

A monthly bulletin by **Crisis Group** on current and potential conflicts around the world

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CrisisWatch:

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

CrisisWatch is compiled by Crisis Group's Brussels Research Unit, drawing on multiple sources including the resources of 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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January 2010 Trends



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February 2011 Watchlist



Conflict Risk Alerts

Côte d'Ivoire
Egypt



Conflict Resolution Opportunities

Egypt

Crisis Group

Crisis Group is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation, with some 130 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict. Crisis Group's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts are located within or close by countries at risk of outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict. Based on information and assessments from the field, Crisis Group produces regular analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international decision-takers, and backed up with high-level advocacy. Crisis Group is co-chaired by former European Commissioner for External Relations Lord (Christopher) Patten and former U.S. Ambassador and Vice Chairman of Hills & Company Thomas R. Pickering, and its President and Chief Executive is former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour.



CENTRAL AFRICA

➡ **Burundi** In New Year address President Nkurunziza said “negotiation” with opposition would raise unnecessary questions over 2010 election process, emphasised official channel Forum for Dialogue to address grievances. Rise in attacks targeting police in Bujumbura Rural province including 7-8 Jan attack on police post in Kanyosha commune, several police killed. Countering persistent claims by authorities that attacks in recent months carried out by “armed bandits”, perpetrators dropped leaflets claiming rebel responsibility during separate 17-18 Jan attack in same commune. Following Dec attempts to play down UN claims that National Liberation Forces (FNL) arming in eastern DRC, FARDC 27 Jan said 6 killed during 25-26 Jan clashes near Uvira in South Kivu triggered by rebel ambush. Govt 7 Jan cancelled \$500mn contract signed 2009 with company AAE systems; followed international pressure and denouncement of contract by main anti-corruption body OLUCOME. Trial concerning April 2009 assassination of former OLUCOME VP opened 19 Jan, adjourned due to procedural issues.

- “Procès: affaire Manirumva devant la cour d’appel de Bujumbura”, *Burundi Transparence*, 29 Jan. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°155, *Burundi: Ensuring Credible Elections*, 12 Feb. 2010.

➡ **Cameroon** Paul Abine Ayah, sole challenger to President Paul Biya’s ruling Cameroon People’s Democratic Movement (CPDM), resigned 3 Jan after receiving death threats. Leader of main opposition party Ni John Fru Ndi 6 Jan for first time visited presidency; move perceived as political appeasement before April presidential election.

- “Cameroon presidential hopeful quits ruling party”, Reuters, 11 Jan. 2011.

➡ **Central African Republic** First round presidential, legislative elections took place 23 Jan without major incident. Ahead of vote President Bozizé 13 Jan appointed 6 rebel leaders as disarmament advisers. No opposition boycott despite memo signed 4 Jan by 4 of 5 presidential candidates alleging biased election commission CEMI, violations of electoral code and lack of freedom of movement due to presence of armed groups. Ahead of official announcement of results 3 candidates 25 Jan declared rejection of results, demanded presidential vote be annulled. International observers reported process acceptable despite organisational problems, minor irregularities. Opposition commissioners on CEMI resigned 27 Jan denouncing irregularities.

- “Vague de démission à la CEI”, RFI, 28 Jan. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°167, *Dangerous Little Stones: Diamonds in the Central African Republic*, 16 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Chad** President Déby 15 Jan declared candidacy for April presidential election. Former head of Chadian Red Cross Yaya Mahamat Liguita appointed 7 Jan as new election commission (CENI) head following late Dec sacking of predecessor accused

of fraud. CENI 13 Jan announced new date for legislative election 13 Feb. During fiftieth anniversary of independence commemoration Déby 12 Jan announced amnesty for 6 former leaders of Union of Forces for Democracy and Development involved in Feb 2008 rebel offensive. Following Senegal’s Dec decision to cancel trial of former Chadian President Habré, UN Committee Against Torture 12 Jan issued letter reminding Senegal of obligations; AU 26 Jan announced new plan for Senegalese, African judges to try Habré in mixed court.

- “UN committee against torture calls for prosecution of former Chadian President”, VoA, 19 Jan. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°162, *Chad: Beyond Superficial Stability*, 17 Aug. 2010.

➡ **Gabon** Hundreds took to streets 27 Jan in anti-govt protests, dozens injured during clashes with police. Demonstrators supporting opposition leader Andre Mba Obame, losing candidate in 2009 presidential election that opposition claimed was rigged, who declared himself president on 25 Jan. AU criticised Obame; ruling party cited “attention seeking ploy” ahead of 2011 legislative elections.

- “Gabon police teargas protestors, tensions rise”, Reuters, 27 Jan. 2011.

➡ **Democratic Republic of Congo** President Kabila 20 Jan promulgated new constitution following 15 Jan adoption in parliament. Key amendments include 1-round presidential election instead of 2; new presidential power to dissolve provincial assemblies, revoke governors; prosecutor’s office incorporated under justice ministry. Opposition boycotted parliamentary vote; claimed changes favour incumbent president; Information Minister Lambert Mende 15 Jan dismissed claim, said revision would avoid conflict caused by presidential election run-off. Vital Kamerhe of Union pour la Nation Congolaise 16 Jan called for petitions across country demanding further revision of constitution; opposition delegation 17 Jan met UN SRSG to voice protest. National Assembly 15 Jan approved new electoral commission including 4 members of Kabila’s Alliance de la majorité présidentielle (AMP), 3 opposition. Early Jan incident in Fizi South Kivu between FARDC soldier and civilian escalated into violence; military units went on rampage in Fizi raping more than 60. UN deployed additional troops, 20 Jan called on army to remove commander Lt-Col Kibibi Mutware, recently promoted former CNDP rebel. Reports 21 Jan said Mutware arrested. FDLR 26 Jan attacked Mirangi, Rutsuhuru territory in North Kivu; 6 killed including 2 FARDC.

- “Fractured Congo opposition must unify against Kabila”, Reuters, 21 Jan. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°165, *Congo: No Stability in Kivu despite Rapprochement with Rwanda*, 16 Nov. 2010.

➡ **Rwanda** Military court 14 Jan sentenced in absentia 4 exiled former allies of President Kagame found guilty of threatening state security, promoting ethnic divisions. Former director of external intelligence Patrick Karegeya and former chief of staff Kayumba Nyamwasa received 20 and 24 years; authorities 18 Jan issued international arrest warrants. French prosecutors 25 Jan confirmed transfer to The Hague of executive secretary and International Criminal Court indictee Callixte Mbarushimana, after Oct arrest. Great Lakes conference ended 21 Jan in Kigali with announcement of 2011 Action Plan; prompted speculation of military cooperation between Rwanda, Burundi and DRC to

prevent formation of alleged FDLR-Mai Mai Yakatumba, Cheka-Rwandan exiles rebel alliance in eastern Congo. Kagame met Burundian President Nkurunzima 22 Jan to discuss border security, economic issues. Kigali grenade attack 28 Jan killed 2, injured at least 28; police made 4 arrests. Human Rights Watch 24 Jan annual World Report criticised West's failure to exert pressure on "favourite African autocrats", highlighted Kagame.

- ["Rwanda sentences dissident exiles to long jail terms"](#), BBC, 14 Jan. 2011.

HORN OF AFRICA

➡ **Eritrea** Eritrea reopened mission to AU, following April 2009 withdrawal from organisation in protest at AU call for sanctions over claims Eritrea was supporting Islamist militants in Somalia. Current AU host Ethiopia said Eritrea's return did not change countries' frozen bilateral relations.

- ["Eritrea reopens African Union mission"](#), VoA, 19 Jan. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°163, *Eritrea: The Siege State*, 21 Sept. 2010.

➡ **Ethiopia** Govt mid-Jan released over 400 Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) rebels; move follows Oct agreement between govt and breakaway ONLF faction led by Salahdin Abdulrahman. Mohamed Omar Osman-led ONLF faction reiterated group's intent to continue struggle.

- ["Rebels accuse Ethiopian army of ethnic cleansing"](#), Reuters, 21 Jan. 2011.

