

1 August 2009, N°72

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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Afghanistan



Conflict Resolution Opportunities

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CENTRAL AFRICA

- ➡ **Burundi** Sharp debate sparked by electoral law approved by Council of Ministers on 9 July transferring several electoral commission powers to president and retaining multiple ballot system that opposition claims favours ruling CNDD-FDD. Coalition of 7 opposition parties 13 July alleged govt failing to guarantee free and fair 2010 poll, citing increase in candidate registration fee and failure to review voter rolls. Govt steering committee 14 July launched 6-month public consultation on potential transitional justice mechanisms.
- [“The Government analyzes electoral legislation”](#), *Burundi Tribune*, 8 July 2009.

Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°63, [Burundi: To Integrate the FNL Successfully](#), 30 July 2009. The peace process in Burundi has made considerable progress in recent months, but further consolidation is necessary for successful presidential elections in 2010 and to put a permanent end to the threat of armed conflict. The FNL and the government must both renounce violence and respect individual and political rights.

- ➡ **Central African Republic** FDPC rebel group leader Abdoulaye Miskine 3 July signed 2008 Global Peace Agreement with govt in margins of AU summit in Libya. Chad 8 July released CPJP rebel group leader Charles Massi, requiring he negotiates with govt. New electoral commission established following National Assembly's 27 June approval of new election law; opposition protested govt requirement that commission head be appointed by govt, not elected. U.S., France pledged support for election process. Leader of opposition MLPC Martin Ziguélé, following visit to northwest towns, alleged ministry of territorial administration carrying out illegal census, ruling KNK party intimidating local officials.
- [“Central African Republic rebels sign peace deal: mediator”](#), AFP, 4 July 2009.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°55, [Central African Republic: Untangling the Political Dialogue](#), 9 Dec. 2008.

- ➡ **Chad** Coalition of 3 armed rebel groups, Mouvement National, signed peace agreement with govt 24 July in Tripoli - largest of the 3, FSR, thought peripheral to May offensive. Final appointments made to electoral commission (CENI); CENI appointed Ngarmajiel Gami, perceived opposition ally, as commission chair in apparent sign of political opening at centre. But CENI's instatement postponed by Supreme Court 17 July after main opposition coalition CPDC vowed to boycott sessions until law passed to ease opposition activities. Chad 16 July launched further airstrikes in Darfur, asserting right to pursue rebels but denying its forces attacked Sudanese army or civilians; Sudan 20 July referred issue to UNSC.
- [“Accord de paix avec une coalition de trois rebellions”](#), AFP, 26 July 2009.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°149, [Chad: Powder Keg in the East](#), 15 April 2009.

- ➡ **Democratic Republic of Congo** National army (FARDC) announced shift from reactive to offensive military operation in S Kivu - part of Kimia II - starting around 10 July in Shabunda and Mwenga territories. FARDC 29 July claimed to have captured FDLR command HQ in 27 July strikes in Kashindaba, claimed 14 rebels killed. FDLR attacks continued over month, with 13 July assault on MONUC and FARDC positions in Mwenga, and on 21 July on FARDC military base in N Kivu town Mandje, near S Kivu border; 24 killed including 16 civilians. UNHCR 24 July announced 35,000 displaced during Kimia II. UNSG in 30 June report called on MONUC to withdraw support from FARDC units responsible for human rights abuses. MONUC chief Alan Doss, briefing UNSC 10 July, announced deployment of 3,000 extra peacekeepers delayed until Oct. Defense Minister 17 July met with Rwandan and Burundian counterparts in Goma to discuss economic and security cooperation. FM Tambwe 24 July announced Congo to send 1st ambassador to Rwanda in over a decade.
- [“Some 35000 flee renewed clashes in DR Congo: UNHCR”](#) AFP, 24 July 2009.

Africa Report N°151, [Congo: A Comprehensive Strategy to Disarm the FDLR](#), 9 July 2009. The Congolese and Rwandan governments, and the international community, must formulate a new strategy to dismantle Rwandan Hutu rebels or face continuing instability. A new approach is needed to end civilian suffering and restore state authority in eastern Congo.

- ➡ **Gabon** Ruling PDG party 15 July selected Ali Ben Bongo, son of late president Omar Bongo, as its candidate in upcoming elections. Constitutional court early month approved extension to required 45-day election period, bringing deadline to 6 Sept. Sectors of ruling party, opposition and rights groups condemned Bongo family's political dominance. 5 ministers, including 2 PDG ministers and PM Ndong, stood down after announcing intention to run as independents.
- [“Bongo son set for Gabon candidacy”](#), BBC, 16 July 2009.
- ➡ **Republic of Congo** Incumbent President Nguesso won 78.6% of vote in calm presidential poll 12 July; boycotted by opposition as “neither free nor fair”. Govt claimed turnout 66%, independent local monitoring group estimated maximum 20%.
- [“Congo candidates challenge ‘totally false’ vote results”](#), AFP, 15 July 2009

- ➡ **Rwanda** UNSC 9 July extended International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) mandate to end 2010. ICTR 14 July sentenced former Kigali governor Renzaho to life for genocide, rape, murder. President Kagame 27 July announced Rwanda prepared to take part in further joint military operations in DRC against FDLR.
- [“Rwanda-DRC ready for more joint operations – Kagame”](#), Reuters, 27 July 2009.

- ➡ **Uganda** Govt early month arrested 17 people linked to new group Uganda Patriotic Front (UPF) petitioning for rights in north, alleging UPF plot to oust president. Office of UN envoy Joaquim Chissano wound down; Chissano stressed need for 2-pronged approach comprising military action and negotiation with LRA; UNSC praised envoy's readiness to restart negotiations if LRA signs final peace deal.
- [“The rumors of new rebel group in Uganda”](#), *Sudan Tribune*, 7 July 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** Somali al Shabaab 30 June threatened to attack Ethiopia following reports of troop presence in Somalia; Addis Ababa said posed “no clear danger”. U.S. Asst Sec State Carson 6 July warned Ethiopian re-engagement “counterproductive”. Govt 7 July passed controversial anti-terrorism law, amid fears could be used against opposition. Police 1 July shot dead 2 people building church at site also claimed by Muslims. Govt 21 July suspended 42 NGOs allegedly involved in activities “out of their mandate”.

- [“Ethiopia adopts strict anti-terrorism bill”](#), AFP, 7 July 2009.

➡ **Kenya** Cabinet 30 July failed to decide on establishment of special tribunal into perpetrators of post-2008 election violence, pledged instead to try suspects through local courts after judicial reform drive and, hinting at ICC option, reaffirmed commitment to Rome Statute obligations. Mediator Kofi Annan 9 July handed suspect list to ICC. 3 foreign aid workers kidnapped from border town 18 July by gunmen, taken into Somalia. Govt 21 July announced plans to reinforce eastern border as violence in Somalia rises.

- [“Annan acts on Kenya poll suspects”](#), BBC, 9 July 2009.

➡ **Somalia** Mogadishu and central Somalia hit by several bouts of intense fighting over month. At least 51 killed, 212 injured in Mogadishu over July, with fighting particularly heavy early month. Reports security director of transitional govt (TFG) killed 11 July. AMISOM 12 July began assisting TFG forces as govt made first serious advances against al-Shabaab; AMISOM denied reports troops moved to front line but acknowledged limited defensive action; govt continues to press for strengthened AMISOM mandate. In Hiran region: 31 killed in fighting between Al Shabaab and moderate Islamist Ahlu Sunna Waljamaca 22-23 July; govt claimed to have retaken Beledweyn town end month. UN Human Rights Commissioner Pillay warned bombings into residential areas, civilian executions by Islamist troops may amount to war crimes. TFG, AMISOM, UN Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) 26 July announced formation of new Joint Security Committee to support Somali security institutions. AU early month urged UNSC to impose sanctions on Eritrea over alleged support for Islamist forces; UNSC divided, but some members 9 July threatened to consider action. 2 French officials kidnapped by suspected al-Shabaab members late month.

