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August 2013 Trends



Deteriorated Situations

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Improved Situations



Unchanged Situations

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September 2013 Watchlist



Conflict Risk Alerts



Conflict Resolution Opportunities

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 140 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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Africa

Central Africa

 **Burundi** Former rebel National Forces of Liberation (FNL) leader Agathon Rwasa returned from exile 6 Aug, reportedly to prepare for 2015 elections; police prevented Rwasa from addressing supporters. Rwasa 22 Aug rejected allegations he ordered 2004 massacre of Congolese Tutsi refugees in Gatumba. FNL-Miburo swiftly distanced itself from former leader.


- [“Burundi’s veteran rebel resurfaces, denied rally”](#), AFP, 6 Aug. 2013.

 **Cameroon** Former Seleka fighters from CAR 19 Aug reportedly executed Cameroonian policeman responsible for border outpost in Toktoyo. Cameroon 14 Aug officially took possession of Bakassi Peninsula, hitherto under provisional Nigerian-Cameroonian administration, as per Aug 2008 Greentree accord; UNSC praised both countries for peaceful transition.

- [“Security Council praises Cameroon, Nigeria for Bakassi Peninsula transition”](#), UN News, 15 Aug. 2013.


 **Central African Republic** Violence increased with around 10 reportedly killed during month in clashes in Bangui and at least 11 Bozizé supporters killed 20 Aug during disarmament operation in Boy-Rabe. Reports former Seleka fighters looting, killing in NW, including executing 8 farmers 28 Aug. UN reported over 5,000 fled Boeïng district, sought refuge in Bangui airport, under control of regional peacekeepers, following abuses by former Seleka fighters. French President Hollande 27 Aug called on UNSC and AU to help stabilise country, warned CAR on “verge of Somalisation”. UN officials 14 Aug briefed UNSC on situation in CAR, confirmed no rule of law, humanitarian disaster; UN envoy to CAR Babacar Gaye warned “country runs risk of descending into anarchy and chaos”. UNSC called for increased aid, said human rights component of UN peacekeeping mission to be increased. Former Seleka rebel leader Michel Djotodia formally sworn in as interim president 18 Aug, marking beginning of 18-month transition period; cabinet reshuffled early Aug. Transitional Constitutional Court established 16 Aug. Seleka increasingly fractured: Gen Nourredin Adam, second-in-command, replaced as Minister of Security by Josue Binoua, former Bozizé supporter, 27 Aug; Gen Hakouma Arda reportedly arrested 26 Aug. Deposed former president Bozizé mid-Aug announced formation of new movement “FROCCA”, 10 Aug announced willingness to retake power by force, accused Chad of engineering 23 March coup.

- [“Another failed state beckons”](#), *Economist*, 31 Aug. 2013.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°203, [Central African Republic: Priorities of the Transition](#), 11 June 2013.

 **DR Congo** Fighting between army and M23 rebels restarted around Goma late Aug; UN “intervention brigade” fought alongside national army for first time, shelled rebel positions, one peacekeeper killed, 5 injured; peacekeepers accused of killing 2 during protests against fighting. U.S. 25 Aug expressed alarm at violence, condemned M23 rebels, called for end to hostilities. M23 30 Aug announced unilateral ceasefire, withdrawal from front line. Tensions with Rwanda increased with accusations of cross-border


bombings (see Rwanda); govt accused Rwanda of firing rockets on Goma to aid M23; Assistant UNSG Edmond Mulet 29 Aug said “consistent and credible reports” of ongoing Rwandan support for M23. Rwanda 27 Aug opposed additional UN sanctions on M23 military leaders Kazamama and Mboneza after M23 shelled civilians in Goma. MP Muhindo Nzangi Butondo arrested 11 Aug after criticising President Kabila’s management of M23 crisis. Army Colonel Richard Bisamaza 12 Aug defected along with some 60 men in N Kivu in largest defection so far this year; Bisanzanza reportedly killed in military operations mid-Aug. Army 23 Aug launched offensive in Lendu Bindi, Ituri District, against Ituri Patriotic Front (FPRI) rebels; thousands displaced. 300 Ugandan soldiers 27 Aug reportedly entered Mahagi, Ituri District, after govt relocated customs checkpoint closer to Uganda border. Preparatory workshop for national consultations opened 17 Aug; Speaker 28 Aug rejected Senate president Léon Kengo Wa Dondo’s earlier assertion that consultations would lead to cabinet reshuffle; opposition UDPS and UNC refused to participate in workshop.

- [“UN turns up the heat in the Congo”](#), Deutsche Welle, 28 Aug. 2013.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°206, [Understanding Conflict in Eastern Congo \(I\): The Ruzizi Plain](#), 23 July 2013.

 **Rwanda** Tensions with DRC escalated: govt alleged 34 bomb attacks by DRC on Rwandan territory late-Aug, said DRC “deliberately” firing rockets across border; UN and DRC govt said M23 rebels responsible for bomb attacks, DRC govt suggested M23 seeking to draw Rwanda into conflict. Govt late-Aug dispatched military convoy to border; U.S. 28 Aug called on Rwanda, DRC to avoid war; UNSG Ban reportedly called President Kagame late-Aug to urge restraint. UN 22 Aug called for investigation into “disappearance or abduction” of 3 Rwandan refugees, including 2 ex-presidential guards, from Uganda. Opposition Democratic Green Party 12 Aug said not ready for Sept polls after electoral commission took 3 years to register it, would prepare for 2017 presidential elections.

- [“Rwanda accuses Congo of rocket attacks over border”](#), *Guardian*, 30 Aug. 2013.

Horn of Africa

 **Ethiopia** Several Muslim protests coinciding with Eid al-Fitr early Aug resulted in clashes with security forces in Addis Ababa, Dessie, and E and W Oromiya. Protesters 2 Aug clashed with police in W Arusi, Oromiya region; govt said 3 police killed by armed protesters; protesters reported over 10 killed when police fired on unarmed protesters. Organisers of longstanding “Friday protests” expressed concern, distanced themselves from any protester violence; rights group Amnesty International condemned reported govt violence. Opposition groups mid-month condemned govt crackdown, warned govt’s hard-line stance on Muslims will inspire extremism following reports of arrests, beatings.

- [“Muslim protests raise slender hopes of change in Ethiopia”](#), Deutsche Welle, 9 Aug. 2013.

New Crisis Group Africa Report N°207, [Ethiopia: Prospects for Peace in Ogaden](#), 6 August 2013. The most credible attempt at talks to end decades of armed conflict in Ogaden may soon resume, but concerted efforts need to be made to guide them to a peaceful resolution.

➡ **Kenya** Al-Shabaab militants mid-Aug attacked police post in Galmagala, killing 4; Kenyan Defence Forces 20 Aug clashed with some 20 Al-Shabaab in Garissa, reportedly killing at least 10. Police 22 Aug warned Somalia al-Shabaab militants may be planning attacks in Mombasa to coincide with anniversary of assassination of Muslim cleric Aboud Rogo. Over 20 reportedly killed late Aug in clashes in Moyale in north; govt warned it would use force to restore peace; local MP denied deaths due to intercommunal clashes between Borana and Gabra, said militiamen crossing border from Ethiopia to blame.

- “Three people killed in Moyale clashes”, Capital FM, 25 Aug. 2013.

➡ **Somalia** Somalia Federal Govt (TFG) and local militias 28 Aug reached agreement recognising Sheikh Ahmed Madobe as 2-year leader of interim Jubaland administration following months of clashes in Kismayo port, including at least 10 Al-Shabaab militants reportedly killed in clashes with Kenyan troops 21 Aug and fighting between Al-Shabaab and Ras Kamboni militias. UN and AU welcomed agreement but hundreds 30 Aug protested in regional capital Baidoa against SFG. Regional Puntland president Farole 5 Aug accused SFG of tampering with Somali provisional constitution, announced regional administration suspending cooperation with SFG until country’s “genuine” constitution restored. Puntland VP Shire late-Aug visited disputed borderlands between Somaliland and Puntland sparking condemnation by Somaliland officials. Clashes between govt forces and Al-Shabaab continued: heavy fighting reported 22-23 Aug in Janale town, Lower Shabelle region; Al-Shabaab 26 Aug attacked govt base in Bakol region. Gunmen 21 Aug killed 2 police officers in Mogadishu; radio journalist shot dead 20 Aug in Mogadishu marking 5th journalist killed this year.