➡ **Kenya** Industrialisation Minister and chair of PM Odinga's Orange Democratic Party Henry Kosgey 4 Jan resigned over corruption charges; followed attorney general's 3 Jan decision allowing anti-corruption commission to prosecute. International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor Moreno-Ocampo mid-Dec named Kosgey as 1 of 6 prominent figures responsible for organising 2006-2007 post-election violence. VP Kalonzo Musyoka early Jan undertook visits seeking support of AU members to defer ICC case; claimed South African President Zuma, Ugandan President Museveni responded positively.

- ["Rights watchdog wants Africa to reject move against ICC"](#), East African, 30 Jan. 2011.

➡ **Somalia** Month saw increasingly strained relations between Puntland and Transitional Federal Govt (TFG). Puntland administration 16 Jan criticised TFG, urged UN Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) to "reconsider" its position regarding TFG. Move follows end-Dec approval of 4,000 additional AMISOM troops, and UNSG Ban's 14 Jan call for further support to AMISOM. Reports emerged 20 Jan that former leader of Xe Services, previously Blackwater private military company, involved in anti-terror and anti-piracy training of Puntland forces by Ugandan offshoot of South African company Saracen International. Fighting continued in Mogadishu between govt forces and al-Shabaab including 21-22 Jan clashes which left at least 3 dead, 6 injured. At least 12 killed, more than 30 injured as civilians caught in 31 Jan violence in Mogadishu; details unclear but al-Shabaab not implicated in initial reports.

- ["Blackwater founder said to back mercenaries"](#), *New York Times*, 21 Jan. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°74, *Somalia's Divided Islamists*, 18 May 2010.

➡ **Sudan (Northern)** Darfur saw increased govt confrontation with rebel groups: Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) 20 Jan clashed with rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) on Menawashi-Kidnir road in S Darfur following rebel ambush; 13 rebels, 8 SAF killed. JEM, SLA statement 25 Jan claimed rebels shot down helicopter gunship, many more killed during clashes with SAF near Al Fasher, N Darfur. UN peacekeeping mission UNAMID confirmed SAF 23 Jan arrested 37 during raid of El Fasher Zam Zam IDP camp; said raid violated terms of agreement requiring prior notification to UNAMID of govt action in camps. Former South African President Mbeki, chair of AU High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), 18 Jan called for all rebel groups to join political process on ground. Abyei self-determination referendum to join either North or South did not take place as scheduled 9 Jan due to disagreement over voter eligibility. Unresolved future status of Abyei, including border demarcation, resource-sharing, citizenship issues led to localised deadly clashes 7-9 Jan between rival ethnic Misseriya Arab nomads from North and pro-Southern Dinka Ngok. UN SRSG said although agreement reached 14 Jan succeeded in containing violence, absence of final Abyei settlement risks further trouble. Meanwhile violent suppression of anti-govt protests in Khartoum and elsewhere 29 Jan. Demonstrations in protest at crackdown on political, civic freedoms and rising living costs; commentators say unrest linked to Egypt protests.

- Comment by Zach Vertin (Crisis Group), ["Now the Real Work Begins in Sudan"](#), Huffington Post, 21 Jan. 2011.
- ["Darfur rebels and Sudan army in second clash in week"](#), Reuters, 25 Jan. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°76, ["Negotiating Sudan's North-South Future"](#), 23 Nov. 2010.

➡ **Sudan (South)** Preliminary results from historic 9-15 Jan self-determination referendum indicate 99% vote for secession. U.S. Sec State Clinton, UNSC 18 Jan commended South Sudanese people, referendum commission and bureau; international observers said process free and fair in line with international standards. President Bashir 25 Jan pledged support to South.

- ["South Sudan: a necessary secession"](#), *Economist*, 6 Jan. 2011.

➡ **Tanzania** Police 5 Jan shot dead 2 anti-govt protestors demanding release of leading Chadema opposition figures arrested same day during unauthorised rally in Arusha. Chadema party claims fraud in Oct 2010 presidential elections, corruption in govt.

- ["Police kill at least two at Tanzania protest"](#), AFP, 6 Jan. 2011.

➡ **Uganda** Month saw reports of violence, harassment of opposition candidates, corruption, intimidation ahead of 18 Feb presidential election. High Court 25 Jan threw out opposition's Dec petition for Election Commission to issue voter cards to 4 million newly registered voters saying other identification can be used. Opposition leader Kizza Besigye 12 Jan threatened to pull out of elections if process became "hopeless". Electoral commission chair Badru Kiggundu 19 Jan identified 9 militia groups including "Kiboko squads" and "Black mamba" threatening to disrupt process.

- ["Ugandan parties form militias ahead of poll"](#), Reuters, 19 Jan. 2011.

- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°157, *LRA: A Regional Strategy beyond Killing Kony*, 28 Apr. 2010.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

- ➡ **Comoros** Constitutional Court 13 Jan confirmed ruling party candidate Ikilou Dhoinine winner of 26 Dec presidential election. Despite reports of irregularities and fraud UNSG Ban 18 Jan issued statement commending peaceful conduct, welcomed acceptance of results by all candidates.
 - [“UN chief praises Comoros elections and welcomes acceptance of results”](#), UN News Service, 19 Jan. 2011.
- ➡ **Madagascar** De facto authorities, ex-President Ravalomanana in New Year speeches signalled readiness for compromise on transition govt. SADC mediators 31 Jan presented road map suggesting possible breakthrough in political stalemate. In statements to press Charles Andrianasoavina, leader of March 2009 mutiny which brought de facto leader Rajoelina to power, acknowledged coup was instigated by specially paid soldiers, not due to popular uprising. Ravalomanana 20 Jan lodged complaint with judicial authorities against “authors and accomplices” of 2009 coup.
 - [“Ousted Madagascan president lodges complaint after coup”](#), AFP, 20 Jan. 2011.
 - For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°166, *Madagascar: Crisis Heating Up?*, 18 Nov. 2010.
- ➡ **Zambia** At least 2 people killed 14 Jan in clashes between police and pro-secession activists after authorities banned public meeting on secession in Western Province district of Mongu. Govt 17 Jan said situation returned to normal.
 - [“Poverty fuels secession bid by Western Province”](#), IRIN, 25 Jan. 2011.
- ➡ **Zimbabwe** South African mediators 18 Jan arrived for separate consultations with MDC-M, MDC-T, Zanu PF; said election road map to be guided by revised constitution, including security sector, media and electoral reforms. President Mugabe 23 Jan threatened to dissolve parliament, prepare for elections if unity govt does not agree on poll. Zimbabwe Election Support Network 21 Jan released report claiming 27% registered voters are either dead, aged over 100 years or under 12 months, indicating vote-rigging intentions. Further to PM Tsvangirai’s Dec criticism of heavy state security deployment to rural areas, reports emerged early Jan that soldiers used violence against population in Masvingo province including 30 injured 5 Jan. MDC-T 14 Jan issued statement condemning targeted violence against MDC officials, activists urged SADC, AU and international community to note ZANU-PF crackdown. Attorney General Johannes Tomana 13 Jan denied Dec state media claims that he would establish commission of inquiry to investigate PM Tsvangirai, other MDC officials over U.S. diplomatic cables released by Wikileaks.
 - [“2011 could be politically intriguing”](#), *Zimbabwe Independent*, 6 Jan. 2011.
 - For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°70, *Zimbabwe: Political and Security Challenges to the Transition*, 3 March 2010.