- Comment by Daniela Krosiak (Crisis Group), [“Militant Islamists Try to Draw Kenya Into a Trap”](#), AllAfrica, 26 June 2009.

- [“Between violence and hope”](#), openDemocracy, 15 July 2009.

➡ **Sudan** Abyei Tribunal based in the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) 22 July delivered decision on disputed Abyei region at north-south border: in compromise verdict – welcomed by both NCP and SPLM – PCA shifted border to give north access to region’s richest oil field; assigned Ngok Dinka ethnic group, expected to vote in 2011 referendum, control over remaining area. Following its 24 June-3 July summit in Libya, AU announced it would not cooperate with ICC over President Bashir’s arrest. ICC Chief Prosecutor Ocampo 7 July lodged appeal with Court to expand Bashir’s charges to include genocide. Egypt hosted meetings with

President Bashir and 6 Darfuri rebel groups early month for talks on Darfur peace process. JEM, absent from Cairo talks, 3 July signed “declaration of principles” with opposition Umma party in potential new political alliance, agreed not to accept census results. Opposition parties argued current Govt of National Unity illegitimate beyond 10 July 2009, demanded transitional national govt. Chad 16 July conducted further air strikes in Darfur, prompting Sudan to urge UNSC action; reports of retaliatory attacks by Khartoum in Darfur region 2 days later. UNSG Ban expressed “grave concern” over both incidents.

- [“Sudan flashpoint”](#), *Financial Times*, 23 July 2009.

Africa Report N°152, *Sudan: Justice, Peace and the ICC*, 17 July 2009.



Sudan must dismantle its system of impunity for atrocity crimes or there will be no peace in Darfur and the north-south civil war could again erupt. The NCP must accept judicial reforms and transitional justice mechanisms as key elements of a Darfur settlement or Sudan will face increased turmoil.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

➡ **Madagascar** 2 killed in explosion and 20 other devices reportedly discovered across capital 19 July in what national leader Rajoelina described as botched terrorist attack. Rajoelina’s administration 21 July issued arrest warrants for 5 senior former officials from ousted president Ravalomanana’s govt, withdrew from 22 July international contact group meeting. Talks proceeded in Addis Ababa with delegations from former presidents Ravalomanana and Didier Ratsiraka; SADC chief mediator Joaquin Chissano and UN mediator Tieblile Drame visited capital 28 July, announcing all 4 key groups had agreed to meet for talks in Mozambique early Aug. Rajoelina in early-month visit to Brussels failed to convince EU leaders to unblock €600m in EU aid, with EU dismissing Rajoelina’s “roadmap” for political transition as unconstitutional. FM 8 July announced country would hold elections before end 2009 “if means were available”.

- [“Madagascar political groups agree to meet: mediator”](#), AFP, 22 July 2009.

➡ **Zimbabwe** Tension between GPA coalition partners on the rise. MDC MPs 29 June boycotted cabinet meeting unilaterally rescheduled by President Mugabe, announced list of unresolved grievances regarding appointments and Mugabe’s failure to convene all-party National Security Council. 4 MDC MPs handed jail sentences over month, requiring they vacate seats; MDC 22 July accused ZANU-PF of seeking to erode MDC majority. 13 July all-stakeholders conference on constitution-making process disrupted, resuming next day, after ZANU-PF supporters stormed meeting; both sides condemned disturbances. ZANU-PF continues to press for adoption of 2007 “Kariba draft”, MDC for fresh consultative process. Reports of worsening violence against MDC supporters in countryside. Mugabe in 27 July Global Dialogue conference in Uganda hinted at ban on NGOs. Mugabe met new U.S. Asst Sec State for Africa Carson at AU summit in Libya 3 July, afterwards called Carson an “idiot” for seeking to “dictate” Zimbabwean affairs. Kimberley Process review team visited Marange diamond fields early month, reporting “horrific” violence against civilians by security forces and

illegal mining by military, calling for removal of troops by 20 July and threatening to blacklist Zim diamonds; security forces remained at end month.

- Comment by François Grignon (Crisis Group), [“The Race for Influence in Zimbabwe”](#), *Guardian*, 25 July 2009.
- [“Political violence growing in rural areas”](#), IRIN, 27 July 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°59, [Zimbabwe: Engaging the Inclusive Government](#), 20 April 2009.

WEST AFRICA

➡ **Cameroon** Gunmen 6 July abducted 3 Filipino fishermen and 2 Ukrainian mechanics off coast. 4 foreign oil workers freed 19 July after 3 months in captivity, leaving 7 still captive. Reports link captors to armed group Bakassi Freedom Fighters. President Biya started 4-day visit to France 21 July to discuss bilateral relations.

- [“Four oil hostages freed in Cameroon”](#), AFP, 21 July 2009.

➡ **Côte d'Ivoire** In 10 July report UNSG Ban stressed responsibility for holding Nov elections on time lies with political parties. UN envoy Choi Young-Jin 17 July called for detailed electoral timetable, 23 July told UNSC that despite progress bureaucratic delays could threaten poll. Electoral commission published election timetable same day. CDI UN Ambassador Djedje condemned “unjustified” remarks allegedly made by French President Sarkozy blaming President Gbagbo for electoral delays.

- [“Ivorian envoy slams ‘unfair’ French attacks on peace process”](#), AFP, 23 July 2009.

Africa Briefing N°62, [Côte d'Ivoire:](#)

[What's Needed to End the Crisis](#), 2 July

2009. To avoid jeopardising Côte d'Ivoire's peace agreement, President Gbagbo and other Ivorian leaders must speed up implementation of its key provisions before the November election. National and local authorities need to increase the tempo of electoral preparations, administrative reunification and disarmament of armed groups.



➡ **Guinea** Military junta 11 July placed army on maximum alert at all border posts, alleging drug traffickers based in neighbouring countries preparing attack on Guinea; Liberia, Guinea-Bissau and Senegal dismissed accusations, while several national and international observers, including AU, expressed scepticism over alleged plot as possible diversion from transition process. Junta leader Dadis Camara threatened to arrest anyone publicising doubts about credibility of threats.

- [“Guinea on alert for ‘attack plot’”](#), BBC, 12 July 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°58, [Guinea: The Transition Has Only Just Begun](#), 5 March 2009.

➡ **Guinea-Bissau** Former heads of state Malam Bacai Sanha (ruling PAIGC) and Kumba Yala (opposition PRS) went to polls 26 July in 2nd-round presidential run-off after winning 39.6% and 29.4% of vote respectively in 28 June vote. Electoral commission 29 July announced Sanha's victory, with over 63% of vote; Yala accepted outcome. EU monitors announced 28 June poll “free and fair”; both votes conducted without incident and with reported 60% turnout. Analysts stress considerable reform challenges facing new president.

- [“Sanha wins Guinea-Bissau election”](#), BBC, 29 July 2009.
- For background, see Africa Briefing N°61, [Guinea-Bissau: Beyond Rule of the Gun](#), 25 June 2009.

➡ **Liberia** Truth and Reconciliation Commission submitted final report to parliament 1 July, recommending review of govt institutions, establishment of local conflict resolution forums, prosecution of 200 people and listing 52 that should be barred from public offices for 30 years, including President Johnson-Sirleaf over alleged failure to show remorse for past support to Charles Taylor; generating heated public debate. In 6 July press conference 7 former warlords announced they would oppose efforts to bring them to justice.

- [“TRC furore overshadows peace building proposals”](#), IRIN, 9 July 2009.

➡ **Mali** Further clashes between govt and Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) forces following govt's June announcement of “total war” against AQIM. AQIM early month claimed 28 Malian soldiers killed and 3 others captured in north, 12 July released last hostage, Swiss national Werner Greiner. In deal reportedly brokered by Algerian ambassador, Tuareg rebels mid-month agreed to assist govt fight AQIM activity.