- “Somalia strikes deal with former Islamist over port city”, Reuters, 28 Aug. 2013.

➡ **South Sudan** Lawmakers 24 Aug unanimously endorsed parliamentary speaker James Wani Igga as new VP; parliament 25 Aug delayed election of new speaker after failing to reach consensus on Igga’s replacement. UNSC 23 Aug condemned attacks on civilians in Jonglei state, called for humanitarian access. Dozen of SPLA officers reportedly jailed mid-Aug for role in human rights abuses in Jonglei; President Kiir 25 Aug announced investigation into abuses. Rebel David Yau Yau responded positively to Kiir’s renewed offer of amnesty, but demanded “international participation” in peace talks, notably by UNMISS. Hundreds protested 25 Aug in Juba against deteriorating security following killing of 2 police officers in Nyakurona West 24 Aug.

- “S. Sudan army jails high ranking officers over rights abuses in Jonglei”, Sudan Tribune, 22 Aug. 2013.

➡ **Sudan** Following 29 July joint security meeting between Sudan and S Sudan, govts agreed to end support for rebel groups, expressed willingness to solve oil dispute; President Bashir postponed threatened closure of oil pipelines. UNSC 23 Aug expressed concern over “volatile situation” in disputed Abyei region; govt said S Sudan’s threats to unilaterally hold election were breach of cooperation agreements; 25 Aug accused Juba of non-cooperation with AU border commission. Rumours of govt reshuffle continued; meeting between President Bashir and former intelligence chief Salah Gosh early-Aug led to speculation reshuffle will include opponents of ruling National Congress Party. Opposition National Consensus Forces early-Aug called for 3-year transition to resolve “Sudan crisis” through all-inclusive govt including civil and armed opposi-

tion, then free and fair elections. Military operations continued in S Kordofan and Blue Nile; army 25 Aug reported Ashambo region in Blue Nile retaken from SPLM-N rebels. UN 23 Aug reported over 190 killed in Aug in clashes between Maalia and Rizeigat tribes in East Darfur.

- “Khartoum warns South Sudan against holding unilateral referendum in Abyei”, Sudan Tribune, 25 Aug. 2013.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°204, *Sudan’s Spreading Conflict (II): War in Blue Nile*, 18 June 2013.

Southern Africa

➡ **Madagascar** Special Electoral Court (CES) 17 Aug cancelled 8 candidatures, including those of Lalao Ravalomanana, Andry Rajoelina and Didier Ratsiraka; CES 22 Aug scheduled elections for 25 Oct 2013. Rajoelina 23 Aug said respects decision, will step down after polls. Former president Ravalomanana 24 Aug called on supporters to keep supporting wife’s candidacy, 27 Aug said would present new candidate; CES 28 Aug rejected demand, said list is “closed and definitive”. At least 73 killed 31 July in clashes between dahalo cattle-raiders and security forces allied with villagers in SE.

- “La date des elections a Madagascar sera fixee ce jeudi 22 aout”, RFI, 21 Aug. 2013.

➡ **Zimbabwe** Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) 3 Aug announced President Mugabe won 31 July presidential election with 61.09% of vote; PM Tsvangirai trailed with 33.94%. Mugabe’s ZANU-PF won 158 of 210 parliamentary seats, Tsvangirai’s MDC 50. ZANU-PF gains included retaking Masvingo, Manicaland, majority of seats in usually hostile Matabeleland provinces. Preliminary reports by AU, SADC and other observer missions endorsed outcome, though noted irregularities. Following Tsvangirai’s 1 Aug dismissal of vote as “farce” MDC-T 9 Aug lodged challenge of results with Constitutional Court (CC) and application to High Court to release evidence to back case, but 17 Aug withdrew CC case citing unfavourable treatment and partisan nature of judiciary after High Court reserved judgment indefinitely. CC 20 Aug nonetheless ruled against MDC-T finding elections credible, free and fair. MDC-T 20 Aug vowed to continue to challenge legitimacy of election through other means. Mugabe sworn in as president 22 Aug; MDC formations boycotted. SADC member states recognised election outcome; Botswana 5 Aug initially called for audit of results, later reversed decision and endorsed election results. SADC summit 18 Aug endorsed elections declaring them free and peaceful, urged Western countries to review policies on Zimbabwe, drop sanctions; elected Mugabe as SADC vice chair. UK, U.S., Australia condemned election outcome, U.S. 20 Aug said will not lift sanctions without clear evidence of further political reform.

- “Robert Mugabe sworn in for five-year term as Zimbabwe president”, *Financial Times*, 22 Aug. 2013.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°95, *Zimbabwe’s Elections: Mugabe’s Last Stand*, 29 July 2013.

West Africa

➡ **Côte d'Ivoire** Court 5 Aug provisionally released 14 supporters of former president Gbagbo, including his son Michel Gbagbo and former Ivorian Popular Front (FPI) Sec Gen Pascal Affi N'Guessan, pending criminal trials. Early-Aug reports suggested President Ouattara's govt sending undercover agents to Ghana to abduct or assassinate Gbagbo supporters. Lawyers of minister under Gbagbo Charles Blé Goudé 5 Aug said he was being tortured in prison. National Assembly 23 Aug adopted nationality and land tenure bills. Ghanaian authorities 29 Aug said will not extradite former Gbagbo spokesman Justin Koné Katinan.

- "La Côte d'Ivoire réforme ses lois sur la nationalité et le foncier rural", RFI, 24 Aug. 2013.

➡ **Guinea** Justice Ministry 9 Aug announced 113 arrested following 15-17 July clashes which left at least 95 dead in N'zérékoré. Preparations for legislative elections scheduled 24 Sept continued; official campaigning began 24 Aug, main opposition parties participating. Opposition 23 Aug met with international partners in efforts to find consensus on electoral rolls. Opposition leaders Cellou Dalein Diallo and Sidya Touré 22 and 27 Aug said preparations not satisfactory, behind schedule; Touré threatened to resume peaceful protests. New "centrist" alliance Agir Ensemble Pour la Guinée (AEG) formed 6 Aug around opposition parties Guinée pour Tous (GPT), Union des Populations de Guinée (UPG) and Parti de l'Espoir pour le Développement National (PEDN).

- "Le faux départ de la campagne pour les législatives", RFI, 25 Aug. 2013.

➡ **Guinea-Bissau** Ahead of 24 Nov elections authorities 2 Aug announced plans for biometric cards scrapped, improved manual cards bearing photographic identification to be used instead. Ousted PM Carlos Gomes Júnior 8 Aug announced intention to contest Nov elections; govt spokesman Fernando Vaz 13 Aug insisted Gomes Júnior would not be provided with special security, Justice Minister Saido Baldé 19 Aug said Gomes Júnior would still face questioning over suspected role in Oct 2012 attempted counter-coup. Chef of staff António Injai 15 Aug insisted he would resign only if new president asked him to.

- "Guinea Bissau opts for manual voter listing", Africa Review, 4 Aug. 2013.

➡ **Liberia** Opposition Congress for Democratic Change chairman George Solo 12 Aug announced party would stage mass protests against President Sirleaf-Johnson in Jan 2014. Sirleaf-Johnson 6 Aug dismissed Deputy Director of Operations of Drug Enforcement Agency for "serious violations of policies and ethics of govt". Human Rights Watch 22 Aug said police acting as "predators", engaged in criminal conduct. Former leader of rebel Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) leader Sekou Damate Conneh late Aug said group received support from Guinea govt during civil war. Authorities 20 Aug jailed FrontPageAfrica editor Rodney after he said unable to pay \$1.5mn fine for libelling former Agriculture Minister J. Chris Toe.

- "Liberia's ten years of peace", Deutsche Welle, 19 Aug. 2013.

➡ **Mali** Second round of presidential polls took place 11 Aug in positive climate despite minor incidents; Ibrahim Boubacar Keita (IBK) declared winner 16 Aug with 77.6% of vote, 46% turnout. Interim President Traoré 15 Aug promoted April 2012 coup leader Captain

Sanogo to 4-star general; Minister of Territorial Administration Colonel Sinko Coulibaly and Colonel Dacko, who headed military operations in north, also promoted to rank of general; unclear whether President-elect IBK approved decision. Govt 28 Aug announced Sanogo no longer in charge of army reform committee.

- "Who is Mali's 'IBK': junta's man or people's president?", France 24, 5 Aug. 2013.