WEST AFRICA

- ➡ **Côte d’Ivoire** Former president Laurent Gbagbo refused for second consecutive month to yield to regional, international pressure to hand over power to Alassane Ouattara, internationally-recognised winner of 28 Nov run-off presidential election. Nigerian FM Odein Ajumogobia 24 Jan said ECOWAS seeking UNSC resolution authorising use of force in last resort. AU 31 Jan named 5-member panel with month-long mandate to find durable solution to crisis. Security situation increasingly volatile as UN OHCHR 26 Jan said more than 260 mainly pro-Ouattara supporters killed in past 2 months, violence becoming more widespread, including 20 women raped in west, ethnic clashes reported in several areas. UNSC 19 Jan approved immediate deployment of 3 helicopters, 2,000 additional peace-keeping troops raising total number to more than 11,000. UNSG Special Advisers on Prevention of Genocide and Responsibility to Protect 19 Jan cited allegations that armed forces, militia groups are recruiting, arming respective ethnic groups; called for urgent steps to avert risk of genocide, protect those at risk of mass atrocities.
 - [“UN’s Ban urges solidarity over Ivorian election crisis”](#), BBC, 30 Jan. 2011.
 - For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°77, *Côte d’Ivoire: Finally Escaping the Crisis?*, 25 Nov. 2010.
- ➡ **Guinea** Newly-inaugurated President Condé 5 Jan completed appointment of ministers; includes himself as minister of defence, technocrat Mohamed Lamine Fofana as minister of mines and Francois Louceny, Condé’s rival in first round presidential election, as minister of state. Colonel Moussa Thiégboro Camara reappointed 17 Jan to lead fight against drug trade, continuing role held in junta administration. Lt-Col Aboubacar Sidiki Diakite 12 Jan announced desire to return from exile seeking pardon for his commanding role in Sept 2009 army killing and rape of civilians during peaceful demonstration.
 - [“Guinean president forms new cabinet”](#), RFI, 5 Jan. 2011.
 - For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°164, *Guinea: Reforming the Army*, 23 Sept. 2010.
- ➡ **Liberia** Political crisis in Côte d’Ivoire continued to cause influx of refugees to Liberia (see Côte d’Ivoire). UNHCR 11 Jan said more than 25,000 in urgent need of protection with hundreds more arriving each day; 25 Jan said camp construction underway to house up to 18,000 refugees. President Sirleaf 25 Jan said situation did not threaten Liberia’s stability. Following Dec allegations that Ivorian ex-president Gbagbo was recruiting former militia in Liberia, reports 6 Jan said scores of fighters from former rebel groups of both countries were being recruited, crossing border. Voter registration commenced 10 Jan signifying start of build-up to October general elections.
 - [“Fear of contagion: trouble is brewing on the two countries’ porous border”](#), *Economist*, 6 Jan. 2011.
- ➡ **Mali** Self-proclaimed al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb member 5 Jan attacked French embassy with explosive device, fired shots at building; 2 Malians injured.
 - [“Mali tries to form bulwark against extremists”](#), *New York Times*, 1 Jan. 2011.
- ➡ **Niger** First-round presidential and legislative elections took place 31 Jan with estimated 50% turnout; peaceful vote despite

19 Jan calls by 10 presidential candidates to dissolve electoral commission, postpone elections after alleged problems with 11 Jan local elections. Early Jan local polls dominated by coalition Coordination of Democratic Forces for Republic (CFDR); unofficial results indicate over 70% lead. Ex-president Tandja's National Movement for Development of Society (MNSD) party and others called for nullification of results citing serious anomalies. Tandja jailed 16 Jan for alleged financial crimes, following 19 Dec lifting of immunity. Junta leader Lt-Gen Salou Djibo 24 Jan rejected calls following talks with candidates. 2 French nationals kidnapped 7 Jan in Niamey, found dead 8 Jan inside Mali border following failed rescue attempts by Nigerien, French forces. 3 Nigerien soldiers, 4 kidnapers also reported killed during rescue attempt; AQIM 13 Jan claimed responsibility.

- "Niger holds peaceful election designed to restore civilian rule", VoA, 31 Jan. 2011.

➤ **Nigeria** Violence flared in north east states. Human Rights Watch 27 Jan reported more than 200 killed in reprisal attacks following 24 Dec bomb blasts in Plateau State capital Jos. Bus carrying Muslim wedding guests attacked 7 Jan by suspected Christians, sparking deadly riots 8-9 Jan between rival groups south west of Jos. Following 18 Jan army confirmation of "shoot-to-kill" orders to maintain control in Jos area, men in uniform 24 Jan allegedly killed 8 protestors calling for removal of soldiers. Suspected Muslim Falani herdsmen 27 Jan carried out simultaneous attacks on 3 villages south of Jos. In Bauchi state at least 4 killed, several churches and mosques burned 27 Jan during clashes between Christians and Muslims in Tafawa Balewa district; authorities said safe detonation of explosive device planted in church prevented widespread devastation 30 Jan. Islamist sect Boko Haram suspected in spate of gun attacks in Maiduguri, Borno state, including fatal shooting of 4 civilians 18 Jan, 23-24 Jan targeted killing of 2 soldiers and 28 Jan assassination of candidate for governor in April elections, 6 others killed. President Jonathan 14 Jan defeated former vice president Atiku Abubakar in People's Democratic Party (PDP) primaries with 77% of votes, confirming he will stand in April presidential election against main rivals Action Congress of Nigeria's Nuhu Ribadu and Congress for Progressive Change candidate General Muhammadou Buhari. Election official killed 17 Jan by angry mob during voter registration. Court 5 Jan charged PDP Senate leader Teslim Folarin with involvement in Dec murder of union leader Lateef Salako after PDP meeting in Ibadan.

- "Nigeria's presidential primary: another term beckons", *Economist*, 20 Jan. 2011.



CENTRAL ASIA

➤ **Kazakhstan** After over a month of confused debate, President Nazarbaev 31 Jan buried referendum idea proposed by parliament that would have paved way for extension of his term for 10 years. Nazarbaev instead proposed early presidential

elections, in unexpected move interpreted by some observers as response to anti-govt demonstrations in Tunisia and Egypt. Jailed rights activist Yevgeny Zhovtis denied parole 18 Jan on grounds he appears impenitent; activists said decision connected to proposed referendum.

- "Nazarbaev scraps Kazakh referendum, calls for early presidential vote", RFE/RL, 1 Feb. 2011.

➤ **Kyrgyzstan** Continued clashes between security forces and militants, with 3 police killed 4 Jan in Bishkek; 2 suspects killed in operation following day. State security officials said militants involved were members of radical Islamist Jaamat Kyrgyzstan and Jaishul Mahdi, groups also allegedly behind recent bombings in Bishkek. National commission inquiry into June 2010 inter-ethnic clashes in south concluded violence caused by "planned large-scale provocation aimed at splitting Kyrgyzstan and undermining the unity of its people", incited by local Uzbek leaders, relatives of former president Bakiev; scolded interim govt for inaction. Report made little mention of prominent Kyrgyz political establishment figures alleged at time to be fomenting violence. Popular ethnic Uzbek religious leader Rashod Kamolov arrested 18 Jan on fraud charges. Leader of banned Hizb ut-Tahrir movement arrested in Jalal-Abad region 11 Jan. Govt 12 Jan said interreligious council to be created to regulate number of religious groups and their activities.

- "Kyrgyz security chief blames terrorist group for recent bombings", RFE/RL, 17 Jan. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°193, *The Pogroms in Kyrgyzstan*, 23 Aug. 2010.

➤ **Tajikistan** Counterinsurgency operations continued in Rasht Valley. 4 Jan raid killed 7 members and apprehended one of group led by former civil war militant commander Ali Bedaki; Bedaki among dead. Media 18 Jan reported authorities conducting operations against another group led by Mukhammadkarim Abrakhimov in Rasht; govt denied. Govt 24 Jan announced had foiled 2 planned car bomb attacks in northern city Khojent. Court 22 Jan sentenced alleged leader of banned Islamist movement Hizb ut-Tahrir, Yusuf Khafizov, to 18 years in prison; 7 other members also jailed. Religious Affairs Committee 10 Jan announced compilation of 52 approved sermon topics to be used by Imams for Friday prayers, angering clerics and members of Islamic Renaissance Party, who claim govt censorship.

- "Tajik forces continue search for militant leaders", RFE/RL, 19 Jan. 2011.

➤ **Uzbekistan** President Karimov visited Brussels 24 Jan to discuss cooperation on Nabucco pipeline with EU, Afghanistan with NATO. Rights groups condemned visit, first since 2005 Andijon massacre; apparently discomfited European Commission President Barroso said human rights issues raised during meeting. EU President Van Rompuy declined meeting with Karimov for "ideological reasons".

- "Uzbek massacre hangs over Barroso-Karimov meeting", EUObserver, 18 Jan. 2011.

NORTH EAST ASIA

➤ **North Korea** Tensions eased on Korean peninsula as Seoul, Pyongyang shifted towards talks. S Korea 20 Jan agreed to hold working-level military talks with North, scheduled for 8

Feb, following series of conciliatory gestures by Pyongyang, including 5 Jan statement calling for “unconditional and early” talks. S Korean President Lee signalled reluctance to reengage with N Korea, saying North appears to be following old strategy of provoking South then requesting talks and aid; indicated only willing to hold higher-level talks when North takes responsibility for Nov shelling of Yönp’yöng Island, March sinking of S Korean warship. Washington called prospect of new talks “a positive sign”, but said North has “a ways to go” before resumption of 6-party talks. Earlier in month U.S. Defence Secretary Gates warned N Korean missile development could pose direct threat to U.S. within five years. In visit to U.S., Chinese President Hu agreed on joint statement expressing concern over DPRK’s uranium enrichment programme. N Korea’s dire humanitarian situation reportedly worsened due to Jan outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease.