- [“Mali ex-rebels to tackle al-Qaeda”](#), BBC, 20 July 2009.

➡ **Niger** President Tandja pressed forward with 3rd term bid, 3 July set referendum for 4 Aug, despite public opposition. Strikes held over month, but response in capital muted. General strikes called 1 July and 22-23 July after court late month ruled action illegal. 15 July women's protest violently dispersed by police. Deputy-president of main opposition party PNDP briefly detained 14 July after calling for referendum boycott and threatening to disrupt poll. Main opposition parties and trade unions formed anti-referendum campaign 16 July. EU suspended financial aid 11 July, ECOWAS threatened to follow suit if referendum goes ahead. AU, UN, U.S. expressed “deep concern” over Tandja's effort to retain power.

- [“Niger leader defiant on vote plan”](#), BBC, 23 July 2009.

➡ **Nigeria** Focus again shifted to North, as armed men from radical Islamic group Boko Haram (BH) – fighting for Islamic state – launched attacks on security forces 26-29 July in Bauchi (Bauchi State), Potiskum (Yobe State), Maiduguri (Borno State) and Wudil, near Kano: at least 400 killed, over 4,000 displaced. Govt forces 29 July stormed BH's reported HQ in Maiduguri; leader Mohammed Yusuf arrested 30 July and hours later shot dead in custody, according to police whilst he was trying to escape; drew outcry from rights groups. In South: MEND militants in brazen assault struck major oil storage and distribution jetty run by state oil company NNPC near Lagos 12 July, killing 9. Yoruba Council of Elders warned attack was “invitation to inter-tribal war”, as Yoruba militia group OPC threatened retaliatory violence. Suspected senior MEND leader Henry Okah released from jail in Jos after accepting govt's amnesty offer. MEND declared 60-day ceasefire 15 July. Concerns remain over whether ceasefire will hold and feasibility of govt's amnesty DDR programme, as umbrella militant organisation JRC threatened to pull out and 6 Delta governors, playing key liaison role, to withdraw support over govt's failure to address Delta interests in new Petroleum Industry Bill and outline post-amnesty plans. In 14 July protest move, parliament threatened to impeach President Yar'Adua over failure to implement 2009 budget fully; withdrew threat 29 July after executive, initially arguing budget unrealistic amid revenue shortfalls, pledged full implementation. Strikes continued across several sectors over welfare and salary levels.

- Comment by Mark L. Schneider and Nnamdi K. Obasi (Crisis Group), [“A Violent Window of Opportunity”](#), *Foreign Policy*, 17 July 2009.
- [“Nigeria oil truce won’t end conflict”](#), AP, 15 July 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°60, [Nigeria: Seizing the Moment in the Niger Delta](#), 30 April 2009.

- **Sierra Leone** Former Liberian leader Charles Taylor appeared before Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague from 14 July to give evidence in defense of his role in Sierra Leone’s 1996-2002 civil war.
 - [“Liberia’s Taylor takes stand to deny war crimes”](#), Reuters, 14 July 2009.



Asia/Pacific

CENTRAL ASIA

- **Kazakhstan** President Nazarbaev 10 July signed into law new controls on internet, in spite of call for veto from OSCE, which called bill “repressive”.
 - [“Corruption scandals an indicator of clan infighting in Astana?”](#), EurasiaNet, 10 July 2009.

- **Kyrgyzstan** Incumbent President Bakiyev claimed victory in 23 July presidential election; official results gave him about 76% of vote in poll condemned by opposition, local monitors, EU, OSCE. Accusing officials of fraud, main opposition candidate Atambaev withdrew from race on election day. Opposition declared open-ended protests against results, but with little immediate public response; some protesters arrested. Reports emerged of agreement on second Russian military base in south, in face of Uzbek protests. In Bishkek to discuss regional security and anti-terror cooperation, U.S. Undersec State Burns met with President Bakiyev 11 July. Security forces 18 July arrested militants suspected of coordinating logistics supply for Taliban in Afghanistan, including Kyrgyz, Kazakh, Uzbek citizens.
 - [“Tulips squashed”](#), *Economist*, 30 July 2009.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°79, [Kyrgyzstan: A Deceptive Calm](#), 14 Aug. 2008.

- **Tajikistan** Police checkpoint in east reportedly attacked by group of armed men 9 July; some reports of link to large armed group, which crossed into Tajikistan from Afghanistan in June; also concerns that attackers might be Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan militants. Security forces claim to have killed 5 gunmen in Tavil-Dara district 16 July, plus insurgent leader 27 July. Govt 11 July reported former minister and leader of United Opposition forces during civil war Mirzo Ziyoev killed by armed group, allegedly during attempted negotiations on insurgent disarmament; opposition sources allege he was murdered by govt security. 2 bombs exploded near Dushanbe airport and downtown hotel 25, 26 July; no casualties reported; police car blown up 30 July in Dushanbe as Tajik, Afghan, Pakistan and Russian presidents met for security talks.
 - [“Mysterious death raises concerns about militant returns”](#), Eurasianet, 14 July 2009.
 - For latest report see: Crisis Group Asia Report N°162, [Tajikistan: On the Road to Failure](#), 12 Feb. 2009.

- **Turkmenistan** In 10 July statement President Berdymuhamedov suggested possible participation in Nabucco gas pipeline project. President 1 July invited Russian President Medvedev for talks following tensions over gas dispute; mid-July met with U.S. Undersec State Burns. Following UN-sponsored conference in Ashgabat, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan agreed to share costs of upstream water management in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Dispute with Azerbaijan over oil and gas resources in Caspian sea resurfaced late-month (see Azerbaijan).
 - [“Flare-up in Turkmen-Azerbaijani dispute latest Nabucco challenge”](#), RFE/RL, 27 July 2009.
 - [“Elsewhere in Turkestan”](#), *Economist*, 9 July 2009.

- **Uzbekistan** Govt 14 July criticised Russian plans to open second military base in Kyrgyzstan near Uzbek border. Meeting with President Karimov in Tashkent, U.S. Undersec State Burns 13 July said U.S. grateful for Tashkent’s support for Northern Distribution Network for Afghanistan, wants to improve economic, security cooperation.
 - [“Russia seeks second military base in Central Asian nation, rattling Uzbekistan”](#), EurasiaNet, 13 July 2009.

NORTH EAST ASIA

- **China (internal)** Ethnic tensions erupted into bloody riots 5 July in Urumqi, capital of northwest Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. State media report 197 dead, mostly Han Chinese, 1,721 injured, over 1,500 arrested. Clashes began when police confronted Uighurs leading protest march demanding full govt investigation into 25 June deaths of Uighur factory workers. Chaos returned 7 July when thousands of armed Han rioted through Urumqi. Chinese govt dismissed claims that riots due to long-standing resentment of Han Chinese among Uighurs, said U.S.-based World Uighur Congress leader Rebiya Kadeer masterminded protests.
 - [“Ethnic protests rock Chinese city”](#), BBC, 7 July 2009.


- **North Korea** Pyongyang 2 July conducted coastal defence exercise, fired 4 surface-to-ship cruise missiles off east coast; 4 July fired 7 ballistic missiles, condemned by UNSC 6 July. UNSC 16 July imposed sanctions against 5 companies, imposed travel ban and assets freeze on 5 NK citizens, banned trade to NK of 2 weapons-related items. U.S. Sec State Clinton 23 July said possible package of aid, diplomatic relations available in return for “full and verifiable denuclearisation”. NK 27 July insisted no return to 6-party talks, but open to “specific and reserved form of dialogue”. U.S., NK reportedly began negotiations 19 July over fate of 2 U.S. journalists jailed by NK in June.
 - [“North Korea Asserts New Willingness to Talk”](#), *New York Times*, 26 July 2009.

