

**1 March 2010, N°79**

## 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](mailto:crisiswatch@crisisgroup.org).

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## February 2010 Trends



### Deteriorated Situations

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## March 2010 Watchlist



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## CENTRAL AFRICA

➡ **Burundi** 2-week voter registration period ended 9 Feb, after 5 day extension, with 3.5m voters registered; exceeded expectations. Opposition alleged grave irregularities. Several arrested for buying voter cards in Bujumbura. Some 20 of 44 registered parties 16 Feb signed electoral code of conduct. Insecurity continued; 1 killed in 6 Feb shootout in Bujumbura army base; FNL office in Rohero ransacked by unidentified youths 9 Feb; 2 opposition MSD offices raided 21, 23 Feb. New UNSR yet to be appointed after incumbent Youssef Mahmoud left country 28 Jan at expiry of mandate and following govt call for replacement.

- [“Soldier killed in Burundi army base shoot-out”](#), AFP, 6 Feb. 2010.

Crisis Group Africa Report N°155, <a href="#">Burundi: Ensuring Credible Elections</a> , 12 Feb. 2010. Burundi's escape from its long civil war can only be solidified if all political forces, including government, opposition parties, civil society and media ensure that this year's series of elections is truly democratic.	International Crisis Group WORKING TO PREVENT CONFLICT WORLDWIDE
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➡ **Central African Republic** President Bozizé 25 Feb announced legislative and presidential elections would be held 25 April. 6 groups contributing members to the electoral commission (IEC) 13 Feb signed deal to break IEC stalemate following Jan opposition/CFC rebel coalition walkout: opposition appointed new delegates and govt agreed to IEC financial audit. CFC continues to demand resignation of IEC president Joseph Binguimalé. DDR “sensitisation” campaign started 5 Feb, quickly stalling as APRD rebels and govt exchanged accusations of embezzling DDR funds. Bozizé 30 Jan acknowledged death of CPJP leader Charles Massi but next day issued contradictory statement denying knowledge of his fate. String of LRA attacks in south east mid-late month.

- [“Ugandan rebels kidnap 40 in south west of Central Africa”](#), AFP, 22 Feb. 2010.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°69, [Central African Republic: Keeping the Dialogue Alive](#), 12 Jan. 2010.

➡ **Chad** President Déby 7 Feb travelled to Khartoum for 2 days of talks with Sudanese President Bashir. Presidents 8 Feb announced end of hostilities and pledged to work together to resolve insecurity; Déby called on Chadian rebels in Darfur to lay down arms and guaranteed safe return to Chad. In wake of deal, Chad's UN ambassador Allam-mi reiterated govt's desire for UN Chad-CAR peacekeeping mission MINURCAT to leave when mandate lapses in March, stressing govt's capacity to secure east given “changed context”. UNSC 17 Feb agreed to send peacekeeping USG Alain le Roy to Chad to discuss renewal.

- [“Sudan and Chad to end hostilities”](#), BBC, 10 Feb. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°65, [Chad: Escaping from the Oil Trap](#), 26 Aug. 2009.

➡ **Democratic Republic of Congo** President Kabila reshuffled and downsized cabinet from 54 to 44 members 19

Feb in compliance with World Bank debt relief requirements. FDLR violence continued in S Kivu, including 7 killed in attack on Kitembe 12 Feb; MONUC 24 Feb announced FDLR were in control of Irameso mining site. Govt and MONUC 18 Feb denied Amani Leo operation delayed over participation of ex-CNDP senior officers. 350 soldiers 16 Feb reintegrated into FARDC after deserting and joining FDLR in Dec. DRC, Rwanda and UNHCR 15-17 Feb signed technical agreements in Kigali for voluntary repatriation of 53,000 Tutsi Congolese to DRC and 89,000 Hutu Rwandans to Rwanda. Some 130,000 DRC refugees in Republic of Congo and CAR who fled late 2009 violence in Equateur Province resisting return, citing security risk. Tensions within provincial assemblies high: assembly deputies in Equateur, Province Orientale and Katanga called for top officials to resign over embezzlement; Katanga assembly still closed after 28 Jan skirmishes. ICC trial of Thomas Lubanga interrupted 3 Feb for defence lawyers to gather evidence in DRC.

- [“Congo's Kabila reshuffles, trims cabinet, no rebels”](#), Reuters, 20 Feb. 2010.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°151, [Congo: A Comprehensive Strategy to Disarm the FDLR](#), 9 July 2009.

➡ **Rwanda** Victoire Ingabire (opposition UDF) assaulted and blocked from registering as candidate in Kigali 3 Feb. Her assistant Joseph Ntawangundi injured, detained 6 Feb for genocide verdict issued by Gacaca court in 2007; UDF strongly denied evidence. Police early month opened investigations into Ingabire and Bernard Ntaganda (opposition PS-Imberakuri) for inciting “divisionism”; rights groups allege govt using anti-genocide “divisionism” law to silence opposition. 3 opposition groups (UDF, DGP and PS-I) 21 Feb announced parties considering coalition to contest RPF at polls if UDF and DGP unable to register. President Sarkozy 25 Feb travelled to Kigali in first visit of French President since 1994; admitted France made “serious errors of judgement” during genocide. 3 grenade attacks 19 Feb in Kigali, killing 2; authorities said 3 arrested belonged to Interahamwe.

- [“Rwandan opposition eyes union to fight Kagame”](#), Reuters, 21 Feb. 2010.

➡ **Uganda** President Museveni 28 Feb placed presidential guard under elite special forces unit commanded by son Lt Col Muhoozi; opposition groups condemned as move to prepare succession. Major political parties 5 Feb signed memorandum of understanding on elections conduct ahead of 2011 polls. President Museveni 8 Feb announced commencement of 2nd phase of Northern Uganda reconstruction fund involving disbursement of \$140m to 40 north and eastern districts. Attacks by LRA forces continued southeast CAR late month.

- [“Uganda election behind schedule”](#), News24, 24 Feb. 2010.

## HORN OF AFRICA

➡ **Eritrea** RSADO rebel group 16 Feb announced it had killed 17 soldiers in further attack on military bases in Dankalia, remote south east. Eritrean diaspora launched coordinated protests in U.S., Switzerland, Australia against UN sanctions 22 Feb; Asmara denied accusations from rights groups it had coerced Eritreans to participate.

- [“Eritrea rebels say killed 17 government troops”](#), AFP, 16 Feb. 2010.

- **Ethiopia** Opposition accused govt of repression ahead of national elections in May. 8-party opposition coalition Medrek 17 Feb announced some members were being prevented from registering as candidates at gunpoint and reported routine govt surveillance, harassment. Senior opposition UDJ official earlier condemned West's failure to speak out against continued detention of UDJ leader Birtukan Mideksa.
- "Gunmen stop Ethiopia candidates registering: group", Reuters, 18 Feb. 2010.
  - For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°153, *Ethiopia: Ethnic Federalism and Its Discontents*, 4 Sept. 2009.

- **Kenya** Coalition govt plunged into new crisis amid standoff between President Kibaki and PM Odinga over 2 major recent corruption scandals. Kibaki 13 Feb suspended 8 senior officials for involvement, before Odinga 14 Feb announced agricultural and education ministers suspended pending criminal investigations: Kibaki hours later announced Odinga had failed to consult him and called move illegal. Odinga asked mediator Kofi Annan, and allies, to intervene, 16 Feb suspended participation in cabinet meetings. Anti-govt protests immediately broke out in Eldoret, before police stepped up security from 15 Feb; several thousand displaced by 2008 post-election violence marched from Rift Valley to Nairobi 17 Feb to protest govt divisions, corruption and resettlement failures. Leaders met 23 Feb, promising further talks and appealing for unity between coalition parties. AU Panel led by Annan and U.S. ambassador earlier called for swift resolution of crisis through dialogue.
- "Kenyans protest as political crisis deepens", AFP, 16 Feb. 2010.
  - For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°137, *Kenya in Crisis*, 21 Feb. 2008.