- Comment by Stephanie Kleine-Ahlbrandt (Crisis Group), “[Despite Reports, China’s North Korea Policy Stays the Same](#)”, *Huffington Post*, 21 Jan. 2011.
- “[South Korea agrees to low level talks with North](#)”, *New York Times*, Jan 20. 2011.

For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°200, [China and Inter-Korean Clashes in the Yellow Sea](#), 27 Jan. 2011. China is undermining its own security interests by downplaying North Korea’s deadly provocations in the Yellow Sea.

SOUTH ASIA

- ➡ **Afghanistan** President Karzai mid-month delayed planned 23 Jan opening of parliament for 1 month, citing ongoing fraud investigation into Sept vote; later reversed decision. Inaugurating parliament on 26 Jan, Karzai accused foreigners of “interference” in elections. Taliban suicide attacks continued: 29 Jan killed deputy Kandahar governor in Kandahar town; 27 Jan killed 8 in Kabul, attack apparently targeting foreigners; 19 Jan killed 13 in Paktika. 17 killed in 7 Jan Kandahar suicide blast; Taliban claimed responsibility, said target was police commander. Dutch govt 7 Jan announced 545-strong police training mission to south during summer, despite pulling out combat troops 2010. In 11 Jan visit to Kabul, U.S. VP Biden said U.S. troops could stay beyond official pull-out date 2014 if needed.
 - “[Karzai opens Afghan parliament with accusations, calls for unity](#)”, *Washington Post*, 26 Jan. 2011.
 - For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°115, [Afghanistan: Exit vs Engagement](#), 28 Nov. 2010.

- ➡ **India (non-Kashmir)** Supreme Court 14 Jan asked govt to investigate July death of top Maoist commander “Azad”, who rights groups allege was executed in custody by police. Police killed 9 Maoists in 9 Jan Orissa gun battle. Govt 5 Jan stated 2010 death toll highest ever in Maoist insurgency: 1,169 killed, including 713 civilians. Swami Aseemanand, influential ideologue of Hindu nationalist organisation RSS with strong ties to main opposition party BJP, early month allegedly confessed to planning 4 terrorist attacks previously blamed on Muslim groups, including Feb 2007 train bombing on Pakistani border that killed 68. BJP, RSS rejected confession as “coerced”; Aseemanand in custody awaiting trial.
 - “[In the words of a zealot...](#)”, *Tehelka*, 15 Jan. 2011.

- ➡ **Kashmir** Indian Home Secretary G.K. Pillai 14 Jan said govt will cut troop level in Kashmir by 25% over next 12 months as a “confidence-building measure”; Defence Minister A.K. Anthony later clarified reduction only refers to paramilitary forces, not army; separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani said proposal “inconsequential”, demanded full withdrawal.
 - “[India to cut forces in Kashmir](#)”, *Al Jazeera*, 14 Jan. 2010.

- ➡ **Nepal** Following UNMIN 15 Jan ending 4-year mission in Nepal, Maoist party 22 Jan formally agreed to place its 19,000 ex-combatants under control of cross-party committee headed by interim PM Madhav Nepal; UN praised as major step forward in peace process. No agreement yet on integration of combatants into state security forces. All parties agreed on new voting procedure to break 7-month political deadlock and elect new PM, making it mandatory for MPs to vote; Constituent Assembly scheduled first round of new PM elections for 3 Feb.
 - “[Nepal gains control of ex-fighters](#)”, *Al Jazeera*, 22 Jan. 2010.

For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°199, [Nepal: Identity Politics and Federalism](#), 13 Jan. 2011. Federal restructuring of the state has emerged as a major demand of ethnic and regional activists in Nepal.

- ➡ **Pakistan** Punjab governor Salman Taseer murdered by own bodyguard 4 Jan; bodyguard claimed he acted alone, motivated by Taseer’s support for repealing controversial blasphemy law. More than 50,000 people, led by Islamist parties and militant organisations including Jamaat-ud-Dawa, rallied in favour of blasphemy law in Karachi 9 Jan. MQM party rejoined PPP-led govt coalition after PM Gilani 6 Jan agreed to reverse hike on fuel prices; move restored govt majority in parliament, but U.S. Sec State Clinton called economic concession “a mistake”. Suspected Taliban suicide attacks killed 18 in Bannu 12 Jan, 19 in Kohat 17 Jan; Taliban gunmen killed 1 female police officer, 4 others in Hangu 14 Jan. At least 17 killed in clashes between supporters of MQM and ANP parties in Karachi 15 Jan. 16 killed in Lahore and 3 in Karachi in militant attacks on Shia processions 25 Jan. Media NGO 4 Jan reported 8 journalists murdered in Pakistan in 2010, highest single death toll for any country.
 - “[The crumbling centre](#)”, *Economist*, 13 Jan. 2011.
 - For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°196, [Reforming Pakistan’s Criminal Justice System](#), 6 Dec. 2010.

- ➡ **Sri Lanka** UN panel advising on possible war crimes investigation yet to visit Sri Lanka after failing to agree terms with govt; deadline for panel’s report extended to end Feb. Group of Tamil MPs 6 Jan submitted report to parliament on wave of robberies, abductions and killings in north in Dec, Jan; pro-govt paramilitary groups suspected; govt called reports exaggerated. In testimony to govt commission investigating civil war (LLRC), local Mannar bishop said 150,000 disappeared civilians still unaccounted for, criticised continued large military presence in north. Govt announced local council elections to be held 17 March; several smaller Tamil parties will contest jointly with main Tamil party TNA. After 13 Jan meeting with TNA leader, President Rajapaksa said willing to “share powers” with Tamil minority, but did not specify how or time frame.
 - “[Ban’s Sri Lanka war crimes panel stuck in New York](#)”, *Foreign Policy*, 21 Jan. 2010.
 - For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°191, [War Crimes in Sri Lanka](#), 17 May 2010.

SOUTH EAST ASIA

➤ **Burma/Myanmar** New parliament convened 31 Jan, will elect new govt over coming weeks; MPs 1 Feb said junta leader Than Shwe not among presidential candidates, suggesting he will no longer be country's official ruler. Junta 21 Jan named 388 officers to fill 25% of seats allocated to military in upper and lower house and regional, state parliaments. ASEAN FMs 16 Jan called for international sanctions on Myanmar to be lifted, followed earlier similar joint request from main ethnic parties; NDF, DP parties echoed call 20 Jan. EU 19 Jan announced internal review of effectiveness of sanctions, economic impact on population. NGO Physicians for Human Rights 19 Jan reported "widespread human rights abuses" by military in Chin state. Clashes between army and DKBA reportedly intensified in Karen state during month. Supreme Court 28 Jan upheld dissolution of Aung San Suu Kyi's NLD party.

- "Myanmar ethnics, ASEAN call for sanctions lift", AFP, 16 Jan. 2011.

➤ **Indonesia** 3 soldiers 24 Jan jailed for 8-10 months over May torture of Papuan man; rights groups criticised lenient sentence. Soldiers 14 Jan killed 2 Papuans who tried to attack army base in Kabupaten Merauke. Papuan People's Council (MRP) elections, scheduled for 31 Jan, likely to be delayed due to organisational problems and pro-independence groups' resistance to MRP. Terrorism sentences against suspects linked to Aceh training camp discovered Feb 2010 continued. 7 suspects arrested 25 Jan in Central Java for planning bomb attacks against police posts and churches.

- Comment by Sidney Jones (Crisis Group), "Kristenisasi and Intolerance: Another Look", *Jakarta Post*, 19 Jan. 2011.
- "Indonesian military trial angers activists", *New York Times*, 24 Jan. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N° 197, *Indonesia: Preventing Violence in Local Elections*, 8 Dec. 2010.