- **Taiwan Strait** China 16 July boycotted opening ceremony of World Games in Taiwan. President Ma Ying-jeou elected head of ruling Kuomintang (Nationalist Party) 26 July. President Hu Jintao 27 July sent congratulatory telegram, Ma suggested they “put aside disputes”; first direct exchange of messages between Chinese, Taiwan leaders in over 60 years.
 - [“China, Taiwan in direct exchange”](#), BBC, 27 July 2009.


SOUTH ASIA

 **Afghanistan** Significant escalation of violence ahead of 20 Aug presidential elections; Taliban late month said will attempt to disrupt poll over coming weeks. Large-scale U.S.-led assault on Taliban launched in Helmand River valley 2 July to secure area ahead of elections; parallel UK-led operation in northern Helmand province ended after 5 weeks 27 July. Taliban responded with wave of attacks, with incidents including 25 killed in 9 July Logar province blast; at least 9 killed in 21 July series of attacks on Gardez, Jalalabad govt buildings; 26 July attack on motorcade carrying vice presidential candidate Mohammad Qasim Fahim. At least 71 ISAF troops killed in July, highest monthly toll since 2001 U.S. invasion; UN report 31 July stated 1,013 civilians killed Jan-July 2009, up from 818 in same period 2008. Govt allegedly paid GBP20,000 for late month peace deal with militants in Bala Murghab district, Badghis province.


- ["Taliban threaten Afghan poll, deadly month nears end"](#), Reuters, 31 July 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°171, [Afghanistan's Election Challenges](#), 24 June 2009.

 **Bangladesh** Military-led investigation into Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) Feb mutiny 17 July found total 3,000 BDR members involved. Security forces 8 July arrested 4 alleged Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh militant group members.


- ["Charge sheet in Sept, 3,000 jawans found involved"](#), *Daily Star*, 17 July 2009.

 **India (non-Kashmir)** In suspected Maoist Chhattisgarh attacks, 29 police killed 12 July, and 2 police killed, 7 injured 26 July. In West Bengal Maoists 24 July abducted police officer, 18 July shot local official of Communist Party of India-Marxist. Suspected separatist militants 13 July killed Indian army colonel and driver in Assam landmine explosion.

- ["Ambush kills 29 Indian policemen"](#), BBC, 13 July 2009.


 **Kashmir** Violent protests over Indian troops' alleged rape, murder of 2 women in May continued throughout month; state court 15 July ordered arrest of 4 soldiers accused of destroying evidence related to case, investigation ongoing. 3 Islamist militants, 1 police killed in 5 July clashes in Kupwara, Rajouri districts. Surviving gunman from Nov 2008 Mumbai terrorist attack 20 July pled guilty; judge accepted plea, said trial will go on until "outstanding issues" cleared. Pakistani court 25 July adjourned case against 5 accused of involvement in Mumbai attack for 1 month; India PM Singh 17 July had said no resumption of Pakistan peace talks until action taken against Mumbai perpetrators.

- ["Court orders arrest of 4 police in Kashmir murders"](#), AP, 15 July 2009.


 **Nepal** UN-led discharge process of 4,000 disqualified Maoist combatants from Maoist cantonment sites started 17 July, discussions ongoing. Constituent Assembly (CA) proceedings resumed 6 July after Maoist agreement with Nepali Congress, CPN-UML; had been suspended since dispute over President's role in May army sacking. Maoists 27 July agreed to join 'high-level political mechanism' to support CA, peace process. UNHCR 7 July raised concerns with Defence Ministry about promotion of Nepal Army officer following "serious and credible" allegations of human rights violations during conflict. 4 Tarai armed groups leaders killed 18-22 July, 3 reportedly

by police. UNMIN mandate extended to Jan 2010, OHCHR to June 2010 on 23 July.

- ["Cantonments to discharge disqualified combatants"](#), Myrepublica.com, 16 July 2009.


 **Pakistan** Army 1 July said Swat valley all but under military control, though none of top 21 Taliban commanders captured or killed; sporadic clashes continued throughout month. Govt 10 July announced start of phased return of some 3m displaced by fighting; UN expressed support for operation; hundreds of thousands returned by end-month. Taliban 23 July denied govt claim that Swat Taliban leader Fazlullah critically wounded. Planned army offensive against Taliban in North and South Waziristan on hold, although sporadic air strikes continued; dozens of militants killed by U.S. drone strikes on 3, 7, 17 July in regions. Supreme Court (SC) 17 July cleared opposition PML-N party leader Nawaz Sharif of all criminal charges, removing ban on him standing in elections. 13 killed in 13 July blast in Mian Channu, Punjab province. 2 killed, including UN staffer, in 16 July attack by suspected Taliban gunmen in Peshawar IDP camp. SC 31 July ruled emergency rule imposed by ex-President Musharraf Nov 2007 illegal, opening for possible treason charges against Musharraf.

- ["Pakistan's 2 million displaced start returning home"](#), Reuters, 13 July 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°93, [Pakistan's IDP Crisis: Challenges and Opportunities](#), 3 June 2009.

 **Sri Lanka** Growing concerns for some 280,000 displaced by govt-LTTE war and still held indefinitely in govt-run internment camps: reports suggest many detained suffer from malnutrition, have limited access to basic supplies, medicine. Govt 9 July urged international aid groups to "scale down" work after war's end; ICRC said will end operations in Eastern Province. IMF 26 July approved US\$2.6b loan to Sri Lanka; U.S., UK, others abstained from vote, highlighting international concerns over alleged govt human rights abuses during and after war; IMF said "aware of concerns", but loan necessary to prevent "devastating" balance of payment crisis. In 22 July statement, LTTE named Selvarasa Pathmanathan new leader, said will transform rebels to "nonviolent resistance movement".

- Comment by Robert Templer (Crisis Group), ["War Without End"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 21 July 2009.
- ["Sri Lanka keeps refugees in camp that aid built"](#), AP, 18 July 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°172, [Sri Lanka's Judiciary: Politicised Courts, Compromised Rights](#), 30 June 2009.

SOUTH EAST ASIA

 **Indonesia** Suicide bomb blasts ripped through 2 luxury hotels in Jakarta 17 July, killing 9 and wounding dozens; another unexploded bomb later found at Marriot hotel. Splinter group of Jemaah Islamiyah led by fugitive Noordin Top suspected, in first such attacks in 4 years. Violence flared in Papua with string of attacks on Freeport's Grasberg mine: Australian Freeport worker shot dead 11 July; mine guard and 1 police killed, 5 injured in shoot-out 12 July. Followed 8 July arson attacks on Freeport bus and security post. 3 more wounded by gunfire 22 July. 15 detained following attacks, including 2 Freeport workers; anti-terror police deployed to province. Following 8 July presidential elections, final result

confirmed 24 July with incumbent Yudhoyono winning 60% of vote, 28 of 33 provinces. Losing candidates complained of violations, mounted legal challenge; claim that if vote were fair, Yudhoyono would not have won first round.

- “After the bombings”, *Economist*, 23 July 2009.

Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°94, *Indonesia: The Hotel Bombings*, 24 July 2009. On 17 July 2009, suicide bombers attacked two hotels in the heart of a Jakarta business district in the first successful terrorist attack in Indonesia in almost four years. Whilst it is still too early for definitive answers on who was responsible and why, there are some clues available from past attacks.



➡ **Myanmar/Burma** UNSG Ban in early-July Burma visit met twice with Gen Than Shwe, urged junta to announce date for elections, engage in national dialogue, allow re-registration of all political parties, release political prisoners including Aung San Suu Kyi; received no concrete commitments from govt, was denied access to Suu Kyi. Military junta 13 July said preparing amnesty offer for political prisoners in response to Ban’s request. Trial of Suu Kyi, charged with breaking terms of house arrest in May, resumed 10 July. Final arguments began 24 July; trial adjourned 31 July with expectation of verdict on 11 Aug. UK official 18 July said EU will impose new sanctions on Burma if Suu Kyi not freed. U.S. Sec State Clinton 22 July appealed to junta to free Suu Kyi, citing possible benefits including direct investment.