➡ **Niger** President Issoufou 14 Aug appointed national unity govt, citing need to reinforce political stability and address regional security threats; opponents claimed move intended to neutralise rivals before next presidential election; Moden Lumana party 22 Aug announced withdrawal from ruling coalition. Multi-National Joint Task Force, comprising intelligence operatives from Niger and Nigeria, 1 Aug reported Boko Haram training instructor and accomplices arrested in Karanga in East. Police 8 Aug arrested reported member of MUJAO sleeper cell in eastern Niger. Niger renewed commitment to stabilisation of Mali; new contingent of 850 troops left Niamey 4 Aug, to be integrated within UN-led MINUSMA.

- "Le Niger entre dans une crise politique", RFI, 24 Aug. 2013.

➡ **Nigeria** Video purportedly released by Islamist sect Boko Haram (BH) leader Abubakar Shekau 11 Aug denied his death and replacement, following rumours of BH internal coup; military Joint Task Force (JTF) 19 Aug said Shekau "might have died between 25 July and 3 Aug" in military operations. Army 4 Aug reported killing 2 senior BH commanders. Violence continued: at least 35 killed in clashes between security forces and BH in Borno State 4-5 Aug; 44 killed 11 Aug at mosque in Konduga; at least 44 killed 20 Aug near Baga, Borno State. BH targeted civilian JTF squads throughout month with over 50 members reportedly killed, including 24 killed in ambush near Monguno, Borno 31 Aug. 5 killed 3-4 Aug in infighting among Civilian JTF squads in Biu, Borno. Defence authorities 18 Aug announced newly-created army division to take over operations against BH effective 19 Aug. Gunmen 31 Aug killed 14 nomadic herders in NE Borno. Navy 17 Aug killed 12 suspected pirates during rescue of hijacked oil vessel. At least 12 killed in communal clash in Benue State 25 Aug.

- "Is Boko Haram in Nigeria on the back foot?", BBC, 20 Aug. 2013.

Asia

Central Asia

➡ **Kyrgyzstan** 3 Ata-Jurt MPs deprived of seats 20 Aug after Supreme Court found them guilty of attempting to overthrow govt Oct 2012. Collection of political parties with power base in south, including Ata-Jurt, continuing attempts to forge bloc to challenge central govt; President Atambayev reportedly trying to consolidate position in north. 2 people wounded in local council election-related clash in south 18 Aug. Kyrgyzstan and China held combined anti-terrorism drill along border 11 Aug within framework of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO); approximately 460 armed police from both countries participated. Results of negotiations over Kumtor gold mine scheduled to be revealed 10 Sept; many predicting significant cabinet reshuffle soon after.

- "Acquittals reversed for opposition Kyrgyz lawmakers", RFE/RL, 7 Aug. 2013.

➡ **Tajikistan** President Rahmon visited Moscow 1 Aug; promised stalled agreement on extending lease for Russian base would be ratified by parliament this autumn; also reportedly secured tacit support of Kremlin in upcoming presidential elections. Harassment of opposition figures continues ahead of elections set for 6 Nov.

- [“Rahmon says Tajikistan will extend Russian’s military presence to 2042”](#), RFE/RL, 1 Aug. 2013.

➡ **Uzbekistan** Recent spate of incidents, some deadly, along Kyrgyz-Uzbek border descended into war of words, with usually reticent, state-controlled Uzbek media unusually launching tirade of articles criticising Kyrgyz Border Service and several high profile figures. Kyrgyz press rebutted coverage with equal vigour.

- [“Vice Prime Minister: Uzbek delegation will arrive in Bishkek for talks on border issues”](#), 24, 14 Aug. 2013.

North East Asia

➡ **China (internal)** Authorities in Xinjiang region 27 Aug reported 22 ethnic Uighurs shot dead in police “anti-terror” raid on house 20 Aug. 1 policeman also killed, 4 Uighurs arrested.

- [“Death toll in Xinjiang police shootout climbs as exile group blasts raid”](#), Radio Free Asia, 27 Aug. 2013.

➡ **China-Japan** Tensions in East China Sea remain high. Newly-consolidated China Coast Guard 2 Aug dispatched 4 vessels to waters around disputed Diaoyu/Senkaku islands for a record long stay prompting Tokyo to protest. Five fishing boats carrying over 20 Japanese activists sailed into disputed waters 18 Aug. Prospects for diplomatic thaw between China and Japan continue to appear dim. Japanese vice FM Saiki claimed presidential summit imminent after his late-July visit to Beijing; Chinese FM denied Saiki was received by any Chinese officials. China late-month dismissed possibility of leaders meeting at G20 summit early-Sept, accused Tokyo of “empty talk”. Japan 6 Aug launched largest warship since WWII, arousing suspicion in China, with its media saying destroyer is aircraft carrier in disguise. Japan says vessel remains in line with pacifist constitution. Anniversary of Japan’s WWII surrender 15 Aug saw PM Abe omitting commemoration/recognition of wartime damage inflicted on its Asian neighbours in his speech. Abe refrained from visiting controversial Yasukuni Shrine, but several members of his cabinet paid visits; Chinese govt summoned Japanese ambassador to protest. China’s PLA Navy launched 4-day exercise in Bohai and East China Seas.

- [“Fishing trips”](#), *Economist*, 10 Aug. 2013.

➡ **Korean Peninsula** DPRK and ROK 14 Aug agreed on steps to reopen Kaesŏng Industrial Complex (KIC), closed for over 4 months, after Pyongyang offered to resume talks 7 Aug in response to ultimatum from Seoul. Under 5-point accord, sides will meet again “in the near future” to form new joint committee to work out additional details, set timeline. Pyongyang and Seoul 23 Aug agreed to hold reunions of separated families 25-30 Sept, first since Oct 2010; also agreed to hold video conference reunions in Oct, more reunions in Nov. Pyongyang 20 Aug proposed talks to reopen Mt. Kŭmgang tourism project, closed since July 2008. Seoul 27 Aug proposed talks be held 2 Oct after conclusion of family visit and Ch’usŏk holiday; Pyongyang has not yet accepted. ROK-U.S.

carried out combined and multinational military exercise Ulchi Freedom Guardian (UFG) 19-30 Aug, involving 30,000 U.S. and 50,000 ROK troops, 7 United Nations Command (UNC) countries. DPRK cancelled planned visit by U.S envoy. Exports from China to North Korea decreased 13.6% in first half of 2013 compared with same period 2012.

- Daniel Pinkston, [“Time to Engage Pyongyang?”](#), *Strong & Prosperous*, 26 Aug. 2013.
- [“Bordering on comradesly”](#), *Economist*, 24 Aug. 2013.

South Asia

➡ **Afghanistan** Negotiations intensified ahead of Sept opening of presidential nominations for 2014 polls as parties discussed coalition-forming and selection of candidates: Hezb-e-Wahdat Islami party, headed by 2nd VP Karim Khalili, and party’s political arm, led by Minister of Economy Abdul Hadi Arghandiwal, agreed to support single unnamed candidate in 2014 polls; Omar Daudzai, ambassador to Pakistan, 17 Aug announced intention to run; President Karzai 24 Aug denied reports he suggested candidacy of Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, former mujahidin leader accused of human rights violations. UN SRSG Jan Kubiš 27 Aug said “encouraged” by progress following meeting with elections commission (IEC) chairman. Opposition parties 7 Aug expressed concern over Strategic Cooperation Agreement between Afghanistan and Iran. Major offensives in eastern districts continued: defence ministry 9 Aug said nearly 200 insurgents and some dozen Afghan troops killed in operation in Azra district, Logar province. National Directorate of Security (NDS) 4 Aug said 52 Pakistani insurgents arrested in previous 4 months. Taliban attacks continued including: bombing of army base in eastern province Kapisa 26 Aug killing 1 soldier, 5 Taliban killed in ensuing fire; 6 govt workers executed by Taliban in Herat 27 Aug; 15 police killed 28 Aug in Farah province; district governor killed 30 Aug in Kunduz. NATO commander in Afghanistan Gen. Joseph Dunford 14 Aug said Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) able to independently maintain security for 2014 polls, 2014 fighting season.

- [“Afghanistan district governor killed in suicide attack at mosque”](#), *LA times*, 30 Aug. 2013.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°141, [Afghanistan’s Parties in Transition](#), 26 June 2013.