➤ **Philippines** "Informal" govt-MILF talks held in Malaysia 13 Jan, first meeting since President Aquino took office June 2010. Govt continues to demand allegedly pro-MILF facilitator Othman Razak be replaced, but both sides agreed to resume "formal" peace talks mid-Feb. 16 Dec-3 Jan ceasefire declared between govt and communist New People's Army (NPA) largely respected, but clashes resumed early month: NPA 6 Jan killed 3 soldiers in Davao del Norte; killed 5 police in Rizal 23 Jan; army 5 Jan captured senior NPA commander Tirso Alcantara. Govt and NPA representatives held preparatory talks 14-18 Jan; formal negotiations to start 15 Feb in Oslo.

- "Philippines, Muslim rebels to resume talks", AP, 13 Jan. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N° 103, *Philippines: Pre-election Tensions in Central Mindanao*, 4 May 2010.

➤ **Thailand** Govt commission investigating Apr-May violence 24 Jan delayed report indefinitely, citing lack of cooperation from police and military; echoed by Human Rights Watch 25 Jan. Some 30,000 anti-govt "red shirts" rallied in Bangkok 10 Jan, largest demonstration since May govt crackdown. Police 18 Jan arrested "yellow shirt" leaders Chaiwat Sinsuwong and Somboon Thongburan for involvement in Dec 2008 seizure of Bangkok airport, later released on bail. In south, some 50 suspected Muslim separatists 19 Jan killed 4 soldiers in attack on Narathiwat army camp; 1 killed in 22 Jan Pattani province

attack. Govt 18 Jan extended state of emergency in 3 southern provinces for 3 months, except Pattani's Mae Lan district where law lifted 28 Dec.

- "Thai inquiry into violence falters", *New York Times*, 24 Jan. 2011.

➤ **Timor-Leste** Ahead of Feb UNMIT mandate renewal, govt-UNMIT discussion on handover of security to Timor police continued. Govt 4 Jan criticised leaked UNDP report alleging slow govt progress on poverty alleviation, prosecution of war criminals.

- "East Timor and Asean: new strategic imperatives", *Nation*, 17 Jan. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N° 116, *Timor-Leste: Time for the UN to Step Back*, 15 Dec. 2010.



BALKANS

➤ **Albania** 3 people shot dead, over 100 injured during clashes between police and opposition supporters as thousands joined anti-govt protests 21 Jan. Protests called by opposition leader and Tirana mayor Edi Rama after publication of video reportedly showing former deputy PM Ilir Meta and former economy minister Dritan Prifti discussing corrupt deals. State prosecutor Ina Rana issued arrest warrants for 6 senior members of Republican Guard over protester deaths, prompting PM Berisha to accuse her of helping opposition; warrants yet to be enforced. Parliament 23 Jan ordered probe into violence, Berisha called rally attempted coup. EU and U.S. called for calm, dialogue. Estimated 10,000 28 Jan attended peaceful memorial for those killed. Police 28 Jan arrested 3 suspected of planning assassination of Rama.

- "Albania killings cast shadow over country's EU aspirations", EUObserver, 24 Jan. 2011.

For latest Briefing, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°59, *Bosnia: Europe's Time to Act*, 11 Jan. 2011. After years of hesitancy, European Union (EU) member states should make 2011 the year when the lead international role in Bosnia and Herzegovina shifts from the Office of the High Representative (OHR) to a reinforced EU delegation.



➤ **Bosnia** Ongoing deadlock following Oct elections as winning parties continued to debate coalitions, ministerial posts, reform agendas. Main Serb and Croat parties and Bosniak Union for a Better Future met 10 Jan to discuss possible coalition for new state-level govt; main Bosniak parties refused to attend. Social Democratic Party proposed forming Federation of BiH (FBiH) govt without support of main Croat parties; latter responded by blocking formation of legislative assemblies in 4 cantons, thereby blocking formation of FBiH legislature and govt. High Representative (HR) Valentin Inzko 26 Jan imposed decision on temporary financing to allow entity to operate. Republika Srpska (RS) constitutional court 31 Jan rejected complaint by Bosniak MPs over RS entity govt, allowing Aleksandar Dzombic to take office as PM of RS. HR 5 Jan suspended RS law on status of property, adopted by RS parliament in Sept, pending decision

by state constitutional court. Law stipulates entity will manage all forms of property within its territory; RS President Milorad Dodik said he considers Inzko's suspension void. HR 21 Jan reversed his Sept 2009 decision on Brcko District electrical supply, after RS negotiated compromise with deputy HR and EU officials.

- ["Bosnia mediator slaps interim budget on federation"](#), BalkanInsight, 27 Jan. 2011.

➡ **Kosovo** Following flawed 12 Dec snap parliamentary elections, rerun of vote in 5 municipalities 9 Jan and in Mitrovica 23 Jan marked by low voter turnout, further reported irregularities. Final results give Democratic Party of Kosovo 34 seats out of 120, followed by Democratic League of Kosovo with 27, Self-Determination 14, Alliance for Future of Kosovo 12, New Kosovo Alliance 8, Serb parties 14, other minority parties 11. State prosecution office investigating 133 cases of election violations, mostly Pristina, Prizren, Mitrovica. Several political parties renewed calls for fresh elections throughout country. EUSR Pieter Feith 23 Jan said new govt should exclude individuals who are indicted or under investigation. Newly-appointed leader of Serbia's negotiating team Borko Stefanovic 22 Jan said planned talks with Pristina to include Kosovo status. Council of Europe 26 Jan called for new inquiry into allegations senior KLA leaders involved in war crimes, organized crime and organ trafficking following 1999 conflict with Serbia, published Dec; EULEX late month launched preliminary investigation. PM Thaci under pressure from opposition, Feith and IMF to cancel early Jan decision to increase public sector wages by up to 50%. Govt 11 Jan ordered police to confiscate new Serbia-issued vehicle license plates; apparent informal agreement reached 18 Jan for Serbia to stop issuing plates, Kosovo to stop confiscating them. KFOR 22 Jan handed over control of part of border with Macedonia to Kosovo Border Police.

- ["Thaci 'confident' of forming Kosovo coalition"](#), Balkan Insight, 28 Jan. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°206, ["Kosovo and Serbia after the ICJ Opinion"](#), 26 Aug. 2010.

➡ **Macedonia** TV station A1 27 accused govt of responsibility for court decision to freeze bank account. Opposition parties announced parliament boycott in protest, joining ethnic Albanian opposition DPA which has boycotted since Aug 2009.

- ["Macedonia opposition announces parliament boycott"](#), Balkan Insight, 28 Jan. 2011.

➡ **Serbia** European Parliament approved Serbia's Stabilisation and Association Agreement, important step towards EU membership, and adopted resolution on process of Serbia's EU integration, calling for Belgrade to address judicial reform, corruption, cooperation with ICTY, achieve results in dialogue with Pristina. Ratification included proviso that Serbia must not use upcoming dialogue with Kosovo to reopen status, seek partition.

- ["Serbia welcomes EP ratification of SAA"](#), SE Times, 20 Jan. 2011.

CAUCASUS

➡ **Armenia** President Sarkisian 13 Jan signed controversial amendments to Law on International Agreements, adopted by parliament 17 Dec, allowing Armenian state institutions to establish "legal relations" and sign agreements with unrecognised entities. Deputy FM Shavarsh Kocharian said document

will facilitate international recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh, making it an "international entity" with which Armenia signs "inter-entity" agreements. Parliament's budgetary affairs committee 13 Jan reported national debt tripled from under 15% of GDP in 2008 to 40% at \$3.4bn.

- ["Authorities still sanguine about Armenian debt burden"](#), Armenialiberty, 14 Jan. 2011.

➡ **Azerbaijan** Following Dec Islamist demonstrations against govt ban on wearing hijab in schools, govt began crackdown on Islamic networks, community leaders. Movsum Samadov, head of unregistered Shiite Azerbaijan Islamic Party (AIP) and one of main organisers of Dec protests, arrested 7 Jan, following 2 Jan speech criticizing govt for hijab ban, calling on population to "rise up and put an end to this despotic regime". Samadov sentenced 24 Jan to 3 months pretrial detention on charges of illegal arms possession, inciting terror, seeking to change constitutional system. Samadov's arrest quickly followed by arrests of several dozen AIP activists, some accused of illegal arms possession. Activists said arrests politically motivated, claimed police planted weapons.

- ["Assessing the jihadist threat to Azerbaijan"](#), RFE/RL, 14 Jan. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°207, ["Azerbaijan: Vulnerable Stability"](#), 3 Sept. 2010.