- **Somalia** In Mogadishu, at least 21 civilians killed in shelling by Islamist militia al-Shabaab 7-11 Feb. Al-Shabaab early month began moving hundreds of reinforcements into capital, 12 Feb proclaimed "all out war" against govt. UNHCR 17 Feb reported thousands fled city over previous 2 weeks. 5 killed in shootout between security forces over non-payment of salaries 11 Feb. 4 killed in suicide bomb targeting military convoy and defense state minister 15 Feb; minister escaped unharmed. Reports of numerous clashes in southern and central Somalia. UN official in south reported that new rules imposed by U.S. to prevent flow of humanitarian aid to Islamist militia were imposing "impossible" restrictions on aid deliveries. Al-Shabaab 28 Feb ordered World Food Program to halt operations. Reports of several successes in international anti-piracy operations; Danish special forces under NATO command recovered 2 trawlers off Gulf of Aden early month.
- "Somalia's al-Shabaab vows all-out war against govt", *Mail & Guardian*, 12 Feb. 2010.
  - For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°64, *Somalia: The Trouble with Puntland*, 12 Aug. 2009 and Africa Report N°147, *Somalia: To Move Beyond the Failed State*, 23 Dec. 2008.

- **Somaliland** Recently formed electoral commission moved forward with registration process over month, hiring national registrar and announcing new procedures for reviewing and addressing previous registration fraud. Officials in Hargeysa 20 Feb appealed to international community to provide humanitarian aid for hundreds of thousands affected by prolonged drought.

- "Drought-hit Somaliland pleads for aid", IRIN, 16 Feb. 2010.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°67, *Somaliland: A Way out of the Electoral Crisis*, 7 Dec. 2009.

- **Sudan** North-south tensions remained high as South's SPLM party 1 Feb refused to withdraw candidate for national presidency in face of strong appeals from NCP party. Progress in talks on disputed census: parties 26 Feb announced agreement to increase seats for southern parties in national assembly by 40 (26%) following SPLM objections census under-represented south. NCP minister Biong 22 Feb also announced census recount for S Kordofan. Campaigning by political parties started, with President Bashir 13 Feb holding major rally in Khartoum condemning ICC and pledging to support southern "brothers" in event of secession. Chadian President Déby and Bashir following 7-8 Feb meetings in Khartoum announced new deal to end support for proxy rebel groups and combat insecurity along border. Bashir 20 Feb announced new agreement with Darfur rebel group JEM; other rebel groups rejected. UN reported between 140-400 killed in serious upsurge in clashes between army and SLA-Abdel Wahid in Darfur's Jabel Marra region late month; army denied. Across South, at least 52 killed over month in series of clashes between rival ethnic groups and between military and armed civilians. ICC appeals court 3 Feb ruled legal basis used by pre-trial judges to reject genocide charge against Bashir was wrong, opening door to genocide charges.
- Comment by Alain Délétraz (Crisis Group), "The Right Time for a Wrong Arrangement", *European Voice*, 11 Feb. 2010.
  - "Darfur rebels agree to truce with Sudan", *New York Times*, 20 Feb. 2010.
  - For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°68, *Sudan: Preventing Implosion*, 17 Dec. 2009 and Africa Report N°154, *Jonglei's Tribal Conflicts: Countering Insecurity in South Sudan*, 23 Dec. 2009.

## SOUTHERN AFRICA

- **Madagascar** Main opposition groups 5 Feb backed AU Commission Chair Jean Ping's Jan compromise solution aimed at implementing existing Maputo and Addis Ababa power-sharing deals. De facto leader Rajoelina 5 Feb announced "transparent" parliamentary elections would be postponed from 20 March to late May. AU 2 Feb called on "the illegal regime" to stop acting unilaterally and implement power-sharing deals. International Contact Group 18 Feb and AU Peace and Security Council 19 Feb announced govt had 1 month to implement deals before sanctions. FM Ny Hasina Andriamanjato resigned 10 Feb over dispute on implementation of Maputo deal; Rajoelina 24 Feb appointed Admiral Hyppolite Ramaroson as replacement.
- "Madagascar's leader pushes elections back to May", Reuters, 18 Feb. 2010.

- **Zimbabwe** 1-year anniversary of unity govt marked by ongoing political stalemate. MDC-T party 12 Feb formally declared deadlock in talks with ZANU-PF, after SADC facilitation team failed to broker progress during early Feb visit; PM Tsvangirai 5 Feb said early elections may be only way to break impasse. Controversial Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment law gazetted 10 Feb; Tsvangirai declared law "null and void" because not seen by unity govt cabinet; Mugabe 27 Feb insisted law would be enforced from 1 March.

EU 15 Feb extended targeted sanctions; President Mugabe 17 Feb denounced as punishment for land reform program and rejected further concessions to MDC until sanctions lifted. Despite impasse, parties 8 Feb agreed to appointments for heads of electoral and human rights commissions. AU 31 Jan selected Zimbabwe for 3-year term on Peace and Security Council. IMF 19 Feb restored Zimbabwe's voting rights. Govt workers 2 Feb began open-ended civil strike over wages.

- Comment by Donald Steinberg (Crisis Group), [“Zimbabwe's Unity Government at One Year: Much to Celebrate, Much to Do”](#), *Guardian*, 11 Feb. 2010.
- [“Bring on the polls”](#), *Economist*, 18 Feb. 2010.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°59, [Zimbabwe: Engaging the Inclusive Government](#), 20 April 2009.

## WEST AFRICA

📍 **Côte d'Ivoire** Election preparations ground to halt as President Gbagbo 12 Feb invoked constitution to dissolve govt and electoral commission (CEI), alleging CEI president Robert Mambé manipulating voter rolls to boost opposition. Opposition groups accused Gbagbo of seeking to limit northern vote and stall polls. Events followed rising tensions early month, including several protests against local magistrate rulings striking “foreigners” from voters roll. CEI's dissolution triggered widespread protests 15-19 Feb; at least 7 killed. Talks between govt/opposition started 22 Feb under mediation of Burkina Faso President Compaoré. Parties 23 Feb announced formation of new govt (with opposition retaining several key ministries) and new CEI (with opposition figure appointed head 25 Feb); opposition 26 Feb called off protests. Ex-rebel Forces Nouvelles 8 Feb warned of rising inter-communal violence and evidence militias rearming.

- [“Urgent talks’ needed to resolve Ivorian crisis”](#), BBC, 21 Feb. 2010.
- Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°62, [Côte d'Ivoire: What's Needed to End the Crisis](#), 2 July 2009.

📍 **Guinea** PM Doré 15 Feb appointed 34-person interim govt comprising opposition, trade unionists and former junta members. Electoral commission 21 Feb proposed presidential polls for 27 June, welcomed by ECOWAS and Contact Group for Guinea 22 Feb. Doré called for elections support from donors. Govt inquiry into 28 Sept massacre issued report 2 Feb alleging Aouabacar “Toumba” Diakité, presidential guard member accused of shooting ex-junta leader Camara in Dec, was solely responsible for Sept killings. Diakité 5 Feb announced he had been following orders and was willing to face justice but not in Guinean court. ICC assessment mission arrived mid-month, 19 Feb announced Sept killings could amount to “crimes against humanity” and pledged to press forward with preliminary investigation. During mission, Doré stated Guinea's judiciary was unfit to undertake prosecutions properly.

- [“After massacre, Guinea sees hope of lifted chains”](#), *New York Times*, 2 Feb. 2010.
- For background, see Africa Briefing N°66, [Guinea: Military Rule Must End](#), 16 Oct. 2009.

📍 **Mali** Court in Bamako 18 Feb announced 4 suspected al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) prisoners were “legally free” after sentencing the men to time already served since detention in April, in apparent effort to save life of French AQIM hostage Pierre Camatte; AQIM in Jan had announced

Camatte would be killed if prisoners were not released by 20 Feb. Releases followed series of French diplomatic visits including 1 Feb visit by French FM Kouchner to Bamako. Algeria condemned their release and Mauritania recalled ambassador in protest.

- [“Prisoners demanded in Mali hostage crisis ‘free’”](#), AFP, 18 Feb. 2010.

📍 **Niger** Group of soldiers led by Major Adamou Harouna launched successful coup d'état 18 Feb, entering presidential palace and announcing President Tandja and ministers detained, govt institutions dissolved and constitution suspended; at least 3 reported killed during palace shootout. Followed 10-month constitutional crisis grounded in Tandja's bid to extend term in office. Junta 19 Feb announced new Supreme Council for the Restoration of Democracy (SCDR), headed by squadron chief Salou Djibo, was in control, most ministers would retain posts, president safe; in late month statements pledged to restore constitution order, hold elections in which no junta member would stand. All but 3 ministers quickly released. Thousands rallied in Niamey 20 Feb in support of takeover; opposition coalition CFDR called for speedy elections. AU 19 Feb condemned coup, suspended Niger, called for restoration of constitutional order “as it existed before Aug 2009”. UNSG Ban Ki-moon, EU, France, U.S. echoed call, U.S. stopping short of calling takeover a coup. UN, AU and ECOWAS mediation team arrived 21 Feb.