- “The world is running out of options on Myanmar”, Reuters, 8 July 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°161, *Burma/ Myanmar After Nargis: Time to Normalise Aid Relations*, 20 Oct. 2008.

➡ **Philippines** Govt 23 July ordered suspension of military actions against MILF, reciprocated by MILF on 25 July. President Arroyo 28 July declared “good prospect for peace talks”. Police actions against 3 “rogue” MILF commanders to continue. MILF and govt 29 July signed joint statement agreeing to resume peace talks under auspices of Malaysia as 3rd party facilitator; agreed to reframe “consensus points” of failed 2008 Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain as starting point for moving toward more comprehensive settlement. Govt blamed early July bomb attacks in Mindanao, including 5 July bombing near Cotabato Cathedral killing 5, on JI and Abu Sayyaf elements, later suggested linkage to 17 July bombings in Jakarta; no evidence provided of connection. Abu Sayyaf group 11 July released remaining ICRC hostage held since January. Govt 19 July announced hundreds of marines, army troops to be deployed to Jolo and Basilian for new offensive to eradicate Abu Sayyaf by year-end and hunt down JI members. New Peoples Army and govt agreed to resume peace talks in Norway in Aug.

- “Jolo man”, *Economist*, 16 July 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°88, *The Philippines: Running in Place in Mindanao*, 16 Feb. 2009

➡ **Thailand** Violence in south continued: in Pattani province 1 soldier killed by bomb, 1 civilian shot dead 9 July; 2 Muslims shot dead in separate incidents by suspected separatist insurgents 15 July; 1 soldier, 1 suspected militant killed in gun battle 26 July. Car bomb killed 2 soldiers in Yala province 17 July. 3 killed in separate drive-by shootings 19, 20 July. Police began questioning leaders of anti-Thaksin “yellow shirt” movement

over 2008 blockade of Bangkok airports. Police issued arrest warrants for police and army officer in connection with Apr shooting of People’s Alliance for Democracy leader Sondhi Limthongkul.

- “Brutal insurgency haunts Thai Muslim south”, Reuters, 3 July 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°82, *Thailand: Calming the Political Turmoil*, 22 Sept. 2008.

➡ **Timor-Leste** Trial began 13 July of 28 people accused of involvement in Feb 2008 attack on President Jose Ramos Horta.

- “Justice in the dock”, ISN, 16 July 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°87, *Timor-Leste: No Time for Complacency*, 9 Feb. 2009.

PACIFIC

➡ **Fiji** Military ruler Frank Bainimarama late month named ally and former army commander Ratu Epeli Nailatikau interim President. Commonwealth 31 July gave Fiji until Sept to commit to elections by Oct 2010 or face suspension from body.

- “Fiji faces possible suspension from Commonwealth”, AP, 29 July 2009.



Europe

BALKANS

➡ **Bosnia** European Commission 15 July announced that Bosnia has failed to meet requirements for visa liberalisation in Jan 2010, in decision denounced by Bosniak politicians, media. Top 5 political parties 16 July agreed to speed up reforms needed for visa liberalisation, OHR closure. High Representative Inzko 21 July announced 3-party Prud process negotiations on constitutional reform dead. Strikes by Mostar civil servants continued over unpaid salaries as city confronted 9th month with no mayor, budget or functioning council, following deadlock over mayoral election; firemen blockaded roads 20, 21 July. Inzko imposed interim public services financing measures 29 July. IMF 8 July approved EUR 1.2bn loan for Bosnia, conditional on cuts in public spending.

- “Political rows hinder reform”, *Balkan Insight*, 17 July 2009.

Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°54, *Bosnia: A Test of Political Maturity in Mostar*, 27 July 2009. Mostar, the largest city in Bosnia and Herzegovina with a Croat majority, will face new and potentially dangerous strains if its leaders do not break a deadlock that has paralysed its government. The tensions threaten to poison relations between leading Bosniak and Croat parties.



➡ **Kosovo** EU EULEX prosecutor 18 July issued summons to Milan Ivanovic, leader of numerous anti-EULEX demonstrations, to appear for questioning in South Mitrovica court. EULEX 23 July criticised Kosovo’s weak rule of law institutions, recommended changes in policing. Belgrade 2 July sacked influential head of Mitrovica hospital Marko Jaksic, 13 July suspended Leposavic parallel municipal govt en masse; 3 July called on Kosovo Serbs to boycott 15 Nov

local elections. In ongoing dispute between Štrpce/Shtërpçe Serb residents and Kosovo power utility KEK, Kosovo police and KEK 22 July attempted to seize local power station from Serbs, leading to tense standoff. Kosovo excluded from EU's decision to liberalise regime for Serbian citizens, no roadmap for visa-free Schengen travel.

- "Isolation fear grips Kosovo Serbs", BBC, 29 July 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°200, *Serb Integration in Kosovo: Taking the Plunge*, 12 May 2009.

➡ **Macedonia** European Commission 15 July adopted proposal for visa-free travel for Macedonia starting Jan 2010, conditional on 4 technical conditions met by 30 Sept. EU Enlargement Commissioner 23 July said country needs swift reforms to earn recommended date for EU accession this autumn. Following early-month visit to Skopje and Athens, UN mediator in name dispute between Macedonia and Greece Mathew Nimetz expressed optimism about chances of solution in coming months. Macedonia 22 July presented evidence to International Court of Justice relating to Nov 2008 complaint alleging Greece breached 1995 Interim Accord on name dispute..

- "EC adopts visa-free travel for Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro", Balkan Insight, 15 July 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°52, *Macedonia's Name: Breaking the Deadlock*, 12 Jan. 2009.

➡ **Serbia** European Commission 15 July announced Serbia to be approved for visa-free travel to Schengen zone Jan 2010 provided 4 technical conditions met by 30 Sept. In Albanian-majority Presevo Valley, 2 police injured 9 July by rocket launcher attack on their vehicle; bomb exploded in front of building housing families of mostly Albanian police 14 July, injuring woman, child. Interior Minister Dacic accused Kosovo police of helping smuggle explosives, weapons into south. Presevo Valley Albanians sent letters to Western embassies demanding withdrawal of Serbian police from area.

- "Serbia police wounded near Kosovo", BBC, 9 July 2009.

CAUCASUS

➡ **Armenia** Opposition Armenian National Congress (HAK) 13 July issued statement of concern over govt concessions in revised Madrid Principles forming basis for continuing talks on resolving Karabakh conflict (See Nagorno-Karabakh). Hardline nationalist Dashnaksutiun party 14 July demanded resignation of FM Nalbandian for "failed" Karabakh policy. Nalbandian 20 July said Yerevan has not endorsed Madrid Principles, regards them as "basis for negotiations". Fugitive opposition journalist Nikol Pashinian jailed after turning himself in 1 July; opposition said his arrest contrary to 19 June amnesty, reflects ongoing "political vendetta".

- "Foreign minister denies Armenia has endorsed Madrid Principles", RFE/RL, 21 July 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N° 48, *Armenia: Picking up the Pieces*, 8 April 2008.

➡ **Azerbaijan** Early-month arrest of 2 youth activists on charges of hooliganism, widely believed to be fabricated, provoked widespread international condemnation. 13 Azerbaijanis on trial on charges of collaboration with Taliban. Deputy FM Khalaf Khalafov 26 July said Azerbaijan ready to consider arbitration as option to solve Caspian delimitation

problems with Turkmenistan, following Turkmen President's 24 July statement that his country preparing to file case against Azerbaijan in International Court of Arbitration.