➡ **North Caucasus (Russia)** 24 Jan suicide bomb attack on Moscow airport killed at least 35. Federal Investigative Committee 29 Jan identified 20-year old man from Caucasus as bomber, said attack aimed at foreign citizens. PM Putin rejected negotiations with terrorists, President Medvedev and some senior parliamentarians linked continuing insurgency to social-economic problems. Amid ongoing insurgent attacks in Chechnya, Chechen interior minister Ruslan Alkhanov 18 Jan said 93 militants, including 3 rebel leaders and Arab mercenary, killed in Chechnya in 2010, 202 rebels detained, 40 turned themselves in. Dagestan interior ministry 12 Jan announced Dzhafar Bikmaev, son of chairman of the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Southern Russia Nail Bikmaev, detained 6 Jan, suspected of involvement in "illegal armed formations". Continued deadly militant violence directed at civilians and police in Dagestan, including 26 Jan car bomb killing 4 people in Khasavyurt; several militants killed during clashes with police.

- ["Russia faces multiple terrorist threats"](#), EDM, 27 Jan. 2011.

➡ **Georgia** Govt 15 Jan announced continuation of evictions from Tbilisi of IDPs from Abkhazia and South Ossetia (SO), following first wave June-Aug 2010. Opposition parties voiced support for IDPs, several people protesting evictions arrested 20 Jan after clashes with police. European Court of Human Rights 10 Jan dismissed 1,549 claims relating to Georgia's conduct in Aug 2008 war with Russia, due to applicants' failure to supply requested information. SO claimed decision "unjust". Georgia 17 Jan boycotted closed Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) session on 2008 war, citing PACE's failure to address Russian breaches of its previous resolutions. Reports of Russian deployment of Tochka missile unit in SO. Abkhazia de facto defence ministry 19 Jan launched 2-day training exercise, simulating complete mobilisation of armed forces. SO, Russia 31 Jan launched combined military drills.

- ["Is Georgia ripe for new wave of protests?"](#), RFE/RL, 11 Jan. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°58, ["Georgia: Securing a Stable Future"](#), 13 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** Russian FM Lavrov 13 Jan said Minsk Group mediators trying to find mutually acceptable formulations on remaining “two or three” sticking points blocking agreement on basic principles; 24 Jan mediated meeting between Armenian, Azerbaijani FMs. Armenian president Sarkisian speaking in Cyprus 17 Jan said N-K “has no future within Azerbaijan”. 2 Armenian soldiers reported wounded, 1 killed, and 2 Azerbaijani soldiers reported killed as a result of continued ceasefire violations on line of contact. Sides accused each other of initiating incidents, Armenia claimed Azerbaijan deliberately breaking ceasefire to sabotage international efforts to resolve dispute, boost army morale.

- [“Karabakh deadlock: Future uncertainties”](#), EDM, 20 Jan. 2011.

EASTERN EUROPE

➡ **Belarus** Continued crackdown on opposition activists and supporters, presidential candidates and journalists following 19 Dec protests against rigged presidential election, with KGB and police searching dozens of homes and offices. International condemnation of crackdown gained pace: EU FMs 31 Jan reimposed and expanded travel ban and asset freeze on Lukashenka and other top officials, U.S. confirmed plans to strengthen existing sanctions. Lukashenka 20 Jan said would respond to renewed EU sanctions with “harshes” retaliatory measures; 29 Jan released to house arrest 7 detainees arrested during Dec protests, including former presidential candidate Uladzimir Nyaklyaeu. Russia 20 Jan said will provide loan to Belarus to build first nuclear power plant, said Belarus will continue to receive subsidised oil supplies.

- [“Belarus faces renewed isolation over crackdown”](#), BBC, 27 Jan. 2011.

➡ **Moldova** Parliament 14 Jan approved PM Vlad Filat’s new govt led by re-formed 3-party Alliance for European Integration (AEI); opposition communists boycotted vote. AEI holds 59 out of 101 seats in parliament; Filat 3 Jan said hopes to gain 2 extra votes needed to meet 61-vote threshold needed to elect president. EU 24 Jan gave Moldova “action plan” for visa-free travel for Moldovans within bloc.

- [“Moldova approves western-leaning government”](#), *Financial Times*, 14 Jan. 2011.

➡ **Ukraine** Against backdrop of criminal cases being pursued by state against former PM Tymoshenko and others in her govt for abuse of office during her time as premier, EU Enlargement Commissioner Stefan Fuele 11 Jan said Ukraine should not use criminal law for political ends.

- [“Russian Black Sea Fleet strengthens presence in Ukraine”](#), EDM, 21 Jan. 2011.

WESTERN EUROPE/MEDITERRANEAN

➡ **Basque Country (Spain)** Video released 10 Jan showing masked ETA militants declaring permanent ceasefire; no mention of handing over weapons. Govt rejected ceasefire, saying it did not go far enough. Newspaper *El Pais* 16 Jan reported ETA voted to continue use of violence Nov 2010. Police 18 Jan arrested 10 people suspected of links to ETA support organisations. Anti-terrorist services reportedly identified 50 ETA members residing in Venezuela.

- [“On the verge of a nervous peace”](#), *Economist*, 6 Jan. 2011.

➡ **Cyprus** German Chancellor Merkel 11 Jan visited south of island, angered Turkey by expressing support for Greek Cypriot president Christofias, laying blame for lack of solution with Turkish side. After almost month-long hiatus in reunification talks due to Turkish Cypriot leader Eroğlu’s heart surgery, Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders met 12, 21 Jan to discuss governance and power-sharing, EU matters chapters. Signalling change in Turkish Cypriot position on power sharing, Eroğlu in 15 Jan speech stressed existence of two states, demanded continued Turkish guarantees. In interview with Turkish *Miliyet*, Christofias 7 Jan offered to meet with Turkish officials in Turkey, without demanding recognition for Republic of Cyprus. FM Kyprianou 9 Jan said Nicosia would never agree to Turkey’s EU accession before Cyprus issue is resolved. 26 Jan meeting between 2 leaders and UNSG Ban in Geneva produced no breakthrough; Ban commended progress since last trilateral meeting in Nov, but said more work needed to reach further convergences on core issues. UNSG report to UNSC expected end-Feb on status of reunification talks. Tens of thousands of Turkish Cypriots 28 Jan protested against Ankara-backed govt austerity measures.

- [“Parties unmoved and unimpressed by Geneva meet”](#), *Cyprus Mail*, 28 Jan. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°210, [Cyprus: Bridging the Property Divide](#), 9 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Turkey** Police 5 Jan clashed with students in Ankara protesting against strong police response to Dec student protests. Security forces 13 Jan clashed with demonstrators in southeastern provinces as trial of 150 Kurdish provincial leaders linked to outlawed PKK resumed. In continuing chill in relations with Israel, PM Erdoğan 13 Jan derided Israel PM Netanyahu’s govt as “worst” in history of Israel, called Israel FM Lieberman Israel’s “greatest problem”. Turkey “surprised, appalled and dismayed” by Israel’s 23 Jan publication of report finding no fault in 31 May 2010 killing of 8 Turks and Turkish-American on Gaza-bound flotilla ship; U.S. said report “credible and impartial and transparent”. Police 15 Jan arrested 17 people with suspected links to Turkish Hizbollah after 9 suspected members of group disappeared following 4 Jan release of 18 members of group and 5 PKK members under new law limiting to 10 years time suspects can be detained without sentencing. FM Davutoğlu and Qatar PM al-Thani 20 Jan suspended efforts to mediate Lebanon’s political crisis after 2 days of talks failed to achieve breakthrough (see Lebanon). Deputy PM Ali Babacan 29 Jan warned EU becoming “Christian club”, criticised lack of progress in EU accession.

- [“Turkey slams Israeli flotilla report, issues own”](#), Reuters, 24 Jan. 2011.



Latin America / Caribbean

➡ **Bolivia** 11 Jan report from govt ombudsman highly critical of justice system: 70% of prisoners yet to receive formal charges, many lack access to lawyers; govt rejected report. Mario Cossío, suspended Tarija governor who fled country in Dec after govt launched corruption charges, granted political asylum in Paraguay 18 Jan.

- [“Brasil y Paraguay conceden asilo político a opositores de Evo Morales”](#), *El Pais*, 20 Jan. 2011.