- [“African Union condemns Niger coup but America blames ousted leader”](#), *Times*, 20 Feb. 2010.

📍 **Nigeria** Political tensions resulting from President Yar'Adua's 3-month hospitalisation abroad continued, intensifying following his sudden return to Abuja 24 Feb. Media outlets and civil society groups 3 Feb issued appeal for Yar'Adua to hand over power. National Assembly 9 Feb approved motion declaring VP Goodluck Jonathan acting president. Jonathan quickly assumed presidential authority, delivering national address 9 Feb, minor cabinet reshuffle 10 Feb and elected ECOWAS chair 16 Feb. Sharp divides within cabinet and political elite over legitimacy of Jonathan's leadership. Yar'Adua allies 9 Feb declared handover “unconstitutional”, filed legal challenges. Uncertainty increased with Yar'Adua's return: accompanying high security and secrecy increased speculation over his capacity to govern; presidential camps issued conflicting statements over who was in charge. Senate 25 Feb voted for constitutional amendment requiring ill leaders to step aside after 14-day absence from office; requires National Assembly approval. Anambra state governorship election held 6 Feb, incumbent Peter Obi (opposition APGA) declared winner 7 Feb; marred by allegations of serious irregularities. Niger Delta violence at relative ebb, as Delta leaders urged restraint to allow Jonathan to push forward reforms. Previously unknown Joint Revolutionary Council (JRC) announced attacks on Shell pipeline in Rivers State, claimed fighting for “independent Niger Delta”.

- Comment by Louise Arbour and Ayo Obe (Crisis Group), [“Leaderless Nigeria Could Spin Out of Control”](#), *Financial Times*, 1 Feb. 2010.
- [“Nigerian acting president keeps full powers for now”](#), Reuters, 25 Feb. 2010.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°60, [Nigeria: Seizing the Moment in the Niger Delta](#), 30 April 2009.



## Asia/Pacific

### CENTRAL ASIA

- **Kazakhstan** FM and OSCE chair Kanat Saudabaev early month visited U.S., failed to secure support to convene OSCE summit; 2 Feb participated in U.S. "Helsinki" Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe hearing to defend Kazakhstan rights record. OSCE media freedom representative 8 Feb denounced 1 Feb court ruling against 5 opposition newspapers for printing corruption allegations concerning president's son-in-law Timur Kulibayev. Followed by some steps to ease pressure on media: injunction, libel cases against newspapers overturned 9 Feb, investigation into charges against Kulibayev launched 11 Feb; publishing ban for libel imposed Oct 2009 on opposition newspaper Respublica lifted 16 Feb.

  - "Foreign minister's arrival in Washington highlights democratization vs. security debate", EurasiaNet, 1 Feb. 2010.
  - For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°97, *Islamists in Prison*, 15 Dec. 2009.
  
- **Kyrgyzstan** Pursuant to President Bakiev's constitutional amendments, approved by parliamentary committee 26 Jan, Head of State Security Service and brother of President replaced National Guard with elite military unit answering directly to President. Military appeals court 19 Feb upheld Jan 8-year prison sentence for former defence minister and opposition member Ismail Isakov; opposition and supporters, denouncing charges as politically motivated, threatened continued protests. Govt stepped up measures against Hizb ut-Tahrir in capital: 15 alleged members arrested in 8 Feb restaurant raid; 3 women detained for recruitment 11 Feb.

  - "Kyrgyz rewrite leadership succession rules", IWPR, 3 Feb. 2010.
  - For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°176, *Women and Radicalisation in Kyrgyzstan*, 3 Sept. 2009.
  
- **Tajikistan** Parliamentary elections held 28 Feb expected to yield victory for President Rakhmon's People's Democratic Party in vote denounced by opposition, OSCE observer mission as marred by serious irregularities. Campaign against alleged Islamists continued: suspected al-Qaeda member sentenced to 8 years in jail 9 Feb; 4 members of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) sentenced to 8-30 years in jail in northern Sogd region 14 Feb; 12 Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) activists received 8-14 year prison terms in Dushanbe 17 Feb.

  - "Tajik Islamic party puts face-lift to a test", RFE/RL, 22 Feb. 2010.
  - For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°162, *Tajikistan: On the Road to Failure*, 12 Feb. 2009.
  
- **Turkmenistan** President Berdymukhammedov 18 Feb announced readiness to allow registration of other political parties in addition to pro-presidential Democratic Party of Turkmenistan, sole political party since independence. President 1-2 Feb visited France for talks with President Sarkozy, political and business leaders, focusing on energy, economic cooperation, regional security; international rights groups criticised French leadership for failing to press rights concerns.

  - "Le Turkménistan et les droits de l'homme", *Les Echos*, 1 Feb. 2010.

- **Uzbekistan** U.S. Special Envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke completed Central Asia tour 17-21 Feb, stressing countries' strategic role for war effort in Afghanistan. U.S. to resume military education program for Uzbekistan suspended after 2005 Andijan massacre. Closed trials began 11 Feb of 15 suspects of July-Aug attempted murder of Tashkent chief imam and murder of anti-terrorism officer; 25 men went on trial 16 Feb in north-eastern city Jizak for religious extremism. Court 10 Feb found artist Umida Ahmedova guilty of defamation against Uzbek nation for work presenting local customs.

  - "Uzbek photographer convicted as 'warning to others'", IWPR, 11 Feb. 2010.
  - For latest report, see Group Asia Report N°183, *Migrants and the Economic Crisis*, 5 Jan. 2010.

### NORTH EAST ASIA

- **North Korea** In highest ranking UN visit since 2004, UN USG Pascoe travelled to NK 9-12 Feb, reported plans for further discussions, said Pyongyang would rejoin 6 Party Talks if sanctions lifted and peace talks to formally end Korean war commenced. Chinese envoy Wang Jiarui visited 9 Feb to press for resumption of NK nuclear programme negotiations; NK PM Kim Yong Il returned visit 23 Feb, meeting with President Hu Jintao. But NK 20 Feb vowed to bolster nuclear force unless U.S. dropped "hostile" policy. NK PM Kim Yong Il made rare public apology in Jan for Dec currency revaluation that sparked social unrest. U.S. human rights campaigner Robert Park returned home 7 Feb after 43 days of detention for entering NK illegally. NK 20 Feb declared 4 areas near disputed sea border naval firing zones in preparation for naval exercise, 22 Feb proposed military talks with S Korea in March.

  - "Kim Jong-il birthday overshadowed by health and economic fears", *Guardian*, 16 Feb. 2010.
  - For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°179, *Shades of Red: China's Debate over North Korea*, 2 Nov. 2009.
  
- **Taiwan Strait** China-U.S. relations continued to strain over Jan U.S.-Taiwan deal. Beijing 1 Feb accused U.S. of "cold war thinking". Taiwan military 5 Feb confirmed purchase of several helicopters from German manufacturer Eurocopter. Taiwan 25 Feb announced talks with China expected March aiming to increase direct cross-Taiwan strait flights between countries.

  - "Chinese media accuses U.S. of 'cold war thinking' over Taiwan arms deal", *Guardian*, 1 Feb. 2010.

Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°100, *The Iran Nuclear Issue: The View from Beijing*, 17 Feb. 2010. China lacks the West's urgency about the Iran nuclear issue and insists more diplomacy is the key to a peaceful solution. It will probably pursue a delay-and-weaken strategy on sanctions, but if isolated in the Security Council, it is likely to avoid a veto and focus on ensuring punitive measures will not harm its interests.