- "Baku becomes a question mark for Nabucco project", Eurasianet, 16 July 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°50, *Azerbaijan: Defence Sector Management and Reform*, 29 Oct. 2008.

➡ **Chechnya (Russia)** Month marked by insurgency violence and murder of prominent activist Natalia Estemirova, investigating rights violations by security forces in Chechnya, kidnapped in Grozny and killed 15 July; body found same day in Ingushetia. Prompted widespread international outrage and renewed focus on rights abuses in Chechnya; some fellow activist alleged murder sanctioned by President Kadyrov. Estemirova's organization Memorial 19 July announced suspension of work over safety concerns for its employees. 6 killed by suicide bomb attack in Grozny 26 July. Russian security forces shot dead 5 militants in 2 separate incidents 13 July. Policeman shot dead in Grozny 17 July.

- "War and peace through the bravest eyes", *Economist*, 23 July 2009.

➡ **North Caucasus (non-Chechnya)** After President Medvedev ordered Chechen President Kadyrov to hunt down militants in Ingushetia following 22 June suicide bomb attack wounding Ingush President Yevkurov, 9 Chechen police sent by Chechen Kadyrov to fight insurgency in Ingushetia shot dead 4 July after being ambushed by militants. Ingushetia PM Rashid Gaysanov, acting president since 22 June attack, met with President Medvedev 14 July; Medvedev said ongoing joint Chechen/Ingush operation has had "success", should be intensified, with involvement of federal security forces. Followed Medvedev's 3 July decree designating Gaysanov acting president, amid speculation over Kadyrov's role in Ingushetia. Several arrested 8 July in connection with 22 June attack. Senior police officer attacked in Ingush capital Nazran died 9 July. Ingush regional administration minister shot dead 17 July. Ingush leadership 21 July requested Moscow to increase police strength 50%. 8 insurgents reported killed by security forces 27 July in Daghestan.

- "A mountain of troubles", *Economist*, 16 July 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°192, *Russia's Dagestan: Conflict Causes*, 3 June 2008.

➡ **Georgia** Only 1,500 attended Tbilisi opposition rally 9 July marking 3 months since start of opposition campaign against govt; opposition 24 July suspended protests. Parliament 16 July approved much-criticised amendments to laws restricting protests and enhancing police powers. Opposition leader Irakli Alasania announced formation of new political party same day. President Saakashvili in address to parliament 20 July outlined package of proposals to appease opposition; opposition rejected proposals. U.S. VP Biden, warmly received in 2-day Tbilisi visit, 23 July reiterated U.S. support for Georgia. Ahead of visit, opposition released open letter to Biden calling for U.S. support for political reform. Georgian, Russian officials met for OSCE-facilitated talks in Geneva 1 July; no agreements reached. EU 27 July extended monitoring mission in Georgia until Sept 2010; no discussion on participation of non-EU states. Georgian, Abkhazia representatives met in Gali 14, 28 July within framework of joint incidents prevention mechanisms. Russian Deputy FM Karasin 23 July said Russia

will take “concrete measures” to prevent Georgia rearming.

- [“Biden brings tough love to Georgia”](#), *New York Times*, 23 July 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°51, [Georgia: The Risks of Winter](#), 26 Nov. 2008.

➡ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** Armenian, Azerbaijani presidents met with OSCE Minsk Group chairs 8, 10 July. Met in Moscow for further talks 17 July, and with Russian President Medvedev next day. Followed 3-4 July visit led by Armenian, Azerbaijan ambassadors to Russia to N-K, Armenia, Azerbaijan. French, Russian, U.S. presidents released statement 10 July calling on both countries to endorse revised Madrid Principles for resolving conflict. Minsk group chairs met late-month to update Madrid Principles.

- [“Mediators amend draft Karabakh peace proposals”](#), RFE/RL, 28 July 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°187, [Nagorno-Karabakh: Risking War](#), 14 Nov. 2007.

EASTERN EUROPE

➡ **Belarus** Further signs of trade war with Russia as Belarus closed Russian fuel pipeline and Russia banned some Belarusian meat imports.

- [“Old allies signal loyalty to Russia has limits”](#), Reuters, 20 July 2009.

➡ **Moldova** New general elections 29 July saw 4 main opposition parties win over 50% of vote and 53 seats in 101-member parliament; Communists won 45% of vote and 48 seats. Opposition 30 July vowed to form coalition govt but deal remains unclear, with parties’ combined seats falling short of 61 votes needed to appoint new president, and speculation over future role of Communist Party. OSCE gave election overall positive assessment, but noted “subtle intimidation and media bias”.

- [“Quo vadis Moldova?”](#), RFE/RL, 30 July 2009.

➡ **Ukraine** Ukrainian police intercepted 2 Russian missile convoys travelling without permits in Sevastopol near Russia’s Black Sea Fleet (BSF) base 8, 21, 23 July. Govt accused Russia of deliberate attempt to provoke tensions; Moscow 26 July admitted violating Ukrainian law. Moscow expelled Ukrainian diplomat 29 July, following Kyiv’s earlier expulsion of Russian diplomat. U.S. VP Biden in 20-22 July Kyiv visit reiterated U.S. support, criticised leaders “political posturing”. EU and IFIs late-month agreed loan deal to help Ukraine pay Russian gas debts.

- [“Russia admits violation in Ukraine base incident”](#), Reuters, 26 July 2009.

WESTERN EUROPE/MEDITERRANEAN

➡ **Basque Country (Spain)** 2 police killed by bomb on Majorca 30 July; police deactivated second bomb found nearby, closed ports and airports to prevent bombers’ escape. Attack came day after 60 people injured by bomb explosion outside police barracks in Burgos, north; both attacks blamed on ETA. ETA blamed for 10 July bomb attack on Socialist party office in Basque region. Supreme Court 24 July dissolved ANV political party due to links with ETA. 31 July marked 50th anniversary of ETA foundation. 4 suspected ETA members arrested in France over month.

- [“Deadlier than the male”](#), *Guardian*, 26 July 2009.

➡ **Cyprus** 9 July opening of talks on security and guarantees, last of 6 main categories in settlement talks, overshadowed by 35th anniversary commemorations of 15 July 1974 coup seeking to annex Cyprus to Greece and 20 July of Turkish invasion. Divisive issue in talks remains 1960 Treaty of Guarantee between UK, Turkey and Greece; Ankara, Turkish Cypriots maintain Turkey will never abandon rights as guarantor power on Cyprus, while Greek Cypriots say will never accept foreign power having say over island. Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders also discussed issues of territory in a future federation and immigration, asylum and citizenship issues. Cracks deepened between pro-compromise Turkish Cypriot president Talat and hardline camp victorious in April elections; PM Eroğlu 8 July said will not abandon self-declared Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus or demands for sovereignty. Turkey impatient with slowness of process, wants deal by Dec. Cyprus FM 20 July said govt will continue to hinder Turkey’s EU accession by blocking energy chapter unless Ankara stops obstructing Cyprus offshore oil exploration.

- [“Divided Cyprus remembers Turkish invasion”](#), AFP, 20 July 2009.

- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°194, [Reunifying Cyprus: The Best Chance Yet](#), 23 June 2008.

➡ **Northern Ireland** Over 20 police injured during mid-month disturbances surrounding loyalist Orange Order parades; Sinn Fein blamed dissident republicans from Real IRA.

- [“The Orange festival marred”](#), *Irish Times*, 19 July 2009.