➡ **Bangladesh** Sporadic clashes, shutdowns, protests over war crimes trials and govt crackdown on Islamic groups continued. Supreme Court 5 Aug refused to stay High Court verdict upholding Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) party ban, triggering protests; some 40 pro-JeI demonstrators injured in clashes with police 13 Aug. International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) 18 Aug began investigations into JeI party role in 1971 war of liberation; previous investigations focused on individual members. ICT prosecutors 20 Aug charged Human Rights Watch with contempt of court for criticising trial of ex-JeI leader Ghulam Azam. Awami League (AL) and opposition Bangladesh National Party (BNP) failed to reach agreement on elections; BNP 16 Aug said violence “inevitable” if vote held under incumbent govt, calling for caretaker govt. Rights activist Adilur Rahman Khan arrested 10 Aug for claiming 61 Islamists killed by govt in 2 May protest.

- [“The battling begums”](#), *Economist*, 10 Aug. 2013.

➡ **Kashmir** India 6 Aug claimed Pakistani troops fired at Line of Control (LoC) border post killing 5 soldiers, said incident “gross violation” of 2003 ceasefire; Pakistan reported 2 soldiers killed in separate attacks near Skardu 20 Aug and near Rawalakot in Poonch district 22 Aug. Unidentified militants 27 Aug killed two Indian police officers in separate attacks in Shopian, Anantnag districts of South Kashmir; Indian police 30 Aug reportedly killed at least 5 militants during clash in Najwan forest area near Ganderbal district. Indian FM Salman Khurshid 12 Aug said secretary-level talks with Pakistan will only take place in “environment free of terror”. Pakistan PM Sharif 14 Aug called for de-escalation, reiterated his govt’s resolve to normalise relations.

- “Pakistan accuses India of killing two soldiers in Kashmir”, AFP, 22 Aug. 2013.

➡ **India (non-Kashmir)** 3 Chhattisgarh Armed Force (CAF) personnel, 1 Maoist reported killed 16 Aug in clash near Maharabeda, Chhattisgarh. Arrests of suspected Maoists continued: police 20 Aug arrested 5 Maoists with arms cache and ammunition in Chhattisgarh. Maoists 3 Aug detonated explosives on railway track in Bihar, no injuries; 27 Aug ambushed Border Security Force (BSF) convoy in Koraput, Odisha state killing 5 BSF soldiers and injuring 2. Police 29 Aug arrested Yasin Bhatkal, alleged head of the Indian Mujahideen (IM) militant group; 17 Aug arrested Abdul Karim Tunda, bomb-maker and Lashkar-e-Taiba operative near Indo-Nepal border.

- “3 jawans, Maoist killed in Chhattisgarh encounter”, *Hindu*, 13 Aug. 2013.

➡ **Nepal** All-party talks began 24 Aug between 33-party anti-election alliance led by Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) and HLPC, collapsed within minutes. CPN-M continues to demand govt’s resignation, dissolution of High Level Political Committee (HLPC); CPN-M strategy uncertain but its leaders urge boycott of polls. Deal on elections reached 15 Aug between HLPC and opposition Federal Democratic Forum, comprising Madhesi People’s Rights Forum-Nepal and 7 other small parties: parties agreed to join elections, proportional representation/first-past-the-post ratio restored to last election ratio (335/240). Ashok Rai-led Federal Socialist Party not part of deal, but remains open to negotiation. Parents of war victim Krishna Adhikari fast-unto-death for justice in 5th week; govt ordered force feeding, doctors say unethical; case could have consequences for elections. 70 ex-Maoist rebel fighters 26 Aug joined national army as officers, fulfilling key component of 2006 peace deal.

- “HLPC strikes six-point deal with Federal Democratic Front”, *Himalayan Times*, 16 Aug. 2013.

➡ **Pakistan** Political crisis continued following 31 Aug resignation of Justice Ibrahim, reportedly in protest at Supreme Court interference in July presidential election: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) challenged legitimacy of election, call for resignation of Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry. Former president Musharraf officially charged 20 Aug over killing of former PM Benazir Bhutto. Afghanistan President Karzai visited 26 Aug to discuss Afghanistan peace process, urged Pakistan “to facilitate peace talks” with Taliban; PM Sharif said process must be “Afghan-owned and Afghan-led”; no tangible progress made. Govt 13 Aug issued first detailed statement on countering terrorism and extremism: Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan said govt would prefer dialogue but would not shy away from “all-out war”; also said joint policy to be devised on U.S. drone program; in first televised address to nation,

PM Nawaz Sharif 19 Aug reiterated both call for dialogue and military option. Attacks continued in Balochistan including killing of 2 paramilitary personnel 18 Aug. 30 police officers, including Deputy Inspector General of Operations, killed 8 Aug in suicide bombing targeting funeral of senior police official in Quetta; 10 killed in attack 9 Aug. In Karachi, first ever attack on Ismaili Shia sect mosque killed 2 and injured 40 13 Aug; 3 wounded in second attack; Sunni extremist Lashkar-e-Jhangvi suspected. 4 killed 30 Aug by reported U.S. drone strike in North Waziristan, govt condemned attack. Treason conviction against Dr. Shakil Afrisi, who also aided U.S. in hunt for Bin Laden, overturned 29 Aug, retrial ordered.

- “Prime Minister of Pakistan open to talks with Taliban”, *New York Times*, 19 Aug. 2013.

➡ **Sri Lanka** At least 3 killed, many injured, several journalists attacked 1 Aug when army dispersed protest in Colombo; protesters reportedly chased and beaten in local Catholic church prompting condemnation by Catholic archbishop who called for independent investigations. Army’s actions strongly and widely condemned, including among Sinhalese. Opposition 14 Aug staged rally protesting violence; Defence Sec Gotabaya Rajapaksa accused opposition of using deaths to tarnish army’s reputation; military announced inquiry into deaths. Militant Buddhists 10 Aug attacked mosque in Grandpass area of Colombo, prompting protests and communal clashes between Muslims and Buddhists in Grandpass district injuring at least 12. Govt’s Muslim ministers 11 Aug issued unprecedented joint statement condemning police inaction and calling for president to take action to halt anti-Muslim campaign. Campaigning for 21 Sept provincial council elections began: intra-party violence seen in north-central and central provinces; scattered attacks on opposition campaigners in northern province. Govt 13 Aug appointed presidential commission of inquiry into war-time disappearances in north and eastern provinces. Visiting UN human rights chief Pillay 27 Aug met families of missing and disappeared in north and east; 31 Aug said “deeply concerned” that country “showing signs of heading in an increasingly authoritarian direction”.

- Alan Keenan, “When public relations meets militarisation”, Sri Lanka’s Search for Lasting Peace, 22 Aug. 2013.
- “Three killed as Sri Lankan Army clamps down on protesters”, *Hindu*, 4 Aug. 2013.

South East Asia

➡ **Indonesia** Anticipated major announcement on Papua by President Yudhoyono in his 16 Aug Independence Day address failed to materialise, with no significant mention of Papua provinces/ plans to revise 2001 Special Autonomy law to create “Special Autonomy Plus” /ostus plus; said Aceh and Papua inseparable part of republic. Medical worker shot dead by unknown assailants in Papua highlands 31 July. National Commission on Human Rights announced findings that 1989-2005 military operations in Aceh could be categorised as gross human rights violations, for which military responsible. 3 injured in explosion at Buddhist centre in W Jakarta 4 Aug, reportedly in response to persecution of Myanmar’s Rohingya Muslims. Tit-for-tat killings of Indonesian police by violent radicals continue: police shot 2 terror suspects in E Java in late July. 3 police shot dead in Jakarta area 7, 16 Aug. Prison

riots continued as inmates 18 Aug torched prison in N Sumatra, at least 30 escaped.

- [“Military operation in Aceh was ‘gross human rights violation’](#)”, *Jakarta Post*, 2 Aug. 2013.