### SOUTH ASIA

- **Afghanistan** ISAF 13 Feb launched largest military operation in Afghanistan since 2001: 15,000 mainly U.S. and UK troops deployed to Helmand province in Taliban strongholds Marja, Nad Ali. ISAF claimed Taliban resistance initially minimal, but increasingly stronger; 18 Feb said "another month"

needed to fully secure areas. Afghan parliament condemned “unjustifiable” civilian deaths in operation after at least 39 killed in ISAF attacks during month. At least 17 killed, including 10 Indians, in string of Taliban 26 Feb Kabul attacks. U.S. 16 Feb confirmed Taliban no 2 Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, 3 other Taliban commanders captured inside Pakistan. Taliban 5 Feb rejected peace talks with govt, denied unofficial talks already ongoing. 10 Feb UN report said opium cultivation likely to remain unchanged during 2010; cultivation has decreased significantly 2007-2009.

- “With Marja largely won, marines try to win trust”, *New York Times*, 28 Feb. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°96, *Afghanistan: Elections and the Crisis of Governance*, 25 Nov. 2009.

➡ **Bangladesh** Police 12 Feb detained some 300 suspected Jamaat-e-Islami militants after early month clashes between rival political student groups left at least 2 dead; dozens injured following violent Dhaka protests. Main opposition party BNP returned to parliament 13 Feb, ending boycott in effect since June 2009.

- “Bangladesh law and order problems centre on campuses”, Reuters, 11 Feb. 2010.

Crisis Group Asia Report N°187, *The Threat from Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh*, 1 March 2010. The Bangladesh government has taken steps to dismantle the terrorist group Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), but it should not take its demise for granted: the organisation is regrouping and the possibility of another attack is increasing.



➡ **Kashmir** Early month violent demonstrations across Kashmir over alleged killing of 2 teenagers by police, paramilitary troops in separate incidents; govt 4 Feb imposed curfew across valley, 13 Feb suspended 14 paramilitary troops suspected of 2nd killing. Army 15 Feb killed 3 militants in Kulgam district. India, Pakistan Foreign Secretaries 25 Feb in 1st official meeting since Nov 2008 Mumbai attacks; India said meeting positive, but not ready to resume formal peace talks.

- “Street riots greet Kashmir peace talks”, *Guardian*, 21 Feb. 2010.

➡ **India (non-Kashmir)** At least 16 killed in 13 Feb Pune blast, little-known Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba Al Alami militant group claimed responsibility; 1st major act of terrorist violence since Nov 2008 Mumbai attacks. Maoists 16 Feb killed at least 24 paramilitary troops and burnt down army camp in West Bengal; 18 Feb killed 11 villagers in Bihar. Maoist leader Koteswara Rao 1 Feb said open to talks with govt if 4 top imprisoned Maoist commanders released. 400-strong separatist Assamese KLNLF militant group surrendered 11 Feb, ending 15-year campaign for Assam independence.

- “Not a dinner party”, *Economist*, 25 Feb. 2010.

➡ **Nepal** Royalist RPP-Nepal party launched general strike 22 Feb in Kathmandu, Bkaktapur and Lalitpur, demanding plebiscite on reinstatement of monarchy; 1st royalist strike since monarchy abolished 2008, no violence reported. VP Jha sworn in 7 Feb after taking oath in Nepali and Maithili languages; Supreme Court Aug ruled his previous oath in Hindi unconstitutional. Senior NC party leader 19 Feb said NC will create own paramilitary force if violence by Maoists does not stop. Maoists 20 Feb rejected Indian claims that Maoist leader

Prachanda had met with Indian Maoist leader Kobad Ghandy.

- “A Himalayan task”, *Times of India*, Feb 6. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°184, *Nepal: Peace and Justice*, 14 Jan. 2010.

➡ **Pakistan** Govt, U.S. 10 Feb claimed Pakistani Taliban leader Hakimullah Mehsud killed by wounds from Jan U.S. drone strike; Taliban yet to officially confirm. Heavy Taliban-army fighting in Bajaur district continued; military 7 Feb claimed capture of major Taliban Bajaur base. UN 9 Feb called for US\$537m in aid for more than 1m still displaced by fighting in northeast. 7 killed, including 3 U.S. soldiers, in 3 Feb Lower Dir Taliban suicide blast. 25 killed 5 Feb in 2 Karachi blasts targeting Shia religious procession, Taliban claimed responsibility. Karachi clashes between rival political and ethnic groups continued, at least 8 killed early month. Govt-judiciary tensions continued as Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry 13 Feb rejected 2 Supreme Court nominees by President Zardari; Zardari 17 Feb withdrew nominations. U.S. President Obama 1 Feb proposed US\$1.2bn in 2010 military aid to Pakistan, \$500m increase from 2009.

- “Pakistani backs down in conflict with judge”, *New York Times*, 17 Feb. 2010.

Crisis Group Asia Report N°185, *Reforming Pakistan's Civil Service*, 16 Feb. 2010. If Pakistan's deteriorating civil service is not urgently repaired, public disillusionment and resentment could be used by the military to justify another spell of authoritarian rule.



➡ **Sri Lanka** Turbulent fallout from Jan presidential elections continued: defeated opposition candidate Sarath Fonseka 8 Feb said willing to testify against govt in any international war crimes investigation. Fonseka arrested hours later for “plotting against govt” while serving as army commander. Buddhist and Christian clergy criticised arrest; protests over following days led to violent clashes with police, govt supporters. Govt also dismissed 14 top army officers, arrested at least 37 soldiers with ties to Fonseka. Fonseka 16 Feb filed petition to Supreme Court over alleged vote rigging by govt in Jan elections. President Rajapaksa 9 Feb dissolved parliament, announced 8 April general elections. Opposition parties jointly backing Fonseka weakened by his arrest, will contest parliamentary polls separately. Some 100,000 IDPs still in camps in north after govt missed self-imposed 1 Feb deadline to close all camps; govt said all will be released by April when demining process finished. EC 15 Feb confirmed will withdraw GSP+ trade concession to Sri Lanka in 6 months if govt does not address human rights concerns.

- “Lock up the losers”, *Economist*, 11 Feb. 2010.

Crisis Group Asia Report N°186, *The Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora after the LTTE*, 23 Feb. 2010. Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora groups should move away, once and for all, from the failed agenda of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and instead put their energies into the quest for a sustainable and just peace in a united Sri Lanka.



## SOUTH EAST ASIA

➡ **Indonesia** Police officer killed 15 Feb in Puncak Jaya, Papua; local bupati (regent) claimed killing not related to Free Papua

Movement, police say otherwise; second killing in province this year after bus driver killed 27 Jan. 11 Feb murder of TV reporter followed by violent protests in Jayapura. Victor Kasiepo, spokesperson for West Papua Peoples Front, died of natural causes 31 Jan in home in Netherlands. 2 killed, 4 arrested 23 Feb during police raid on militant training camp in Aceh Besar; group's affiliation unknown. Terrorism court hearings continued in Jakarta as Amir Abdillah, Noordin Top's alleged driver, charged under anti-terror law, appeared in court 10 Feb. Saudi national Al Khelaiw Ali Abdullah, charged with financing July 2009 bombings, appeared in court 23 Feb. Human Rights Commission 9 Feb concluded report on investigation into 2004 death of rights activist Munir Said Thalib, stating police, prosecutors and judges performed poorly. Former head of Anti-corruption commission Antasari Azhar sentenced 11 Feb to 18 years for involvement in murder of businessman Nasrudin Zulkarnaen; 3 others also convicted.

- ["Obama has the power to help Papua, the 'weak man' under Indonesian rule"](#), *Jakarta Globe*, 21 Feb. 2010.

- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°95, [Indonesia: Noordin Top's Support Base](#), 27 Aug. 2009.

➡ **Myanmar/Burma** Following 15-19 Feb visit, UN special rapporteur on human rights in Myanmar Tomas Ojea Quintana said human rights situation remained serious; Quintana denied access to opposition NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi during visit. NLD deputy leader U Tin Oo released 14 Feb after nearly 7 years in prison and house arrest. NLD 10 Feb said Suu Kyi had not yet decided whether party would participate in elections scheduled for this year; junta leader Than Shwe 12 Feb insisted elections would take place "soon"; some analysts expect late 2010. Supreme Court 26 Feb rejected Suu Kyi's latest appeal against her extended house arrest. Democracy campaigner and U.S. citizen Nyi Nyi Aung sentenced to 5 years prison 10 Feb on charges including carrying false identity card; U.S. embassy urged release, saying charges "politically motivated". Thai govt 8 Feb suspended planned return of 1,700 Karen refugees to Myanmar amid international concern for their safety.