➤ **Colombia** Top FARC commander “Alfonso Cano” 7 Jan said will “redouble” efforts in 2011 while reiterating interest in political solution to conflict; coincided with 7 Jan FARC attack in Caquetá killing 9; FARC 13 Jan attacked house of daughter of Puerto Asís, Putumayo mayor, killing 1. Police 21 Jan said will increase security for victims’s rights activists after 3 NGO workers found dead early month. UN 17 Jan expressed concern over growing violence from paramilitary successor groups after at least 36 people killed in Córdoba department early month; govt deployed 1,300 security forces in response.

- “Los herederos de los paramilitares”, *El País*, 28 Jan. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Latin America Report N°34, *Colombia: President Santos’s Conflict Resolution Opportunity*, 13 Oct. 2010.

➤ **Ecuador** President Correa 17 Jan announced referendum on major constitutional changes, including reforming judiciary, media; opposition and members of ruling AP party criticised, said amounted to “rule by plebiscite” and will sideline Congress; vote likely in May, pending Constitutional Court approval. Govt 19 Jan issued decree placing police force under direct administrative control of interior ministry, following violent Sept police mutiny.

- “Oposición y prensa critican el referendo de Correa”, *Infolatam*, 19 Jan. 2011.

➤ **Guatemala** President Colom 18 Jan extended by 1 month state of siege in Alta Verapaz to combat growing influence of Mexican Los Zetas cartel in region. Corruption trial against ex-president Portillo started 21 Jan. Police said 6,502 homicides registered in 2010, down 6% from 2009; 60% attributed to organised crime.

- “Outgunned Guatemala army extends battle with drug gangs”, *Reuters*, 18 Jan. 2011.

➤ **Haiti** Post-election turmoil continued with uncertainty ahead of 2 Feb release of final results. OAS report leaked 12 Jan noted widespread fraud in Nov vote, recommended exclusion of 51,000 fraudulent votes, eliminating President Préval’s favoured candidate Jude Célestin and putting Mirlande Manigat and Michel Martelly in runoff. Despite intense U.S.-led international pressure, provisional electoral council (CEP) 18 Jan said will not alter official results, despite OAS recommendation. Ruling party Inité 26 Jan announced withdrawal of Célestin, but Célestin himself refused to pull out. CEP 29 Jan announced final results will be released 2 Feb, runoff to take place 20 March. Former dictator Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier 16 Jan made surprise return to Haiti, unclear why. Duvalier 18 Jan charged with corruption, embezzlement during his rule. UN OCHA 6 Jan said it had only received 25% of requested US\$174mn aid to counter cholera epidemic. On anniversary of earthquake, aid groups sharply criticised slow rebuilding process, ineffectiveness of reconstruction commission: 1 million still displaced, only 5% of rubble cleared.

- “Célestin resists calls to pull out of election”, *Miami Herald*, 27 Jan. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Latin America/Caribbean Report N°35, *Haiti: The Stakes of the Post-Quake Elections*, 27 Oct. 2010.

➤ **Mexico** Official figures released 13 Jan put 2010 death toll from cartel violence at 15,273, higher than previous estimates; 42% of deaths concentrated in 4 states. Govt 18 Jan captured Flavio Méndez Santiago, founding member of Los Zetas cartel;

analysts said pointed to changing govt tactic of targeting high-level cartel leaders. Dozens killed in cartel violence in Guerrero ahead of state’s 30 Jan gubernatorial elections. 2 mayors in Morelia, Coahuila towns killed early Jan. Violence continued to rise around Mexico City: 8 killed in suburb Nezahualcóyotl gang shootout 16 Jan.

- “15,273 killed in Mexico drug violence in 2010”, *AFP*, 12 Jan. 2011.

➤ **Venezuela** New National Assembly (NA) convened 5 Jan, depriving President Chávez’s PSUV party of two-thirds majority, but NA’s powers heavily curtailed following enabling law passed Dec that allows Chávez to rule by decree for 18 months. OAS SG José Miguel Insulza 7 Jan criticised law as against OAS democratic charter; Catholic bishops 11 Jan said law opens for “totalitarian state”. Chávez 15 Jan called for dialogue with opposition, said may be willing to give up decree powers in May, but 26 Jan retracted. Following large-scale student protests, Chávez 4 Jan vetoed controversial law increasing govt control of universities.

- “Venezuela’s Chavez may cut short decree rule”, *Reuters*, 15 Jan. 2011.



Middle East / North Africa

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

➤ **Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories** Al Jazeera 23 Jan published leaked internal Palestinian documents related to peace process. PM Netanyahu 31 Jan said he feared Egypt could end up with radical Islamic regime like Iran; agreed for Egyptian soldiers to move into Sinai peninsula for first time since 1979 peace treaty (see Egypt). In Gaza, war of attrition between Israel and Hamas heightened. Number of rockets fired into Israel increased slightly; many now aimed directly at military positions, densely populated areas. IDF increased military activity in Gaza, including 6 Jan shooting of 2 Palestinian men near border and 11 Jan missile strike that killed Islamic Jihad militant. Hamas 13 Jan ordered security forces to ensure other groups in Gaza observe truce on firing rockets at Israel; day earlier factions agreed to “national understanding” on not provoking strong reaction from Israel. Defence Minister Ehud Barak and 4 other Labor party MKs 17 Jan withdrew from party, established centrist faction “Independence”; new faction remains part of coalition, Barak retained defence portfolio.

- Comment by Robert Malley (Crisis Group) and Hussein Agha, “Who’s Afraid of the Palestinians?”, *New York Review of Books*, 20 Jan. 2011.
- “Leaks must not poison diplomacy”, *Economist*, 27 Jan. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°98, *Squaring the Circle: Palestinian Security Reform under Occupation*, 7 Sept. 2010.

➤ **Lebanon** Unity govt collapsed 12 Jan when 11 opposition ministers allied to Hizbollah resigned in dispute over UN Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL); resignations came 1 day after failure of Saudi-Syrian mediation talks. U.S. Sec State Clinton condemned Hizbollah’s withdrawal as “transparent effort...to subvert justice”. STL 17 Jan filed first indictment in assassination of former PM Rafiq Hariri; dossier will be with pre-trial judge for 6-10 weeks. Former PM Hariri 24 Jan said he and his Future Current Movement would not take part in govt headed by March

8 candidate. Hizbollah-backed billionaire businessman Najib Mikati 25 Jan won parliamentary majority; President Suleiman appointed him PM-designate, began formation of new govt. Sunni supporters of defeated candidate Saad Hariri 24-25 Jan held protests across country. UNSG Ban 26 Jan said new govt must honour commitments to STL.

- [“Blazing cedars: Political shambles in Lebanon: no need to worry”](#), *Economist*, 27 Jan. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°100, [Trial by Fire: The Politics of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon](#), 2 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Syria** Saudi-Syrian efforts to mediate tensions in Lebanon broke down 11 Jan; collapse of Lebanese coalition govt followed. Syria-Qatar-Turkey held trilateral summit 18 Jan in Damascus to discuss efforts at easing tensions in Lebanon. FM Walid Mouallem 27 Jan called on all parties in Lebanon to form unity govt under designate-PM Mikati (see Lebanon). Exiled leader of banned opposition Muslim Brotherhood 16 Jan offered to halt group’s political activity in exchange for right to return. President Assad 31 Jan said will not grant IAEA inspectors unrestricted access because it would amount to violation of sovereignty. Assad 31 Jan said no chance of popular uprising in Syria as ruling hierarchy closely linked to beliefs of people; opposition reportedly planning 5 Feb “day of rage” mirroring demonstrations in Egypt and Tunisia.

- [“Syria strongman: Time for ‘reform’”](#), *Wall Street Journal*, 31 Jan. 2011.

GULF

➡ **Iran** No progress during 21-22 Jan second round of nuclear talks between Iran and P5+1 in Istanbul; no further talks planned. Acting FM Ali Akbar Salehi 8 Jan announced Iran will make own fuel for nuclear reactor later this year, making any nuclear swap deal “lose its meaning”; Salehi approved by parliament as new FM 30 Jan. IAEA envoys, mainly from non-aligned nations, 16 Jan visited Natanz uranium enrichment plant; counterparts from China, Russia and the West either not invited or rejected offer. Israel PM Netanyahu 11 Jan said sanctions hurting Iran but only “credible” military threat led by U.S. can stop nuclear program. U.S. Sec State Clinton 19 Jan said Washington considering further unilateral sanctions over Iran’s nuclear programme. Intelligence services 10 Jan said Mossad-linked suspects arrested in Jan 2010 assassination of nuclear physicist. Around 70 Christians detained in post-Christmas crackdown targeting groups authorities described as “hardliners”.