➡ **Myanmar** United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC) ethnic umbrella group 29 July held conference in Thailand to discuss political demands, 2 Aug issued statement calling for complete rewriting of 2008 constitution and fully federal system including with regard to armed forces, with Burman majority being given single state on par with seven main ethnic groups. Some ethnic leaders and govt-linked Myanmar Peace Centre called demands unrealistic. All Burma Students Democratic Front armed group, made up of mostly Burman students who fled cities for ethnic areas to take up arms against govt following failed 1988 uprising, signed ceasefire with govt 5 Aug, shortly before symbolic 25th anniversary of uprising, in which govt delegation participated for first time. Buddhist monks and lay people 6 Aug demonstrated against perceived “attacks on Buddhism” in Myanmar in the international media, bombing of Buddhist site in India and bombing in Indonesia. Buddhist mob attacked Muslim homes and shops in village in NW 25 Aug, no injuries reported, 12 arrested. Vice Chairman of China’s Central Military Commission visited 22 July for meetings with president and commander-in-chief. U.S. President Obama 8 Aug renewed for another year U.S. ban on import of gemstones from Myanmar, retained when broader sanctions removed Nov 2012. President Thein Sein reshuffled cabinet 25 July, moving 4 ministers to new portfolios, along with several deputy ministers.

- [“Burma marks 1988 pro-democracy uprising anniversary”](#), BBC, 8 Aug. 2013.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°140, [A Tentative Peace in Myanmar’s Kachin Conflict](#), 12 June 2013.

➡ **Philippines** Continued uptick in violence; 8 killed by bomb in Cotabato City, Mindanao 5 Aug; 3 bombings in central Mindanao 7 Aug, with targets including army truck. Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement (BIFM) claimed responsibility for latter. Police 6 Aug filed murder charges against suspects in 26 July Cagayan de Oro bombing, including member of new Khilafah Islamic Movement, which officials claim has links with foreign jihadis. President Aquino 8 Aug suggested BIFM, Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and other new radical group perpetrating recent attacks to derail Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) peace process. Clashes between BIFM and Philippine military 10-13 Aug displaced almost 10,000 villagers in 2 towns in N Cotabato province. Govt-MILF peace talks resumed mid-Aug, with 2 of 4 annexes to Oct 2012 pact left to negotiate. In Sulu archipelago, some 70 members of ASG and military clashed in Basilan 8 Aug; 1 soldier, 7 militants killed. 2 injured by bomb in Jolo town 14 Aug; military blamed ASG. Moro National Liberation Front founder Nur Misuari 12 Aug declared independence of Palawan, Zamboanga Peninsula, Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-tawi, and Sabah in eastern Malaysia. Manila and Washington opened negotiations over U.S. military presence in Philippines. Ahead of Chinese-hosted talks with ASEAN in Sept, Chinese FM Wang warned against rushing South China Sea Code of Conduct negotiations; Wang and Chinese analysts accuse Philippines of delaying process. Philippines acquired old U.S. coast guard ship 6 Aug to patrol South China Sea.

- [“Alert up in Mindanao areas after Nur’s independence declaration”](#), *Philstar*, 16 Aug. 2013.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°248, [The Philippines: Dismantling Rebel Groups](#), 19 June 2013.

➡ **Thailand** Future of peace dialogue process between Barisan Revolusui Nasional (BRN) and govt uncertain after BRN 6 Aug issued video announcing suspension of its participation because Bangkok had not responded to its demands. Govt officials repeatedly stated intention to continue dialogue, though senior military officers oppose BRN’s demands. Violence intensified 1 Aug with 12 arson attacks across Pattani, Songkhla and Yala provinces, while separate bombings killed ranger in Yala Province and injured another in Narathiwat. On 2 Aug, eight soldiers injured, 2 severely, by a bomb explosion in Yala’s Raman District 2 Aug. Another soldier killed in IED attack in Yala same day. Bomb attack in Tak Bai, Narathiwat, injured 4 soldiers 3 Aug. 4 gunmen killed imam at Pattani Central Mosque, supporter of peace dialogue, 5 Aug. IED attacks spiked to 35 between 31 July-7 Aug; monthly average was 24 for first half 2013. In spite of continuing violence during ceasefire period, Internal Security Operations Command reported this year’s Ramadan saw lowest number of casualties for holy month since 2007, with 23 people killed in the 3 southernmost provinces 10 July-18 Aug. Video clip posted online 28 July purportedly al-Qaeda death threat against former PM Thaksin for 2004 Tak Bai massacre; National Security Council chief dismissed video as stunt by Thaksin’s political opponents. Early Aug anti-govt rallies aimed at derailing Parliament’s consideration of amnesty bill fell flat; bill, introduced by governing Pheu Thai Party to provide amnesty for crimes associated with political turmoil since 2006, passed first reading 7 Aug; opposition Democrat Party has vowed to contest legislation in parliament, petition Constitutional Court and keep up pressure on streets. Bangkok court concluded that army troops killed 6 people at Pathum Wanaram temple May 2010 following “Red Shirt” protest.

- Matthew Wheeler, [“Talking and Killing in Southern Thailand”](#), *Interpreter*, 9 Aug. 2013.
- [“Government to discuss BRN’s demands”](#), *Bangkok Post*, 24 Aug. 2013.

Europe

Balkans

➡ **Bosnia** Serb youths assaulted 4 Bosniak returnees in Zvornik in eastern Republika Srpska 8 Aug. Long-awaited population census, first since 1991, scheduled for early Oct.

- [“Reform logjam endangers Bosnia’s 2014 elections”](#), *Balkan Insight*, 20 Aug. 2013.

➡ **Kosovo** Ahead of local elections scheduled for 3 Nov, first in Serb-held northern Kosovo since independence, Serb parties yet to register with Kosovo Election Commission ahead of 3 Sept deadline for candidate and party list registration. Belgrade reportedly pushing idea of joint, Belgrade-backed list; northern opposition to participating still firm. Kosovo and Serbia PMs discussed ballots during talks in Brussels 27 Aug. Kosovo Deputy PM Tahiri said all “parallel security structures” in northern Kosovo should go by late Sept.

- [“Kosovo’s elections prove to be a challenge for both sides”](#), *SE Times*, 19 Aug. 2013.

Caucasus

➡ **Armenia** Opposition parties continue to promise autumn protests or “revolution” to force President Sargsyan from office. Already weak economy continuing to suffer from Russian increase in natural gas prices.

- “As Armenia walks tightrope between Russia and EU, public opinion may be shifting”, RFE/RL, 1 Aug. 2013.

➡ **Azerbaijan** President Aliyev officially registered to run for 3rd term in 9 Oct presidential election as usually fractured opposition parties put forward united candidate. Electoral commission approved opposition National Council of Democratic Forces candidate professor Jamil Hasanli as candidate; Hasanli chosen as alternative candidate after Moscow-based playwright Rustam Ibrahimbayov turned down due to dual Russian-Azerbaijan citizenship.

- “EU and Azerbaijan: Setting the record straight”, Eurasianet, 7 Aug. 2013.

➡ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** Sporadic fighting along nearly 1,000 km Azerbaijan-Armenia border spread to highly sensitive Nakhichevan exclave. Armenia defence minister said one soldier killed and one injured in sniper attack 23 Aug, Azerbaijan said Armenians staged incident and “shooting at selves”. Armenian officials repeated increasingly grave warnings they will retaliate. Further skirmishes along international frontier. Azerbaijan said seeking \$3bn weapons purchase from South Korea including submarines, battleships, attack helicopters to add to billions it has spent on weapons in last few years as it tries to assemble insurmountable military advantage over Armenia to force it to compromise, leave occupied territories, or face massive armed assault. Armenian President Sargsyan said Azerbaijan’s Aliyev would be preferable counterpart for negotiations to end war in unusual quasi-endorsement ahead of Azerbaijan election.

- “Choices for the South Caucasus”, *New York Times*, 28 Aug. 2013.

➡ **Georgia** Russian President Putin visited breakaway Abkhazia 27 Aug for talks with local leader Ankvab, second meeting between the two in recent weeks; no results reported. Visit comes after Russia recently reduced funding to entity, where it has thousands of troops, over series of disagreements with de facto authorities. Putin visit drew official protest by Tbilisi via Swiss as countries have no diplomatic relations, and criticism from EU Monitoring Mission. Oct Presidential election battle heating up, with more than a dozen candidates expected to vie for post held by term-limited incumbent Saakashvili. Ex-Saakashvili ally and former parliament speaker Burjanadze waging aggressive campaign, said PM Ivanishvili’s Georgian Dream coalition govt should have done more to mend ties with Moscow, said “not afraid of being called pro-Russian”. Tensions in south when authorities late-Aug dismantled recently-constructed mosque minaret, saying it lacked proper building authorisation.

- “Tensions rise in Georgia’s breakaway regions”, RFE/RL, 26 Aug. 2013.