- ["Elections mean nothing to Myanmar's ethnic armies"](#), Reuters, 10 Feb. 2010.

- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°177, [China's Myanmar Dilemma](#), 14 Sept. 2009.

➡ **Papua New Guinea** 16 killed in late Jan, early Feb tribal violence in Southern Highlands Province, Port Moresby outskirts; violence reportedly related to land disputes over liquefied natural gas project under construction. Local media said 300 armed villagers clashed with police near project 6 Feb; no reported casualties.

- ["Clan killings at Papua New Guinea gasfields"](#), *Australian*, 4 Feb. 2010.

➡ **Philippines** MILF 17 Feb rejected govt's Jan power-sharing proposal, stating draft "comprehensive compact" agreement unacceptable; talks to continue, but MILF chief negotiator said agreement unlikely before President Arroyos's term ends 30 June. Official campaigning for presidential election began 9 Feb, with police preparing for increase in electoral violence. 196 additional suspects, including Andal Ampatuan Sr, charged with murder 9 Feb for Nov Maguindanao massacre. Former Maguindanao police chief, implicated in massacre and detained Dec for firearms possession, escaped Kudarat jail 16 Feb. Former bodyguard of Ampatuan Jr killed 12 Feb

while attempting to kidnap daughter of Maguindanao governor candidate Esmael Mangudadatu. Hostilities between govt and New Peoples Army (NPA) continued; 14 soldiers killed 10 Feb in Mountain and Kalinga provinces; further 3 killed in other attacks. Govt made series of NPA-related arrests including 43 arrested 6 Feb for collaborating with group; international media claimed suspects are aid workers. 6 Abu Sayyaf militants, including commander Albader Parad, and 1 marine killed during 21 Feb clash in Jolo; followed 20 Feb arrest of Abu Sayyaf officer Mujibar Alih Amon. 11 people killed 27 Feb in Basilan in alleged Abu Sayyaf revenge attack.

- ["Abu Sayyaf commander killed in Philippines raid"](#), BBC, 21 Feb. 2010.

- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°98, [The Philippines: After the Maguindanao Massacre](#), 21 Dec. 2009.

➡ **Thailand** Supreme Court 26 Feb seized US\$1.4bn of US\$2.3bn in assets belonging to former PM Thaksin frozen after 2006 coup; court accused Thaksin of abusing power while PM to benefit his companies. 2 grenades exploded in Bangkok 27 Feb; PM Abhisit said "bomb incidents were expected" after verdict. Security beefed up ahead of decision in Bangkok and provinces believed to be strongholds of Thaksin supporters ("red shirts"). Violence and protests ahead of ruling: grenades exploded near govt offices 13 Feb; police defused C-4 bomb at Supreme Court 14 Feb; at least 1,500 pro-Thaksin demonstrators in Bangkok rallied outside Bangkok Bank, blocking traffic on busy business street 19 Feb. Cambodia 15 Feb said it may seek intervention of ICJ or UNSC to settle border dispute with Thailand over land near Preah Vihear temple.

- ["Verdict on Thaksin billions unlikely to heal divide"](#), BBC, 26 Feb. 2010.

- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°181, [Southern Thailand: Moving towards Political Solutions?](#), 8 Dec. 2009.

➡ **Timor-Leste** Country's first anti-corruption commissioner, lawyer Aderito de Jesus Soares, appointed early month; Soares 6 Feb called for campaign to change public attitudes about corruption. Defence lawyers 15 Feb said new evidence undermined prosecution case against 28 people accused of Feb 2008 attack on President Ramos-Horta and PM Gusmao. UNSG Ban 18 Feb expressed concern about fragile security and justice institutions. UNSC 26 Feb extended UNMIT mandate until Feb 2011 and endorsed gradual drawdown of international police presence.

- Comment by Cillian Nolan (Crisis Group), ["Is Policing in Timor-Leste a Spectator Sport?"](#), Lowy Interpreter, 24 Feb. 2010.

- ["QC slams Ramos-Horta assassination case"](#), ABC, 15 Feb. 2010.

- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°180, [Handing Back Responsibility to Timor-Leste's Police](#), 3 Dec. 2009.



## BALKANS

➡ **Bosnia** Relations between Republika Srpska (RS) and OHR continued to deteriorate as RS parliament 10 Feb passed controversial draft referendum law allowing for vote on OHR-

imposed decisions, despite EU, U.S. opposition. 8 Bosniak MPs in RS parliament 22 Feb exercised right to veto, citing threat to vital national interests, sending law to constitutional court for review; constitutional court likely to approve law. RS PM Dodik 9 Feb said draft law not aimed at secession or violating Dayton. High Representative Inzko 11 Feb warned referendum law was pushing RS "into isolation". Peace Implementation Council (PIC), meeting 24-25 Feb, voiced dissatisfaction with BiH's efforts to meet conditions for OHR closure. 8 men, including alleged Wahhabi leader Nusret Imamovic, arrested during 2 Feb police raid on Gornja Maoca, isolated Wahhabi village in northern BiH. Hague war crimes trial of Radovan Karadzic resumed 1 March ending 4-month delay. Serbia, BiH fully normalised diplomatic relations 9 Feb, ending 3-year impasse (see Serbia).

- ["For Bosnia's Dodik, referendum law means it's make-or-break time"](#), RFE/RL, 11 Feb. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°57, [Bosnia's Dual Crisis](#), 12 Nov. 2009.

➡ **Kosovo** As Kosovo prepared to mark 2nd anniversary of independence declaration 17 Feb, International Steering Group (ISG) 8 Feb unanimously backed International Civilian Office (ICO) and Kosovo govt plan to integrate north, dismantle Belgrade-backed parallel structures; ICO head Peter Feith 16 Feb promised further consultation with Belgrade. Speaker of Kosovo Assembly Jakup Krasniqi 10 Feb warned that if Serbs in northern Kosovo wished to "secede", then ethnic Albanians in southern Serbia "are ready to join Kosovo"; Belgrade condemned statement as "warmongering". Following final Supreme Court verdict, Central Election Commission 18 Feb announced plans to hold 3rd round of mayoral elections in Gjilan municipality on 14 March; followed dispute between Central Election Commission and Election Commission for Appeals and Complaints over alleged irregularities in Dec 2nd round. KFOR 31 Jan announced it had downsized presence from 14,000 to 10,000 troops.

- ["Imposing integration in Kosovo"](#), ISN, 1 March 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°56, [Kosovo: Štrpce, a Model Serb Enclave?](#), 15 Oct. 2009.

➡ **Macedonia** UN envoy for Athens-Skopje name dispute Matthew Nimetz visited Skopje and Athens for late month talks, called on parties to "speed up" negotiations. Greek PM Papandreou 4 Feb accepted in principle invitation from Macedonian PM Gruevski for meeting to discuss dispute.

- ["Skopje prepares for fresh round of name talks"](#), Balkan Insight, 22 Feb. 2010.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°52, [Macedonia's Name: Breaking the Deadlock](#), 12 Jan. 2009.

➡ **Serbia** Serbia 9 Feb announced it had fully normalised relations with Bosnia, frozen since Belgrade rejected Bosnia's ambassador 3 years ago. 1 policeman seriously injured in 14 Feb bomb explosion in Bujanovac, Albanian-majority areas in south; police called blast a "terrorist attack". Police 23 Feb conducted search of Ratko Mladic's Belgrade family home aimed at disrupting his financial support network.

- ["At last, good news from the Balkans"](#), *New York Review of Books*, 9 Feb. 2010.

## CAUCASUS

➡ **Armenia/Turkey** Armenian President Sarkisian 12

Feb submitted Oct 2009 rapprochement protocols with Turkey to parliament, demanding Turkish parliamentary approval before Armenia ratifies. Armenian parliament 25 Feb passed amendments to law on international treaties, facilitating withdrawal from protocols in event of delays in Turkey's ratification. Turkish President Gül 11 Feb reaffirmed commitment to protocols but head of parliamentary Foreign Affairs Commission 23 Feb said ratification "very difficult", repeated demands to Armenia for border recognition and withdrawal from Azerbaijani territory. Turkey early month denounced U.S. House Foreign Relations Committee plans to hold 4 March vote on resolution, introduced 1 year ago, urging President Obama to recognize Ottoman killings of Armenians as genocide. U.S. Deputy Sec State Steinberg 4 Feb met with President Sarkisian, 5 Feb with Turkish FM Davutoglu and Azerbaijani President Aliyev.