➡ **Turkey** President Gul 8 July approved law extending civilian courts’ jurisdiction over military personnel despite strong objections from army. Second group of 56 suspects in “Ergenekon” coup plot case, including 2 retired generals, went on trial 20 July; trial postponed 21 July to 6 Aug. PKK 15 July announced renewal of unilateral ceasefire until 1 Sep, said jailed leader Ocalan to reveal “roadmap” to end conflict 15 Aug; PM Erdogan 22 July, interior minister 28 July said govt would pursue own solution to Kurdish issue as part of wider democratisation. 4 killed 6 July in Diyarbakir province, 1 soldier 21 July in Sirnak province, by bombs blamed on PKK; army said 3 PKK members killed 17 July in Hatay province. Kurdish activist Leyla Zana sentenced to 15 months for “PKK propaganda 28 July. Turkey and 4 EU govts signed deal for Nabucco pipeline to supply Caspian/Mid-Eastern gas to Europe via Turkey 13 July.

- [“Second Turkish ‘plot’ trial opens”](#), BBC, 20 July 2009.

- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°197, [Turkey and Europe: The Decisive Year Ahead](#), 15 Dec. 2008.



Latin America / Caribbean

➡ **Bolivia** President Morales 5 July announced govt plans to nationalise electricity supply, railroads. Senate President Oscar Ortiz 13 July launched new Consenso Popular party, aims to unite fragmented opposition for Dec presidential elections; currently 13 opposition candidates running against Morales.

- [“Presidente del Senado crea nuevo partido para las presidenciales”](#), Infolatam, 13 July 2009.

➤ **Colombia** Govt to give U.S. access to at least 3 military bases in Colombia from Nov for next 10 years, final agreement expected early Aug; critics say could infringe on Colombia's sovereignty, increase regional tension. President Uribe 7 July authorised opposition senator Piedad Córdoba to negotiate release of 24 remaining high-profile hostages held by FARC rebels; FARC 18 July said will unilaterally release 2 soldiers, but further releases have to be part of hostages-for-prisoners swap. Army late July killed 29 FARC rebels in Meta department, part of renewed effort to capture FARC number 2 "Mono Jojoy". Relations with Andean neighbours worsened (see Ecuador, Venezuela).

- "From the guerrilla's mouth", *Economist*, 23 July 2009.
- "Autorizan a Córdoba a recibir liberados", BBC, 8 July 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Latin America Briefing N°21, *The Virtuous Twins: Protecting Human Rights and Improving Security in Colombia*, 25 May 2009.

➤ **Ecuador** Relations with Colombia further deteriorated: Ecuadorean judge 2 July ordered arrest of Colombia ex-Defence Minister Juan Manuel Santos over death of Ecuadorean citizen in Colombia's March 2009 airstrike on FARC camp inside Ecuador; Colombia, Interpol rejected order. In video leaked 17 July, FARC number 2 "Mono Jojoy" claimed FARC rebels financed President Correa's 2006 presidential campaign; Correa denied, said video a "set up".

- "Las FARC admiten en un vídeo haber financiado al presidente de Ecuador", *El País*, 19 July 2009.

➤ **Haiti** World Bank, IMF 30 June cancelled US\$1.2b of Haiti's debt; followed earlier cancellation by Inter-American Development Bank. Opposition OPL party late month claimed fraud in official results from June Senate elections, urged its deputies, senators to boycott all govt proceedings.

- "In storm-ravaged Haiti, pockets of progress emerge", *Miami Herald*, 28 July 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Latin America Briefing N°20, *Haiti: Saving the Environment, Preventing Instability and Conflict*, 28 April 2009.

➤ **Honduras** Deadlock remains after June civil-military coup as talks between ousted President Zelaya and de facto govt broke down repeatedly during month. Hopes of solution raised after military 25 July declared would not oppose Zelaya's return under deal proposed by mediator Oscar Arias; de facto President Micheletti 30 July said will give "serious consideration" to deal. Pro- and anti-Zelaya protests continued throughout month with at least 1 protester killed in 5 July clash with military; Arias warned of risk of further violence if no solution reached, said talks will continue. EU 20 July suspended US\$90m in aid; U.S. warned could do the same. Widespread international condemnation of de facto govt throughout month. Zelaya criticised after saying 14 July Hondurans have "right to revolt".

- "Military signals softening in Honduras crisis", *Christian Science Monitor*, 25 July 2009.
- "Pressure grows on Honduras, violence feared", Reuters, 20 July 2009.

➤ **Peru** PM Simon and 8 ministers resigned 8 July following June violent indigenous protests that killed dozens; President García 11 July appointed Congress President Velásquez

Quesquén as new PM.

- "Playing for time", *Economist*, 16 July 2009.

➤ **Venezuela** President Chávez 29 July recalled ambassador from Colombia after Bogotá accused Venezuela of illegal arms supply to FARC rebels. Mayor of opposition-controlled Caracas Antonio Ledezma on 1-week hunger strike early month, demanded OAS respond to govt "increasingly eroding constitution and democratic institutions". National Guard 15 July seized police station in opposition-controlled Miranda state; 8 injured in following clashes between protesters, police. Govt 9 July announced further restrictions on private radio, television broadcasts.

- "Rebels obtained arms sold to Venezuela, Colombia says", *New York Times*, 27 July 2009.
- "Venezuela's opposition feels heat from Chavez", *Los Angeles Times*, 25 July 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.-Israeli tension over settlement-building continued as Israel approved new construction in East Jerusalem, refused to freeze settlement in West Bank. U.S. Mideast envoy Mitchell, Defense Sec Gates, other senior U.S. officials visited Israel for talks 26-29 July aimed at restarting stalled Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. Seventh round of Egypt-hosted Fatah-Hamas reconciliation talks, scheduled for 25 July, postponed 19 July to late Aug. Fatah chairman Kaddoumi 12 July accused PA president Abbas of role in 2004 death of Arafat. PA forces injured 2 in arrest of Hamas member near Ramallah 19 July. Settlers burnt olive trees, attacked Palestinian cars near Nablus after Israeli army removed outpost 20 July. Palestinian killed by Israeli troops after approaching Gaza border fence 19 July. Israel 29 July authorised first shipment of building materials into Gaza since Jan military offensive.

- "Hamas threatens to boycott unity talks with Fatah", Reuters, 31 July 2009.
- "Israel rejects US call to halt Jerusalem project", AP, 19 July 2009.

Crisis Group Middle East Report N°89, *Israel's Religious Right and the Question of Settlements*, 20 July 2009. The issue of West Bank settlements cannot be properly understood without taking into account the increasing role of Israel's religious right. If the importance of this growing political and social phenomenon is ignored, it could undermine a sustainable Israeli-Palestinian peace.



➤ **Lebanon** In talks on new govt following 7 June election, parties agreed end month on allocating 15 cabinet posts to March 14 alliance, 10 to Hizbollah-led opposition, 5 appointed by President Suleiman. Several incidents heightened tensions in south. After arms depot exploded 14 July in Khirbet Selm

near Israel border, senior UN official 24 July said “indications suggest weapons belonged to Hizbollah”, in violation of UNSCR 1701 exclusion zone. Some 70 Lebanese 17 July marched on Israeli military outpost in Kfar Shuba, established June; Israel charged UNIFIL peacekeepers’ collaboration with protest. 10 suspected members of Fatah al-Islam-linked jihadi cell arrested 21 July for plotting attacks against UN, Lebanese army. Sporadic intra-Palestinian violence in Ain al-Hilweh camp throughout month.

- “Rival Lebanese factions close to an agreement on cabinet”, *National*, 28 July 2009.
- “Illegal Lebanon arms may have been Hezbollah’s – UN”, Reuters, 24 July 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°87, *Lebanon’s Elections: Avoiding a New Cycle of Confrontation*, 4 June 2009.

➡ **Syria** U.S. envoy Mitchell in second visit to Damascus 25 July to seek progress on Syrian-Israeli, Israeli-Palestinian peace talks; Mitchell promised administration assistance in seeking case-by-case exemptions from U.S. sanctions on telecommunications, IT, aircraft parts. U.S. sanctions on prominent Syrian individuals renewed 31 July. President Assad 3 July issued formal invitation to U.S. President Obama; U.S. Dep Sec State Steinberg said such visit “will not take place soon” as Syria still transit for Hizbollah arms, Iraq fighters. Saudi Arabia appointed ambassador to Damascus 6 July after post vacant since 2008. Leading human rights lawyer Mohammad al-Hassani arrested 28 July.