- [“Iran’s struggle: The regime tightens its belt and its fist”](#), *Economist*, 13 Jan. 2011.

➡ **Iraq** Supreme Court 21 Jan ruling placed independent commissions and Central Bank under authority of Council of Ministers rather than parliament; member of Allawi’s Iraqiya bloc 22 Jan called it “coup against democracy”. Kirkuk province 18 Jan cut off electricity supplies to national grid in dispute over power rationing; reconnected 21 Jan after ministers agreed 50% quota increase. Month saw increase in bombings, highest casualty rate since Sept. Series of attacks targeted Shiite pilgrims including 3 suicide car bombs 20 Jan killing at least 50 near holy city of Karbala. Attacks on security forces, including suicide bombing 18 Jan killed up to 65 police recruits in Tikrit. Muqtada al-Sadr 5 Jan returned from self-imposed exile in Iran; held rally 8 Jan in

Najaf, exhorted U.S. troops to leave and called on Maliki govt to respond to people’s demands for services.

- [“Car bombs kill 51 in attack on Iraqi pilgrims”](#), AP, 20 Jan. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°99, [Loose Ends: Iraq’s Security Forces Between U.S. Drawdown and Withdrawal](#), 26 Oct. 2010.

➡ **Jordan** King Abdullah dismissed govt and named new PM 1 Feb following weeks of anti-govt protests over economic hardship, lack of democratic reform. King Abdullah II named Marouf al-Bakhit PM-designate, charged him with carrying out “true political reform”. Although inspired by Tunisian and Egyptian revolts, main opposition party, Muslim Brotherhood, said aim was not to oust king but amendment of electoral law and socio-economic reform.

- [“Jordan protests pressure king, but respect for monarchy remains”](#), *Washington Post*, 31 Jan. 2011.

➡ **Yemen** Anti-regime protests in both north and south; some 15,000 people 27 Jan joined opposition protests against presidency for life, hereditary succession and poor economic conditions. Parliament 1 Jan voted in principle to adopt constitutional amendments including elimination of presidential term limits; in face of growing discontent govt 20 Jan dropped political reforms. At least 12 soldiers killed, 3 wounded 7 Jan in al-Qaeda attacks in Abyan province. U.S. Sec State Clinton 11 Jan said al-Qaeda in Yemen “urgent concern” on first trip to country by U.S. Sec State in 20 years. Leader of al-Qaeda in Arab Peninsula (AQAP) 28 Jan declared jihad against northern Houthi Shiite rebels. 3 soldiers killed 9 Jan by southern separatists near town of Habi-layn, reinforcements sent to restive regions Lahij and Dalia 10 Jan. Court in Sanaa 17 Jan sentenced in absentia U.S.-born radical preacher Anwar al-Awlaki to 10 years in prison for inciting Oct killing of French engineer.

- [“Waves of unrest spread to Yemen, shaking a region”](#), *New York Times*, 27 Jan. 2011.

NORTH AFRICA

➡ **Algeria** Several cities and towns including Algiers experienced rioting first half of month, provoked by surge in food prices, housing shortages and failing economic policies; 5 people killed, at least 800 injured, over 1,000 imprisoned following clashes between rioters and police. At least 10 people attempted to replicate Tunisia protests by setting themselves on fire (see Tunisia). To calm situation, govt 8 Jan reduced cost of some foodstuffs. Police 22 Jan broke up anti-govt rally in Algiers, held in defiance of 2002 ban on public gatherings. More than 10,000 people participated in peaceful anti-govt march 29 Jan in northeastern city Bejaia.

- [“Algeria unrest turns deadly”](#), Al Jazeera, 8 Jan. 2011.

➡ **Egypt** Over 135 killed, more than 2,000 injured in security crackdown on anti-govt protesters. Protests against authoritarian rule, poor living standards began 25 Jan during organised “day of revolt” inspired in part by Tunisian uprising (see Tunisia); tens of thousands protested across country over following days. Most serious violence in Suez, Alexandria and Cairo. Army deployed 28 Jan to control late month unrest and looting, 31 Jan vowed to not use force against protesters; some reports implicating regime in chaos and lawlessness as deliberate ploy. Embattled President Mubarak 29 Jan sacked cabinet, appointed intelligence chief Omar

Suleiman Vice President, former air force commander Ahmed Shafik as PM, 31 Jan replaced unpopular interior minister implicated in police violence, but protesters continued calls for Mubarak to step down. Opposition figure Mohamed ElBaradei 30 Jan claimed popular and political mandate, including backing of Muslim Brotherhood, to negotiate creation of national unity govt. U.S. President Obama 30 Jan called for “orderly Egyptian-led transition” of govt. Situation rapidly developing as Crisis-Watch went to press with major day of protests 1 Feb. Earlier in month, more than 100 people injured during demonstrations over 1 Jan deadly bombing of Coptic Christian church.

- Comment by Robert Malley (Crisis Group) and Hussein Agha, “How Should the U.S. Respond to the Protests in the Middle East?”, *Washington Post*, 30 Jan. 2011.
- “Egyptian police reappear alongside army as Mubarak protests enter 7th day”, *Washington Post*, 31 Jan. 2011.

➡ **Mauritania** Opposition Coordination de l’opposition démocratique (COD) 13 Jan marched through Nouakchott in protest against poverty and corruption. Businessman 17 Jan staged self-immolation protest against govt in apparent copycat of similar incident in Tunisia (see Tunisia). Amid rising cost of living President Aziz 20 Jan announced 30% cut in price of essential commodities.

- “Baisse de 30% des prix des denrées de première nécessité”, AFP, 20 Jan. 2011.

➡ **Morocco** Concerned over protests in neighbouring countries, govt 25 Jan promised to maintain food and gas subsidies. Parliamentary inquiry into Nov deadly clashes between security forces and Sahrawis at Laayoune protest camp blamed “terrorist separatists” for instigating violence, recommended improving living standards. Moroccan police 5 Jan dismantled 27-member terror cell, uncovered weapon caches linked to al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in Amghala; interior ministry announced

5 soldiers to face trial for links to arms trafficking to AQIM.

- “Morocco’s WS body says separatists working for Algeria”, Al Arabiya, 13 Jan. 2011.

🏠 **Tunisia** President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali ousted 14 Jan following weeks of riots and demonstrations over economic conditions, govt corruption and repression; UNHCR said at least 219 killed. Rallies sparked by 17 Dec self-immolation protest by Mohamed Bouazizi. New unity govt formed 17 Jan under interim President Fouad Mebazaa, former PM Mohamed Ghannouchi retained position as did ministers of defence, interior and foreign affairs. Anti-govt protests continued over inclusion of members linked to Ben Ali’s former Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD) party. Govt 27 Jan named new interim cabinet, removed 12 ministers linked to former ruling RCD party, appointed 3 independents to interior, foreign, defence posts; retained 9 ministers, including PM Ghannouchi. General Labour Union (UGTT), main force behind protests against interim government, 29 Jan endorsed new cabinet. Govt 20 Jan lifted ban on all political groups, announced amnesty for all political prisoners; Rachid Ghannouchi, leader of long-outlawed Islamist party Ennahdha, 30 Jan returned from 20-year exile. Interim-PM Ghannouchi 21 Jan announced country’s first free elections since independence. Chief of army General Rachid Ammar, who refused to support Ben Ali’s crackdown on protests, 24 Jan promised army will “protect the revolution”, warned political vacuum could bring back dictatorship.

- “No one is really in charge: The revolution is still in flux”, *Economist*, 27 Jan. 2011

➡ **Western Sahara** New round of UN-brokered talks between Polisario Front and Moroccan govt 21-23 Jan stalled over basic issue of disputed territory’s future status; agreed to new round of talks in March.

- “W. Sahara-Morocco talks remain in deadlock”, AFP, 24 Jan. 2011.

“The International Crisis Group reports are a must-read for every foreign affairs editor.”

Steffen Richter, Comment Editor, *Die Zeit*, October 2009

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