- ["Armenia and Turkey: Washington getting more involved in reconciliation process"](#), EurasiaNet, 19 Feb. 2010.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N° 199, [Turkey and Armenia: Opening Minds, Opening Borders](#), 14 Apr. 2009.

➡ **Armenia** Armenian investigation into 10 Jan parliamentary bi-election, condemned by opposition and observers as fraudulent, concluded 19 Feb, finding no evidence of wrongdoing. Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe early month stated intention to raise case of jailed opposition member and losing candidate Nikol Pashinian during spring visit to Yerevan.

- ["Armenian official criticizes PACE envoys"](#), RFE/RL, 11 Feb. 2010.

➡ **Azerbaijan** Parliament 12 Feb passed amendments to media law, approved in March 2009 referendum, banning unauthorized image and voice recordings; move denounced by opposition, media as restricting freedom of expression, facilitating intimidation of journalists. 15 people detained 13 Feb after police clashed with authorised Shiite Muslim procession during annual religious observance day.

- ["New Azeri law enrages journalists"](#), IWPR, 19 Feb. 2010.

➡ **Chechnya (Russia)** 5 federal servicemen, 6 insurgents killed 4-5 Feb in fighting southwest of capital Grozny. In move seen as conciliatory towards rights activists, Chechen President Kadyrov 15 Feb withdrew libel case against independent newspaper Novaya Gazeta.

- ["Kadyrov and rights activists struggle to find common ground amid killings of civilians"](#), EDM, 16 Feb. 2010.

➡ **North Caucasus (non-Chechnya)** Magomedislam Magomedov took office 20 Feb as president of Dagestan following 8 Feb proposal by Russian President Medvedev; pledged to end violence, pardon rebels who put down arms. Rise in violence over month. Several incidents in Ingushetia; 2 killed, 28 injured in 19 Feb blast in Nazran, including 2 top law enforcement officials; Interior Ministry shelled 1 Feb, killing 1 police officer. In Dagestan: 2 civilians shot in western town of Khasavyurt 20 Feb; 2 policemen killed at checkpoint in central Dagestan 19 Feb; Makhachkala police chief and 3 officers killed 5 Feb; head of counterterrorism dept killed 5 Feb. Federal Security Service (FSB) in Dagestan reported prominent militant field commander and alleged Al-Qaeda operative Seyf Islam killed 2 Feb. Russian security forces claimed at least 20 militants killed in 11-12 Feb operation in Ingushetia; rights groups asserted at least 4 were civilians.



- “Despite official PR, North Caucasus situation remains volatile”, EDM, 11 Feb. 2010.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°192, *Russia’s Dagestan: Conflict Causes*, 3 June 2008.

➔ **Georgia** Abkhaz de facto President Bagapsh 17 Feb signed military cooperation deal in Moscow allowing Russia to station military base with at least 3,000 troops in Abkhazia and police de facto border with Georgia for at least 49 years. Georgia decried deal as violation of Aug 2008 6-point ceasefire agreement signed between Russia, Georgia. France 8 Feb announced readiness to sell 1 or more Mistral warships to Russia in unprecedented deal entailing significant upgrade of Russian military deployment capability. Move met with resistance by NATO East European allies but no formal objection by Alliance. Georgian President Saakashvili 17 Feb said agreement a matter of serious concern, will take up issue with President Sarkozy. Russia, South Ossetia (SO) 1 Feb negotiated visa-free travel agreement effective 1 March.

- “Russia gains military base in Abkhazia”, RFE/RL, 17 Feb. 2010.

Crisis Group Europe Report  
N°202, *Abkhazia: Deepening Dependence*,  
26 Feb. 2010. In the eighteen months since Russia recognised it as independent from Georgia, small but strategic Abkhazia has become increasingly dependent on its giant patron.

➔ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** Azerbaijani FM 15 Feb in unprecedented statement endorsed “in general” updated version of reconciliation framework, so-called “basic principles”, as proposed by Minsk group co-chairs Dec 2009; FM still ruled out possibility for N-K’s de jure secession, prompting Armenian FM accusation of obstructionism. Azerbaijan 18 Feb reported 3 soldiers killed, 1 wounded after exchange of fire with Armenian forces along line of contact in N-K; N-K military officials denied charges, reaffirmed commitment to ceasefire.

- “Baku promotes stability in the South Caucasus”, EDM, 23 Feb. 2010.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°55, *Nagorno-Karabakh: Getting to a Breakthrough*, 7 Oct. 2009.

## EASTERN EUROPE

➔ **Belarus** Relations with EU deteriorated over month after crackdown on Union of Poles in Belarus (ZPB), organisation representing 400,000-strong Polish minority. Poland responded with diplomatic offensive, threatened visa ban for Belarusian officials. EU High Rep Ashton in 16 Feb declaration denounced crackdown, threatened to withdraw EU engagement offer. EU Foreign Affairs Council 22 Feb expressed concern, noted setback in relations with Belarus. 1 Feb Presidential decree due to enter into force 1 July requires internet cafés to demand identification for entrance, internet providers to store data on individuals’ usage, block access to websites on govt request; decree denounced by activists, EU as violating media freedoms.

- “Belarusian crackdown on Polish minority puts EU relations at risk”, RFE/RL, 17 Feb. 2010.

➔ **Moldova** In review of policy toward frozen Transdnistria conflict, EU Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) 22 Feb adopted conclusions denouncing continued absence of political settlement, restricted freedom of movement, calling for resumption of 5+2 settlement talks. FAC extended visa

ban against Transdnistrian leaders by 12 months until Feb 2011, but suspended implementation until end Sept to encourage progress. Transdnistrian leader Smirnov mid-month announced readiness to host Russian tactical missiles in response to Romanian agreement early month to accept deployment of U.S. interceptor missiles.

- “Transdnistrier ready to host Russian missiles if asked”, RFE/RL, 15 Feb. 2010.

➔ **Ukraine** Following polls praised as “professional, transparent, and honest” by OSCE, international observers, election commission 14 Feb declared Viktor Yanukovich winner of 7 Feb presidential election run-off. West, including U.S., NATO and EU leaders, congratulated Yanukovich. PM Tymoshenko, losing by 3.5 percentage points, refused to concede, insisting elections fraudulent, but dropped legal challenge 20 Feb. Pro-Yanukovich block in parliament 19 Feb tabled draft resolution for no-confidence vote against govt following Tymoshenko’s refusal to step down voluntarily after president-elect 10 Feb demanded her resignation from PM post.

- “Mixed blessing”, *Economist*, 25 Feb. 2010.

## WESTERN EUROPE/MEDITERRANEAN

➔ **Basque Country (Spain)** Suspected ETA military head Ibon Gogeochea Arronategui arrested in France 28 Feb. Rufino Etxeberria, leading member of ETA political wing, 21 Feb announced plans to end “any armed activity by ETA”. Portuguese police seized half tonne of explosives and bomb-making equipment allegedly belonging to ETA 6 Feb.

- “Spain says it arrested Basque militant leader”, *New York Times*, 28 Feb. 2010.

➔ **Cyprus** UNSG Ban 2 Feb ended 3-day visit with no significant breakthrough in progress towards unity deal. 4 Greek Cypriot political parties boycotted 1 Feb reception for Ban after he visited Turkish Cypriot leader Talat at his presidential office in northern Cyprus rather than official residence as originally planned; UNSR Downer downplayed venue change as having “no political significance”. Greek Cypriot Movement for Social Democracy (KS-EDEK) party 8 Feb announced withdrawal from ruling coalition, accusing Greek Cypriot leader Christofias of making “concessions” to Turkish Cypriot’s during recent talks; main coalition partner DIKO party 23 Feb voted to stay in govt. Greek Cypriot parliament 18 Feb adopted resolution opposing system of guarantees in any settlement; Talat called move “provocation”; Turkish Cypriot parliament 24 Feb called Turkey’s guarantee “vital and fundamental”. Christofias, Talat 24 Feb met to discuss economy chapter of reunification talks.

- “Cyprus president says will press on with talks”, Reuters, 9 Feb. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°201, *Cyprus: Reunification or Partition?*, 30 Sept. 2009.