➡ **North Caucasus (Russia)** Ahead of Russian regional and municipal elections 8 Sept, President Putin 19 Aug proposed to National Assemblies of Ingushetia and Dagestan choice of 3 candidates each for future heads of republics, under indirect election system introduced early 2013; proposed candidates include acting heads of republic, seen as likely winners. Counter-Terrorism

Operations (CTOs) and special operations continued: security forces reported leader of insurgency in Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachay-Cherkessia Khasanbi Fakov plus his wife and 2 other militants killed in special operation in Nalchik 7 Aug. 9 insurgents killed and 4 police injured in special operation in Buynaksk city, Dagestan 20 Aug; one of the killed insurgents identified as powerful leader of “Buynaksk” insurgency group, Bamatkhan Sheykhov. CTO regime introduced in Khasavyurt city 18 Aug, 3 insurgents killed. 3 militants killed in special operation in Karabudakkhent district, Dagestan 17 Aug. Head of Ingushetia’s Security Council Akhmed Kotiev killed in ambush on his car 27 Aug. Threats/attacks on religious figures: mufti of Stavropol Krai alerted police to death threat 7 Aug; Mahachkala imam killed 3 Aug. Violent clashes over land between Kumyks and Laks in Makhachkala suburb involving up to 1,000 people 21 Aug. Anti-corruption campaign continued: mayor of Karachayevsk city, Karachay-Cherkessia republic arrested on corruption charges 9 Aug.

- Ekaterina Sokirianskaia, “Sowing Rebellion in Dagestan?”, *Across Eurasia*, 26 Aug. 2013.
- “Leaders of Daghestan, Ingushetia look set to stay on”, RFE/RL, 21 Aug. 2013.

Western Europe/Mediterranean

➡ **Cyprus** Greek Cypriot president Anastasiades 21 Aug said solution to Cyprus problem “remains government’s priority”, reiterated demand for return of Famagusta. UNSG special envoy Downer 1 Aug said UN engaged with both sides ahead of new UN-mediated negotiations expected Oct.

- “Cyprus problem remains top priority, Anastasiades tells overseas Cypriots”, *Cyprus Mail*, 21 Aug. 2013.

➡ **Turkey** Govt peace process with Kurdish insurgency PKK looks precarious as both sides engage in aggressive rhetoric. PM Erdoğan 16 Aug reiterated no plans to reduce 10% party election threshold to enter parliament or introduce education in mother languages, also said PKK did not fulfil promises and withdrew only 20% of militants to outside Turkey. PKK leader Cemil Bayik 14 and 27 Aug said govt had until 1 Sept to announce plans to take steps, or PKK could stop withdrawals, walk away from talks. Deputy PM Bülent Arınç 26 Aug said PM to announce a “democratisation package” in 2 weeks. Spillover from clashes in Ras al-Ain on Syria’s Turkish border killed 1 Turk 3 Aug, bringing number of Turks killed in Syria-related violence near border to 74 based on unofficial Crisis Group count. Changing its rejection to engage Syria’s PKK-linked Kurds’ Democratic Union Party (PYD), Turkish govt invited PYD leader Saleh Muslim 25 July and 14 Aug to meet national intelligence and foreign ministry officials. Exchange of fire between gendarmerie and 2,500-3,000 alleged oil smugglers at Syrian border wounded 18 soldiers 6 Aug near Hatay. Relations with Israel deteriorated after PM Erdoğan 20 Aug alleged Israel behind July military coup in Egypt. Turkey and Egypt recalled respective ambassadors, cancelled joint naval drill.

- “Erdoğan’s historic gamble on PKK peace begins to falter”, *Financial Times*, 22 Aug. 2013.

Latin America

➤ **Colombia** 13th cycle of govt-FARC peace negotiations ended 28 Aug with discussions still centred on political participation. Talks had been suspended 23-25 Aug as FARC studied implications of 22 Aug govt draft legislation to allow referendum on possible peace agreement to coincide with 2014 national elections. Parties 26 Aug called for organisation of public discussions in Sept on illegal drugs, 4th agenda point. FARC 20 Aug recognised for first time it had caused “pain”. FARC 24 Aug reportedly killed 14 soldiers in Arauca department. President Santos 28 Aug said he was ready to start peace talks with National Liberation Army (ELN), after it released Canadian hostage after 7 months’ captivity 27 Aug. Constitutional Court 28 Aug approved Legal Framework for Peace while setting certain “interpretation parameters” regarding prosecution of serious crimes. “National Agrarian Strike” began 19 Aug. Santos 30 Aug ordered 50,000 military to guarantee mobility throughout country in reaction to violent protests 29 Aug which media said left 5 dead and 250 injured. 2-month peasant strike in Catatumbo region stopped after 2 Aug agreement to hold negotiations; first agreement on drug eradication reached 28 Aug.

- “Colombia peace talks suspended after FARC call for pause”, Reuters, 23 Aug. 2013.

New Crisis Group Latin America Report N°49, *Transitional Justice and Colombia’s Peace Talks*, 29 August 2013. To secure a lasting peace, talks between Colombia’s government and FARC rebels need to include a clear, credible and coherent plan for reckoning with decades of human rights abuses.

➤ **Guatemala** President Pérez Molina 20 Aug announced creation of task force to probe murders of 4 journalists over past 5 months. All killings plus attempted murder of 5th in early Aug were attacks on journalists working for local media outside capital. Constitutional Court (CC) 6 Aug rejected new petition for amnesty by lawyers of former dictator Efraín Ríos Montt, ruled genocide and war crimes ineligible for amnesty under Guatemalan and international law. Authorities late-July deployed some 1,000 forces in joint police-military task force “Operation Dignity” to hunt for drug boss accused of masterminding June killing of 9 police agents: security forces mid-Aug reported 37 people arrested, dozens of weapons and vehicles seized.

- “Guatemala task force to probe journalist deaths”, AFP, 20 Aug. 2013.

➤ **Haiti** Senate committee investigating death of judge Jean-Serge Joseph who had launched corruption investigation against President Martelly’s wife and son 8 Aug called for President Martelly to be charged with high treason and PM and justice minister to resign, stating executive had interfered with judicial process.

- “Le président haïtien accusé de ‘crime de haute trahison’ par des parlementaires”, RFI, 9 Aug. 2013.

➤ **Mexico** Security forces 17 Aug captured suspected leader of Gulf cartel Mario Armando Ramírez Treviño alias El Pelón or X-20 in Tamaulipas state; reinforced security along country’s north-eastern border. Army 23 Aug captured Gregorio Abeja Linares, suspected leader of Knights Templar cartel in Michoacán state. U.S. 14 Aug requested extradition of Rafael Caro Quintero 5 days after court overturned his 40-year sentence for killing of U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration agent. 40 members of self-defence group

from Aquila, Michoacán arrested 14 Aug on weapons charges. Sandra Ávila Beltrán, alias Queen of the Pacific, deported 20 Aug from U.S. to Mexico to face money-laundering charges. Authorities 17 Aug found 16 bodies in Guerrero state, including 5 wearing military-style clothes; another 9 bodies with signs of torture found same day in Michoacán state. National Security Commissioner Manuel Mondragón y Kalb 27 Aug announced Gendarmerie will begin operations July 2014.

- “Mexico steps up security after drug lord’s capture”, *Wall Street Journal*, 18 Aug. 2013.

➤ **Peru** Security forces 11 Aug launched military operation against Shining Path guerillas which led to death of movement’s second-in-command “Comrade Alipio” and 2 others; operation took place in Huanta province in Ayacucho region, traditional Shining Path stronghold.

- “Peru’s security forces kill three Shining Path rebels”, BBC, 12 Aug. 2013.

➤ **Venezuela** Supreme Court (TSJ) 8 Aug dismissed appeal against presidential elections results presented by opposition leader Henrique Capriles because allegations were “generic and vague”; Capriles said not surprised by decision, reiterated intention to appeal to international courts. Following 11 Aug announcement by attorney general Luisa Ortega Díaz that 50 people had been arrested and 53 charged with corruption-related offences, President Maduro said would ask National Assembly for legislative powers to combat corruption; opposition called new anti-corruption drive politically-motivated “witch hunt”.

- “Venezuela anti-corruption crusade: In earnest, or power grab?”, AP, 24 Aug. 2013.