- “U.S. opens way to ease sanctions against Syria”, *New York Times*, 29 July 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°83, *Engaging Syria? U.S. Constraints and Opportunities*, 11 Feb. 2009.

GULF

➡ **Iran** Despite intensified security crackdown, protests against disputed June re-election of President Ahmadinejad continued into second month. Street clashes reported 9 July in Tehran and other cities on anniversary of 1999 student protests; 17 July as thousands demonstrated in central Tehran around Friday prayers led by influential politician Hashemi Rafsanjani; again 30 July as crowds defied security to attend mourning ceremony for slain protester Neda Agha-Soltan in Tehran. In 17 July sermon, Rafsanjani implicitly criticised leadership’s handling of unrest, called for prisoner releases, greater media freedom. Former president Khatami 19 July called for referendum over election. Leading opposition presidential candidate Musavi 22 July confirmed intention to form broad political front to oppose election results; 27 July called for protests at forthcoming religious ceremonies. Ahmadinejad attacked by hardline figures for defying Supreme Leader Khamenei by appointing controversial ally Rahim-Mashai as VP; after withdrawing appointment 24 July, Ahmadinejad sacked several cabinet ministers including intelligence minister 26 July. Despite detainee releases, including 140 on 28 July, arrests of protesters, activists continued. Confirmations continued to emerge of protester deaths, many in custody. 5 Iranian officials detained 2007 by U.S. in Erbil, Iraq, released 9 July. 13 hanged for membership of Jundallah rebel group, Zahedan, south east, 14 July. Kurdish Pejak group 19 July killed 4 police near Orumiyeh, NW Iran; security forces killed

2 rebels 20 July.

- “Iran president denies rift with Leader”, *New York Times*, 31 July 2009.
- “Cleric says Iran in crisis, police fight protesters”, Reuters, 17 July 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Briefing N°28, *U.S.-Iranian Engagement: The View from Tehran*, 2 June 2009.

➡ **Iraq** 25 July Kurdistan regional parliament elections saw high turnout; while retaining overall majority, joint list of ruling KDP, PUK lost significant support to new Goran (Change) movement, which gained 24%. U.S. urged Iraqi govt to pursue political reconciliation in anticipation of U.S. troop drawdown, in meetings including Iraq visits of VP Biden 3-5 July, Defense Sec Gates 28-29 July, Iraqi PM Maliki’s Washington visit 22-24 July. Violent attacks across country continued following end-June U.S. troop withdrawal from cities. Dozens killed in several bombings in Mosul, Baghdad areas throughout month; at least 34 killed by 9 July bomb in Telafar, near Mosul; 29 dead in 31 July bombings targeting Shiite mosques in Baghdad. Bombs hit 7 churches in Baghdad, Mosul 11-13 July. Several attacks in Anbar province including attacks on military, Awakening leaders; bomb destroyed Iraqi Islamic Party HQ in Fallujah 25 July. Police 22 July reported arresting 300 suspected insurgents in Anbar. Shiite leader Muqtada al-Sadr in official visit to Syria 21 July. At least 7 members of Iranian exile group Mojahedin-e Khalq killed in Iraqi security force raid on base, 28-29 July.

- “Kurd polls keep status quo, U.S. urges Iraq peace”, Reuters, 29 July 2009.
- “Bombs kill 50 in Iraq as violence flares”, Reuters, 9 July 2009.

Crisis Group Middle East Report N°88, *Iraq and the Kurds: Trouble Along the Trigger Line*, 8 July 2009. Iraqi leaders and the U.S. must manage increasing tensions between Baghdad and Kurdish authorities or face deadly violence following U.S. troop withdrawal. To prevent an outbreak of deadly ethnic conflict Washington should craft an exit strategy that encourages Iraqis to reach a series of bargains on power, resources and territory.



➡ **Saudi Arabia** Authorities 12 July announced first verdicts in closed terrorism trials begun in March: of total 330 suspects, including 41 foreigners, 323 sentenced, including one death sentence; 7 acquitted.

- “Saudi Arabia tries foreign al Qa’eda suspects”, *National*, 14 July 2009.

➡ **Yemen** Deadly clashes between security forces and supporters of separatist Southern Movement continued. Demonstrations in several cities on 7 July civil war anniversary; dozens detained, 2 protesters killed. At least 16 protesters killed 23 July in armed clashes with security forces in Zinjibar, Abyan province. 4 police killed in ambush in Abyan 28 July. Separatists blamed for 10 July murder of 3 northern shopkeepers in Lahj. In north, 10 killed in 18-19 July clashes between Zaydi Shiite Houthis rebels and Sunni al-Islah movement supporters over control of mosque, al-Jawf province. Army colonel, 2 guards killed by Houthi rebels 19 July; 7 soldiers reported killed in army-rebel clashes in Saada 23-24 July. 1 al-Qaeda suspect, 3 troops killed in clashes, Marib, 30-31 July. 6 sentenced to death 13

July for al-Qaeda-linked attacks on foreigners in 2007-8.

- "Huthi rebels kill 7 Yemeni soldiers, others wounded or captured in attack", AFP, 25 July 2009.
- "Protesters shot dead in Yemen", Al Jazeera, 24 July 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°86, *Yemen: Defusing the Saada Time Bomb*, 27 May 2009.

NORTH AFRICA

➡ **Algeria** At least 14 soldiers killed 29 July in insurgent ambush in Tipaza, west of Algiers. Security forces 11 July arrested 9 members of suspected terror cell in eastern Algiers; 21 July stopped suicide bomb attack outside coastguard barracks, Boumerdes province; 25 July killed 4 militants in Tizi Ouzou province.

- "Algeria insurgents kill at least 14 troops: media", Reuters, 29 July 2009.

➡ **Egypt** Ruling NDP leaders early month rejected press speculation on possible early parliamentary elections in 2010 to secure succession of President Mubarak. 25 arrested 9 July for membership of Gaza-linked al-Qaeda cell plotting attacks on Suez Canal. Prosecutor 26 July said 26 members of "Hizbollah cell" arrested May to be tried by emergency security court. Muslim rioters 1 July burnt Coptic Christian homes in Mansoura following killing of Muslim teenager.

- "Father still knows best in Egypt", Inter Press Service, 18 July 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°76, *Egypt's Muslim Brothers: Confrontation or Integration?*, 18 June 2008.

➡ **Mauritania** Ex-junta leader Mohamed Ould Abdelaziz declared victor with 52% of vote in 18 July presidential election aimed at restoring democracy after 2008 coup. Leading opposition candidates alleged fraud, appealed to Constitutional Council 21 July; council approved results 23 July, but head of election commission resigned, citing doubts. International monitors including AU, Arab League, OIC also endorsed elections 20 July. Security forces arrested 4 suspects in June murder of U.S. aid worker claimed by al-Qaeda 17, 24, 25 July; 22 July reported arrest of 2 alleged al-Qaeda militants planning attacks on national mining company.

- "Abdel Aziz wins Mauritania poll, rivals cry foul", Reuters, 19 July 2009.

➡ **Morocco** In 30 July anniversary address, King Mohamed VI called for normalisation with Algeria, resolution of Western Sahara conflict through autonomy plan. Abdelkader Belliraj, arrested early 2008 for leading Islamist terrorist network, received life sentence 27 July. Court 17 July postponed trial of Islamist activist Nadia Yassine, prosecuted for calling for republic and "insulting" monarchy, until 2010. 5th delay since 2005.

- "King Mohammed VI reaffirms desire for closer ties with Algeria", Magharebia, 31 July 2009.

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Bernard Kouchner, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, France, April 2008

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