➔ **Northern Ireland** Sinn Fein, DUP 5 Feb reached deal over devolution of policing and justice powers, preventing collapse of 2007 power-sharing govt. Agreement creates new post of Justice Minister for Northern Ireland, sets 12 April as date for transfer of powers following N Ireland Assembly vote 9 March. 100kg bomb exploded outside Newry courthouse 22 Feb causing no casualties; no claims of responsibility. Irish National Liberation Army, IRA splinter group, 8 Feb announced it had decommissioned its weapons; came 1 day before expiration of Independent International Commission on Decommissioning

(IICD). 2 men arrested 16 Feb in connection with March 2009 murder of police officer in Co Armagh released 1 day later.

- [“Deal save N. Ireland government”](#), *New York Times*, 5 Feb. 2010.

➡ **Turkey** Army-govt tensions rose sharply after at least 60 high-ranking former and serving military officers detained 22, 26 Feb in connection with alleged 2003 “Sledgehammer” coup plan against AKP govt revealed in Jan; 14 formally charged 24, 26 Feb. State prosecutor arrested 17 Feb in ongoing Ergenekon anti-govt plot case. Opponents of AKP criticised arrest as politically motivated; prosecutor who ordered arrest sanctioned by judicial council. Naval officers among 19 suspects arrested in related case 5 Feb. Kurdish protesters clashed with police in Diyarbakir, Istanbul on 15 Feb anniversary of arrest of PKK armed group’s leader Ocalan; in run-up to anniversary over 80 arrested in south east. Editor of Kurdish paper 10 Feb received 21-yr sentence for pro-PKK content; 16 members of recently banned DTP arrested 3 Feb for alleged PKK links. 6 suspected al-Qaeda members arrested in Adana 3 Feb after shots fired at U.S. embassy. 10 Feb European Parliament report on Turkish EU accession bid criticised failure to open ports to Cyprus, called on Turkey to withdraw troops from Varosha and hand over town to Greek Cypriots.

- [“Turkish court charges 12 officers in coup plot”](#), AP, 24 Feb. 2010.



## Latin America / Caribbean

➡ **Bolivia** President Morales 18 Feb appointed 18 new temporary judges, including to Supreme and Constitutional Courts, after Congress mid-month approved law allowing President to fill vacant seats; Morales claims needed to end paralysis in judiciary, but opposition, legal experts criticised as unconstitutional. Judges due to stand down after Dec 2010 judiciary elections.

- [“Morales posesiona magistrados”](#), BBC, 18 Feb. 2009.

➡ **Colombia** Constitutional Court 26 Feb ruled against allowing referendum on possible 3rd term for President Uribe; Uribe immediately accepted decision, ex-defence minister Juan Manuel Santos to be U Party candidate in 30 May presidential election. FARC 14 Feb killed 4 police, 2 civilians in failed attempt to kidnap Guaviare department governor candidate. Army 2 Feb killed 12 FARC rebels in Caquetá department bombing; 6 Feb killed senior FARC commander “Yerminson” in Meta department bombing. U.S. 2 Feb announced 11% aid cut for Colombia from Oct, mostly in military support, as part of overall reduction in aid to Latin America. 2 Feb HRW report warned new paramilitary groups increasingly active, now number more than 4,000 combatants. Relations with Ecuador improved (see Ecuador).

- [“El Constitucional colombiano cierra la vía a un tercer mandato de Uribe”](#), *El País*, 27 Feb. 2010.
- For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Report N°31, [Uribe’s Possible Third Term and Conflict Resolution in Colombia](#), 18 Dec. 2009.

➡ **Ecuador** President Correa and Colombia President Uribe 23 Feb held 1st official meeting since diplomatic relations broken March 2008; Correa said established road map to normalising

ties. Hundreds of thousands in 11 Feb Guayaquil anti-govt protests over regional budget cuts. Appeal court 4 Feb ruled govt’s Dec 2009 temporary cancellation of pro-opposition TV station Teleamazonas illegal.

- [“Colombia and Ecuador set out road map to normalize relations”](#), Colombia Reports, 23 Feb. 2010.

➡ **Haiti** Govt 9 Feb raised Jan earthquake death toll to 230,000, President Préval 21 Feb said final toll could reach 300,000; more than 1m displaced. Inter-American Development Bank 16 Feb estimated reconstruction cost at US\$14bn; UN 18 Feb launched US\$1.44bn aid appeal. U.S. 13 Feb announced it will cut troops to 13,000 after security situation had stabilised. Opposition during month repeatedly accused Préval of ineffectiveness, passivity in recovery work; called for govt dismissal or formation of consensus govt. Legislative elections remain indefinitely postponed, raising questions of democratic institutions’ legitimacy as parliamentary terms expire May.

- Comment by Bernice Robertson (Crisis Group), [“Haiti’s Women Rise from the Rubble”](#), Daily Beast, 12 Feb. 2010.
- Comment by Donald Steinberg (Crisis Group), [“Haïti, où les meilleures intentions échouent”](#), *Le Figaro*, 1 Feb. 2010.
- [“Haiti’s political solidarity starting to crack”](#), *Miami Herald*, 21 Feb. 2010.

➡ **Venezuela** President Chávez 9 Feb announced “electricity emergency”, signed 60-day decree authorising govt to fine heavy energy users; opposition criticised govt’s 3 Feb appointment of Cuba VP Ramiro Valdés as head of commission to address energy crisis. OAS human rights body IAHR 2 Feb asked govt to investigate “improper use of force” by police during late Jan anti-govt protests that left 2 dead. 25 Feb IAHR report highly critical of deteriorating democratic, human rights situations in Venezuela; Chávez 26 Feb rejected report, announced Venezuela will leave IAHR. Govt rejected Colombia’s 20 Feb claim that FARC commander “Granobles” hiding in Venezuela’s Apure department. Group of independent media outlets 2 Feb criticised Chávez’s increasing erosion of press freedoms.

- [“Venezuela opposition decries appointment of Cuban”](#), Reuters, 4 Feb. 2010.
- For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Briefing N°22, [Venezuela: Accelerating the Bolivarian Revolution](#), 5 Nov. 2009.



## Middle East / North Africa

### EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

➡ **Israel-Occupied Palestinian Territories** Near-daily clashes between Palestinian protestors and IDF in Hebron after Israeli PM Netanyahu 21 Feb added Tomb of Patriarchs/Ibrahimi Mosque and Rachel’s Tomb near Bethlehem to national heritage list. Israeli police, Palestinian protestors clashed at Jerusalem Temple Mount/Noble Sanctuary 28 Feb. PA President Abbas early month sought clarification from U.S. about nature of “proximity” talks with Israel proposed by U.S. in Jan; 15 Feb said he would discuss proposal with Arab League amid reports he is seeking broader Arab backing for any return to talks. UK, Ireland, France Germany and Australia

summoned respective Israeli ambassadors during month after Dubai police said 26 suspected Mossad agents allegedly involved in Jan assassination of Hamas commander travelled on fake European and Australian passports. Palestinian allegedly preparing to attack Gaza Karni border crossing killed by Israeli airstrike 11 Feb. Hundreds attended 5-year anniversary of weekly protests against W Bank barrier at Bilin 19 Feb; Israel 12 Feb began implementing 2-year old Supreme Court order to reroute part of barrier.

- "Can the Islamist tide be turned?", *Economist*, 11 Feb. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°91, *Palestine: Salvaging Fatah*, 12 Nov. 2009.

➡ **Lebanon** Lebanese leaders, including PM Saad Hariri 10 Feb, expressed concerns about threat of war with Israel after Syrian, Israeli officials exchanged harsh warnings early month (see Syria). Hizbollah leader Nasrallah threatened reciprocal action if Israel attacked in 16 Feb speech. Army, UNIFIL protested at 24 Feb Israeli air manoeuvres in Lebanese airspace. Hariri 14 Feb called for new era in Lebanese-Syrian relations at rally by March 14 movement to mark 2005 killing of father Rafiq Hariri, widely blamed on Syria. Nasrallah 26 Feb met presidents of Syria and Iran in Damascus. Arrests of 6 suspected of spying for Israel reported 26 Feb. Severe fighting broke out 15 Feb in Ain al-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp between Fatah, Islamist faction; at least 2 killed.

- "Hariri calls for new era in relations with Syria", *Daily Star*, 15 Feb. 2010.