Middle East and North Africa

Eastern Mediterranean

➤ **Israel-Palestine** Israeli and Palestinian negotiators met for resumed peace talks 14, 20 Aug. Israel 11 Aug released 26 Palestinian prisoners, first of 104 it pledged to release as talks progress; 11-13 Aug approved construction of over 2,000 new settlement homes in W Bank and E Jerusalem; PLO condemned decision as tool to “destroy the two-state solution”. 4th session of talks not postponed despite Israeli security forces shooting dead 3 Palestinians in 26 Aug W Bank clashes. Palestinian Authority (PA) President Abbas 14 Aug gave interim PM Rami Hamdallah 5 weeks to form new govt without Hamas as Hamas-Fatah deadline to form national unity govt passed. 4 militants killed 10 Aug by airstrike in Egypt’s North Sinai; militants said attack by Israeli drone, Egypt claimed strike by Egyptian army helicopter. 4 rockets fired into Israel from Lebanon 22 Aug, al-Qaeda-linked Abdullah al-Azzam Brigades claimed responsibility; Israeli Air Force 23 Aug attacked Popular Front for Liberation of Palestine-base south of Beirut in response.

- Nathan Thrall, “Netanyahu, Then and Now”, *New York Review of Books*, 31 July 2013.
- “Events in Egypt doom intra-Palestinian reconciliation talks”, *Haaretz*, 24 Aug. 2013.

↓ **Lebanon** Sectarian clashes reignited in Tripoli where gunmen 22 Aug killed 3 including Hizbollah supporter; at least 42 people killed, hundreds wounded 23 Aug in 2 explosions in Tripoli; no claim of responsibility; 5 suspects, including 3 members of pro-Syrian regime party, arrested. Explosion in Hizbollah-controlled southern suburb of Beirut 15 Aug killed at least 27, biggest bomb since 2005 killing of PM Hariri; small Syrian rebel group claimed responsibility. March 14 coalition blamed Hizbollah's intervention in Syria for provoking retaliation; Hizbollah leader Nasrallah promised his organisation would double its fighters in Syria with each such attack. Security agencies reportedly uncovered further bombing cells, while Hizbollah set up checkpoints to protect Shia-majority neighbourhoods under its control. Airstrikes from Syria continued; 9 killed, 9 injured in 3 Aug airstrike on Aarsal. 4 Israeli soldiers who had crossed border into Lebanon wounded in 7 Aug attack; Hizbollah claimed responsibility. 4 rockets fired from Lebanon into northern Israel 22 Aug causing damage but no casualties; Israel 23 Aug retaliated bombing "terror site" near Na'ameh (see Israel-Palestine). Political deadlock continued as Future Movement continues to insist on "neutral" cabinet while Hizbollah demands "national unity" govt composed of representatives from all sides.

- "Defiant Hezbollah leader says ready to fight in Syria", Reuters, 16 Aug. 2013.

↓ **Syria** Over 1,300 killed and many injured in reported chemical attack 21 Aug near Damascus, prompting urgent UNSC meeting and calls for investigation. Amid accusations it was behind attack, Assad regime denied responsibility. Attack condemned internationally; Western states discussed possibility of armed intervention: U.S. Sec State Kerry 26 Aug accused regime of "indiscriminate slaughter of civilians", said evidence of chemical weapons use "undeniable" and warned U.S. would hold regime accountable for "moral obscenity"; President Obama 31 Aug said would seek Congressional approval 9 Sept for military action against select targets. French FM said inaction "unacceptable". UN investigation team, already stationed in Damascus, investigated attack site 23-28 Aug; results ready in 3 weeks. 10 children killed, many wounded 29 Aug after incendiary bomb reportedly dropped on school in Aleppo. Al-Qaeda branch Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) continued to strengthen position along northern and eastern fronts, generating increasing alarm in opposition political and activist circles amid continued reports of repressive governance in ISIS strongholds Aleppo and Raqqa. Rebels made advances early Aug after capturing villages and facilities in President Assad's home province Latakia, 6 Aug seized army airbase outside Aleppo following 10-month siege. Regime forces 19 Aug pushed rebels out of Latakia, 21 Aug launched offensive to regain rebel-held territory around Damascus. Estimated 40,000 mostly Syrian Kurds fled to Iraqi Kurdistan starting mid-Aug due to increased fighting between Kurdish militias and Islamist extremist rebel factions in Kurdish areas of NE Syria.

- "Syrian coalition urges strike on Assad, military support", Reuters, 29 Aug. 2013.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°143, *Syria's Metastasising Conflicts*, 27 June 2013.
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Gulf

↓ **Bahrain** Govt launched pre-emptive crackdown ahead of 14 Aug Rebel "Tamarod" protest; Bahrain Center for Human Rights 13 Aug reported over 100 house raids per day. Opposition said some 60 demonstrations held across country 14 Aug; police reportedly closed off villages, cut telecommunications network, arrested 13 protesters and forcibly dispersed demonstrations. Bomb attacks continued, often targeting security personnel: car bomb exploded in Budaiya, west of Manama 3 Aug, no casualties reported; 5 police injured 18 Aug by bomb in Dair village; 4 police injured 30 Aug by bomb in Sahla village near Manama.

- "Bahrain warns protesters they will be met with force", *Guardian*, 13 Aug. 2013.

↓ **Iran** President Rouhani sworn in 4 Aug, presented new cabinet consisting mainly of technocrats who served in Rafsanjani/Khatami administrations; parliament 15 Aug approved 15 of 18 nominees, rejected 3 minor candidates. Iran and U.S. 4 Aug both expressed desire to end Iranian nuclear program dispute: Rouhani called for end to "antagonism and aggression", U.S. said would be "willing partner". IAEA 28 Aug reported that Iran has slowed down several sensitive nuclear activities. Govt 27 Aug warned against U.S. military attack in Syria.

- "Smoother operator", *Economist*, 3 Aug. 2013.

New Crisis Group Middle East Briefing N°36, *Great Expectations: Iran's New President and the Nuclear Talks*, 13 August 2013. In the midst of dispiriting events sweeping the region, Hassan Rouhani's 4 August swearing in as Iran's president offers a rare and welcome glimmer of hope.

↓ **Iraq** Security continued to deteriorate including: at least 46 killed, 80 injured 25 Aug in bombings in Baghdad and Baquba; at least 26 killed 23 Aug in suicide bombing targeting Qahira neighbourhood park in Baghdad. Over 70 killed 28 Aug by coordinated car bombs targeting Shiite areas; PM Maliki linked attacks to Syria conflict, warned against increased terrorism in region, denounced possibility of armed attack against Syria. Govt launched Operation Martyrs' Revenge on outskirts of Baghdad, reportedly arresting over 670 suspected terrorists early-Aug. Meanwhile, head of pro-govt Sahwa tribal corps "New Sahwa" requested authorisation to arrest suspects without warrants in Sunni-populated areas where group deployed. PM Maliki's State of Law coalition 15 Aug proposed parliamentary discussion on enacting state of emergency or martial law. FM Hoshyer Zeibari 15 Aug met with U.S. Sec State Kerry, requested U.S. weaponry and intelligence support to "combat terrorism" in Iraq. Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq Ammar al-hakim and religious authority Ali Sistani's spokesman Abdul Mahdi al-Karbaly early Aug both criticised govt for failing to tackle insecurity.

- "Despite new security measures, violence persists in Iraq", Al-Monitor, 19 Aug. 2013.

New Crisis Group Middle East Report N°144, *Make or Break: Iraq's Sunnis and the State*, 14 August 2013. With Sunni Arab frustration at a boil at home, unprecedented Sunni-Shiite polarisation in the region and deadly car bombings plaguing the country, Iraq is inching toward relapse into generalised sectarian conflict.

↳ **Saudi Arabia** Govt 7 Aug offered Russia major arms deal and pledge not to challenge Russian gas sales if Moscow decreases support for Syrian President Assad; 27 Aug called on international community to take “decisive and serious” position against Syrian regime. King Abdullah 16 Aug expressed further support for Egyptian military; FM Al-Faisal 18 Aug warned West against pressuring Egypt’s military to halt crackdown on Muslim Brotherhood, 19 Aug pledged to fill financial gaps left by Western aid withdrawal. Police 8 Aug arrested 2 men from Yemen and Chad suspected of planning suicide attacks, days after U.S. closed embassies citing al-Qaeda threat.

- “Saudi offers Russia deal to scale back Assad support”, Reuters, 7 Aug. 2013.