➡ **Syria** U.S. formally nominated career diplomat Robert Ford as ambassador to Syria 16 Feb; position vacant since 2005 after Syria accused of assassinating former Lebanese PM Hariri. U.S. envoy Burns and senior U.S. counter-terrorism official 17 Feb held "candid" talks with President Assad. Syria, Iran signed bilateral visa-free travel deal during 25 Feb Damascus visit of Iranian President Ahmadinejad. After Israeli Defence Minister Barak 1 Feb suggested all-out regional war possible, FM Muallim 3 Feb threatened response against Israeli cities; Israeli FM Lieberman also threatened retaliation against Syrian regime with war, but spokesman for PM Netanyahu 7 Feb reaffirmed peace talks are Israeli priority. Muallim 20 Feb rejected IAEA call in 18 Feb report for greater access for agency's inspectors.

- Comment by Peter Harling (Crisis Group), "The Middle East's Dangerous Equilibrium", *Foreign Policy*, 23 Feb. 2010.
- "US envoy William Burns says Syria talks were candid", BBC, 17 Feb. 2010.
- For latest reports, see Crisis Group MENA Report N°92, *Reshuffling the Cards? (I): Syria's Evolving Strategy*, 14 Dec. 2009, and Crisis Group MENA Report N°93, *Reshuffling the Cards? (II): Syria's New Hand*, 16 Dec. 2009.

## GULF

➡ **Iran** Govt held large Tehran rally marking 11 Feb anniversary of Islamic Revolution; opposition counter-demonstrations muted after massive deployment of security forces in Tehran, arrests of many activists, journalists in preceding weeks. Opposition leaders Karroubi, Khatami prevented from joining protests by attacks on vehicles. Opposition leader Mousavi 2 Feb said 1979 revolution had not ended tyranny in Iran, called for constitution to safeguard rights. International concerns about Iranian nuclear program heightened by 8 Feb decision

to produce 20% enriched uranium, critical language of 18 Feb IAEA report. U.S. President Obama 9 Feb said international community working towards sanctions; Sec State Clinton and JCS head Mullen toured Gulf and Middle East 14-16 Feb to build support for U.S. position. U.S. 10 Feb extended sanctions on companies linked to Revolutionary Guards. In 23 Feb written response to IAEA on Oct P5+1 proposal, Iran again called for simultaneous uranium exchange on own soil. 4 members of Kurdish armed group Komala 21 Feb killed by security forces in NW Iran. Abdolmalek Rigi, leader of Sunni Baluchi Jundallah armed group, reportedly arrested 23 Feb on Dubai-Kyrgyzstan flight; in 26 Feb televised confession, Rigi claimed U.S. promised support to group.

- "Are they fearless or foolhardy?", *Economist*, 11 Feb. 2010.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°100, *The Iran Nuclear Issue: The View from Beijing*, 17 Feb. 2010.

➡ **Iraq** As campaigning began for early March legislative elections, controversy continued over ban on over 500 candidates identified as Baathist, seen as targeting Sunni, secularist parties. Appeals panel 3 Feb ruled candidates could stand until cases decided. After PM Maliki disputed ruling, panel 7 Feb reversed suspension of ban, agreed to consider banned candidates' appeals before start of campaign; election commission 13 Feb said only 26 out of some 170 appeals successful; rejected candidates included prominent Sunnis Saleh al-Mutlaq, Dhafir al-Ani. Iraqiya bloc suspended campaign for 3 days in protest; Mutlaq initially called for election boycott 20 Feb, but reversed position 25 Feb. Iraqiya candidate killed in Mosul 7 Feb; several bombings targeted election candidates in Baghdad 13 Feb. Govt 25 Feb announced 20,000 Saddam-era army officers to be reinstated. PUK forces in violent clash with opposition Goran movement supporters in Suleimaniya 16 Feb. Scores killed in bomb attacks targeting Shiite pilgrims around Arbain holy day, including at least 41 in Baghdad 1 Feb, over 60 in Kerbala 3, 5 Feb. 11 killed by suicide bomber 18 Feb near govt offices, Ramadi. U.S., Iraqi forces 12 Feb attacked Kataib Hizbollah militants in Maysan province, arresting 12; civilians allegedly among 8 killed. Christians protested in Baghdad, Mosul 28 Feb after 8 Christians killed in series of attacks.

- "Candidates to stay off ballot in Iraq", *New York Times*, 13 Feb. 2010.

Crisis Group Middle East Report N°94, *Iraq's Uncertain Future: Elections and Beyond*, 25 Feb. 2010. The run-up to the Iraqi elections on 7 March has brought to light deep-seated problems that threaten the country's fragile recovery and could haunt efforts to form a new government.



➡ **Saudi Arabia** Yemeni Houthi rebels handed over 3 captured Saudi soldiers to ceasefire committee 15, 18 Feb following truce deal with Sanaa govt (see Yemen); rebels 23 Feb said 2 Saudis still missing were dead. Suspected al-Qaeda militant arrested in Yanbu 12 Feb.

- "Yemen rebels hand over two Saudi soldiers", Reuters, 18 Feb. 2010.

➡ **Yemen** Ceasefire agreed between govt and Houthi rebels following 7 months of heavy fighting in northern Saada region. Dozens killed on both sides in early-month clashes after govt rejected rebels' end Jan truce offer; President Saleh declared

ceasefire from midnight 12 Feb after rebels accepted gov't conditions including withdrawal from positions, release of prisoners, return of captured weapons, removal of roadblocks. Ceasefire held despite killing of 2 soldiers 12 Feb and 16 Feb, attempted shooting of senior gov't official 12 Feb blamed on rebels. Rebels 25 Feb reported withdrawing from Saada city; handed over 3 captured Saudi soldiers 15, 18 Feb (see Saudi Arabia); 16 Feb said pulled back from Saudi border. Unrest in southern provinces of Abyan, Dhali, Lahj, Hadramawt mid-late month followed 13 Feb killing of separatist demonstrator in Lahj; 4 security force members killed in separate attacks in south; over 100 reportedly arrested. Southern separatist supporters held large protest rallies in several cities 27-28 Feb. U.S. 22 Feb approved doubling of military aid for Yemen to \$150m.

- [“Yemen sappers enter Shi'ite rebel stronghold”](#), Reuters, 27 Feb. 2010.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°86, [Yemen: Defusing the Saada Time Bomb](#), 27 May 2009.

## NORTH AFRICA

➡ **Algeria** Head of national police shot dead by colleague 25 Feb. Security forces 2 Feb reportedly killed 7 militants in Djelfa, south of capital.

- [“Algerian police chief assassinated”](#), Reuters, 25 Feb. 2010.

➡ **Egypt** 16 senior members of Muslim Brotherhood, including deputy leader Ezzat, arrested 8 Feb; detained members reportedly charged with forming clandestine militant organisation. Former IAEA head ElBaradei 23 Feb announced formation of organisation to promote constitutional reform after

meeting opposition, civil society members; over 1,000 defied gov't ban 19 Feb to greet ElBaradei at Cairo airport, urging him to run for president in 2011. Dissident Ayman Nour 14 Feb selected by Ghad party as candidate for 2011 presidential elections despite being barred following 2005 election. Makeshift bomb thrown at Cairo synagogue 21 Feb.

- [“Not your average crackdown”](#), *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 18 Feb. 2010.

➡ **Mauritania** Over 60 Islamist militants in Nouakchott prison reportedly agreed to renounce violence, extremism 4 Feb after religious dialogue sessions held with scholars since Jan. Security forces said 2 suspected militants arrested near northern town of Zouerat 12 Feb. Suspect in Nov kidnapping of Spaniards reportedly arrested 22 Feb; Mauritania recalled ambassador from Mali 22 Feb to protest Mauritanian militant release in exchange deal for French hostage (see Mali). Army 26 Feb killed 3 armed militants, arrested 18 in remote north east.

- [“Jailed Mauritanian Salafists declare ‘repentance’”](#), Magharebia, 12 Feb. 2010.

➡ **Western Sahara** UN-brokered informal talks between Morocco and Polisario Front in New York State 10-11 Feb failed to make significant headway; sides agreed to continue negotiations.

- [“Western Sahara talks end without agreement”](#), Magharebia, 16 Feb. 2010.

“For anyone interested in our planet, the publications of ICG are indispensable.”

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

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