↳ **Yemen** Month saw surge in U.S. drone strikes against suspected al-Qaeda (AQAP) militants killing tens including senior AQAP leader Qaid Ahmad Nasser al-Dhahab 30 Aug. U.S., British, French, Dutch and other foreign embassies closed early Aug for approx 2 weeks after U.S. govt 2 Aug announced AQAP planned attack; Yemeni authorities 7 Aug said AQAP attack on southern port and oil and gas facilities thwarted. Attacks on security personnel left 29 dead in first half of Aug; 2 soldiers killed, several wounded 23 Aug in suicide bomb attack on checkpoint in Shibam, Hadramawt province; intelligence official and son killed 28 Aug in Aden. At least 3 killed, 23 wounded in attack on military bus in Sanaa 25 Aug. Clashes between Huthis and various opposing groups in Amran, Saada and Ibb killed dozens, including 13 killed 13 Aug and 8 killed 28 Aug in Amran. Land disputes in capital intensified. Tensions rose ahead of 18 Sept deadline for conclusion of national dialogue: southern separatists failed to return to negotiations following Eid holidays; negotiations ongoing to secure their return; govt 21 Aug apologised to southerners for 1994 civil war.

- “Western embassies remain closed in Yemen; 19 U.S. posts shuttered amid threat”, *Washington Times*, 5 Aug. 2013.

North Africa

↳ **Algeria** Authorities reported thwarting multiple terrorist attacks targeting govt infrastructure. Security forces 20 Aug defused 3 bombs in separate operations in Dellys and Bouira provinces, 19 Aug engaged in violent shootout with gunmen near Lakhdaria following bomb explosion targeting gendarmerie. Other reported incidents during month included: bomb explosion near Tizi Ouzou 4 Aug which wounded 2 soldiers; 3 police, 1 gunman killed in shoot-out near Tizi Ouzou 6 Aug; shoot-out in Bouira province left gunman dead 8 Aug; 2 alleged terrorists killed 13-14 Aug in shootout between towns of Bouira and Bordj Bou Arreridj. Former AQIM emir and current head of Blood Signatories jihadi group Mokhtar Belmokhtar 22 Aug said joining forces with Mali-based MUJAO to create new “Al-Murabitounes” group; also swore allegiance to al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri. Police 4 Aug detained former VP of Islamic Salvation Front Ali Benhadj. Clashes between Tuareg Idnan and Berabish Arab tribes in Bordj Badji el-Mokhtar 13-17 Aug left at least 15 dead, 50 injured. Military 1 Aug announced deployment of additional battalions to Tunisian border, raising forces to estimated 8,000-strong. President Bouteflika 21 Aug reportedly authorised ruling National Liberation Front to convene central committee with view to electing new secretary general, putting end to 6-month deadlock within party; central

committee 29 Aug elected new secretary general Amar Saadani, reportedly close to Bouteflika.

- “L’Algérie fait échouer des attaques terroristes”, *Magharebia*, 23 Aug. 2013.

↳ **Egypt** Violence by security forces against supporters of former president Morsi continued; daily pro-Morsi protests and sit-ins culminated in 14 Aug army crackdown on Morsi supporters in Nahda and Rabaa al-Adawiya squares in Cairo, some 500 reportedly killed and many injured; army declared curfew and state of emergency. Morsi supporters staged further protests 30 Aug; at least 6 reported killed in clashes with police. Cycle of violence that began 14 Aug believed to have claimed over 1,000 lives. Army continued arrests of Muslim Brotherhood (MB) leaders, including MB supreme guide Mohammed Badie on charges of inciting violence; govt 17 Aug announced it is engaged in “war on terror”, considered dissolving MB, however Interim PM Beblawi 27 Aug said would instead monitor group. Interim govt continued transition plan with drafting of several constitutional amendments behind closed doors. Govt mid-Aug closed Islamist TV channels, arrested journalists critical of new govt. Judiciary 12 Aug extended Morsi’s detention. Prominent opposition figure Mohammed ElBaradei 14 Aug resigned post in new govt as VP for International Affairs in protest at army crackdown. Retribution killings against army and police officers increased in major cities including Giza, Ismailia and Alexandria; pro-Morsi militants 14, 16 Aug reportedly attacked several churches, prompting Coptic Church to declare support for army, police. Ousted President Mubarak released from prison 21 Aug, put under house arrest. Egypt increasingly isolated internationally as army repression widely condemned; EU 21 Aug restricted arms sales to Egypt, will review aid. Violence in Sinai continued, militants 19 Aug killed at least 25 Egyptian soldiers in the border city of Rafah.

- “‘Day of Rage’ in Egypt leaves dozens dead”, *Financial Times*, 17 Aug. 2013.

New Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Briefing N°35, *Marching in Circles: Egypt’s Dangerous Second Transition*, 7 August 2013. Nearly two-and-a-half years after Hosni Mubarak’s overthrow, Egypt is embarking on a transition in many ways disturbingly like the one it just experienced, only with different actors at the helm and far more fraught and violent.

↳ **Libya** Oil exports dropped 70% after protests by armed groups protecting ports shut down oil terminals late July; groups involved in the ports’ closure 17 Aug declared Barqa (Cyrenaica) autonomous federal province, attempted black market sale of Libyan oil; govt threatened use of force against group and any oil companies’ vessels trading with them. Insecurity and targeted assassinations continued in Benghazi including killing of reporter Izzedin Qas-sad 9 Aug and anti-explosive officer Mustafa al-Maghribi 23 Aug. Attack on police station in Sebha, SW, 26 Aug reportedly killed 11. At least 4 killed, several injured 25 Aug in clashes between Wersheffana tribe and residents of Zawiya town near Tripoli; govt late month said “Shield” forces intervened to end clashes following mediation. Ethnic Berbers 13 Aug stormed National Congress calling for greater recognition, PM Zeidan 25 Aug announced launch of national dialogue initiative. Deputy PM Awad Baraasi resigned 3 Aug over “dysfunctional govt”; Interior Minister Mohammed Khalifa al-Sheikh resigned 18 Aug after 3 months in post citing lack of support from PM Zeidan, interference by National Con-

gress members. Prosecutor 27 Aug said Saif Gadhafi trial to begin in Tripoli 19 Sept.

- [“Libya’s oil chaos deepens as armed group shuts pipeline”](#), Reuters, 27 Aug. 2013.



Mauritania Govt 3 Aug scheduled legislative, municipal elections for 12 Oct; opposition movement Coordination for Democratic Opposition (COD) called move “unilateral provocation”, threatened boycott; National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) 22 Aug postponed polls to 23 Nov. Govt signed military cooperation agreement with Niger. President Abdel Aziz confirmed country will participate in UN peacekeeping mission in Mali.

- [“Mauritania postpones elections after opposition boycott threat”](#), AFP, 22 Aug. 2013.



Tunisia Ongoing pro- and anti-govt protests and sit-ins as political crisis remained unresolved. Early month saw exchange of fire with counter-terrorism units as they raided private homes. After extensive negotiations within governing Troika and with opposition, ruling Islamist An-Nahda party 22 Aug agreed to start national dialogue with opposition using framework proposed late-July by Tunisian General Labour Union, which entails forming new govt and expert constitutional committee to review constitution draft. However opposition 23 Aug rejected An-Nahda proposal, 24 Aug started week of protest called Rahil (“Departure”) aiming to dissolve govt and National Constituent Assembly, remove An-Nahda-appointed officials. Army 12 Aug launched airstrikes against Islamist militants in Mount Chaambi near Algerian border, after 1 soldier killed and 7 wounded in landmine explosion 4 Aug.

- [“Tunisian Islamists accept union plan to resolve crisis”](#), Reuters, 22 Aug. 2013.



Western Sahara Senior Polisario Front leader Mustapha Bachir Essaid 14 Aug said Polisario “does not exclude return to armed struggle” if Morocco continues to delay negotiation process. Controversy over extension of MINURSO mandate continued: Mahrez

Lamari, chairman of Algerian National Committee for Solidarity with Sahrawi People (CNASPS), 17 Aug called on UN to protect human rights in W Sahara; President of European Conference of Coordination and Support to the Sahrawi People (EUCOCO) 15 Aug denounced France’s “perverse” role in blocking enlargement of MINURSO mandate.

- [“Le Polisario n’écarte pas un retour à la lutte armée”](#), AFP, 14 Aug. 2013.

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