

# CrisisWatch

A monthly bulletin on current and potential conflicts  
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## September 2015 – Trends

### ↓ Deteriorated situations

[Afghanistan](#), [Burkina Faso](#), [Burundi](#), [Central African Republic](#), [Mozambique](#),  
[Somalia](#), [Syria](#), [Tajikistan](#), [Turkey](#), [Yemen](#)

### ↑ Improved situations

[Colombia](#), [Guatemala](#), [Macedonia](#)

## October 2015 – Watchlist

### 💣\* Conflict risk alerts

[Afghanistan](#), [Burkina Faso](#), [Central African Republic](#)

### ☰ Conflict resolution opportunities

[Colombia](#)

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**CrisisWatch** summarises 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 sources. It 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. It identifies situations where, in the coming month, there is a risk of new or significantly escalated conflict, or a conflict resolution opportunity (noting that in some instances there may be both). It also summarises Crisis Group's reports and briefing papers published the previous month.

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**Arrows and alerts:** Up, down and side arrows signify, respectively, improved, deteriorated or unchanged situations. Conflict Risk Alerts (identified with bombs) or Conflict Resolution Opportunities (with doves) are used in addition to arrows: a bomb signifies a risk of escalated violence; a dove an opportunity to advance peace. Both bombs and doves tend to be used where events are moving fast.

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# Africa

## Central Africa

↓ **Burundi** Political violence and insecurity increased in Bujumbura as gov-opposition dialogue remained deadlocked. Tensions increased within security forces and ruling CNDD-FDD: army chief of staff General Prime Niyongabo 11 Sept escaped assassination attempt, reportedly by army members, which left at least six dead. Attacks on opposition, arrests and kidnappings continued, including 7 Sept killing of opposition Union for Peace and Development (UPD) spokesperson Patrice Gahungu in Bujumbura and 15-16 Sept arrest of some 100 men, reportedly to prevent them from joining armed anti-govt groups. Catholic Church 22 Sept called for gov-opposition dialogue; gov 23 Sept said is open to talks, but will not negotiate with opposition leaders who “pursue insurgency”. Armed assailants attacked several security forces’ posts near Bujumbura throughout month; mortars fired at presidential palace on 25 Sept. Attorney general 17 Sept published report identifying 25 leaders of April-June protests, said they worked with organisers of May military coup.

- [“Burundi army chief Gen Niyongabo survives assassination bid”](#), BBC, 11 Sept. 2015.

➔ **Cameroon** Boko Haram (BH) attacks and suicide bombings in Far North continued: at least 24 killed in attacks on villages; over 40 dead, scores injured in 3 and 13 Sept suicide attacks in Kerawa and Kolofata. Army 22 Sept clashed with BH in Far North, at least seventeen BH fighters killed. Arrests of journalists and eight pro-democracy activists, including prominent civil society figure Jean Marc Bikoko arrested 9 Sept, compounded concerns that new anti-terror law is open to abuse. Some 200 Cameroonian UN peacekeepers serving in CAR protested in Yaoundé 9 Sept, demanding payment of overdue wages; gov blamed AU for delay, mobilised funds.

- Hans De Marie Heungoup, [“Cameroon’s Rising Religious Tensions”](#), *African Arguments*, 8 Sept. 2015.
- [“Two suicide bombings kill at least 30 in north Cameroon”](#), *Guardian*, 3 Sept. 2015.

**New** Crisis Group Africa Report N°229, [Cameroon: The Threat of Religious Radicalism](#), 3 Sept. 2015. Religious intolerance is a growing but seriously underestimated risk in Cameroon, both between and inside the major faiths. To halt the spread of violent extremism in the country, Cameroon needs to bring all sects into a new social compact and within the bounds of a charter for religious tolerance.

↓ 🇸🇩\* **Central African Republic** Security deteriorated significantly; at least 36 were killed, some 200 injured and 30,000 displaced 27-29 Sept in intercommunal clashes involving armed youth militia in Bangui. Clashes followed 26 Sept killing of Muslim motorbike taxi driver. Armed militants 28 Sept attacked Bangui prison, freed some 500 inmates; 29 Sept erected barricades and clashed with MINUSCA and Sangaris forces. Anti-balaka fighters 27 Sept reportedly began gathering in provinces, possibly to march to Bangui. UN, U.S. and EU 28 Sept condemned violence, called on all sides to lay down weapons. Thousands demonstrated in Bangui 27-28 Sept criticising international forces, calling for resignation of transitional President Samba Panza and greater role for national military; protest dispersed by UN peacekeepers. Demonstra-

tions also held 28-29 Sept in Bambari and Kaga Bandoro, multiple houses burned. Samba Panza 29 Sept returned early from UNGA, said elections will be delayed and accused “former dignitaries” of fomenting violence. FM Samuel Rangba 30 Sept called for UN peacekeeping mission to be strengthened, sanctions impacting training of military forces to be lifted. Electoral commission early-Sept began work on new calendar to postpone elections, amid deteriorating security and slow pace of electoral preparations and registration of refugees.

- Thibaud Lesueur and Mathilde Tarif, [“Bambari: A Tragic Microcosm of the Crisis in CAR”](#), In Pursuit of Peace, 29 Sept. 2015.
- Mark Schneider, [“Crisis at a Crossroads in Africa”](#), The Hill, 23 Sept. 2015.
- Thibaud Lesueur and Thierry Vircoulon, [“Élections en 2015: un piège pour la Centrafrique”](#), *Jeune Afrique*, 22 Sept. 2015.
- [“RCA : violences et manifestations déchirent Bangui”](#), RFI, 28 Sept. 2015.

**New** Crisis Group Africa Report N°230, [Central African Republic: The Roots of Violence](#), 21 Sept. 2015. In CAR, the conflict between armed groups is now compounded by a conflict between armed communities. The roadmap to end the crisis including elections late 2015 presents only a short-term answer and risks exacerbating existing tensions. The transitional authorities and their international partners must address crucial issues by implementing a comprehensive disarmament policy and reaffirming that Muslims belong within the nation.

➔ **Chad** Opposition to new anti-terrorist measures including burqa ban increased: 30 political parties 12 Sept signed statement denouncing police intimidation. Multinational Joint Task Force still not operational as sporadic Boko Haram (BH) attacks in Lake Chad continued, amid worsening humanitarian situation: UN humanitarian affairs chief 25 Sept warned about refugee crisis in Chad.

- [“L’opposition signe une déclaration contre les convocations de la police”](#), RFI, 16 Sept. 2015.

➔ **DR Congo** Tensions within presidential majority resulted in major govt reshuffle after group of seven majority parties (G7) 14 Sept sent letter to President Kabila urging him to respect constitution; govt ministers asked to confirm loyalty. Opposition Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS) 13 Sept called on representatives to withdraw from talks with presidential majority on participation in dialogue proposed by Kabila. Opposition demonstration in Kinshasa 15 Sept followed by minor clashes; 18 Sept demonstration in Lubumbashi dispersed by police. Constitutional Court 8 Sept called on govt to provide transitional management in 21 new provinces; govt 18 Sept said it will install special commissioners to temporarily govern provinces in move seen by opposition as unconstitutional. Skirmishes between army and FDLR rebels and attacks attributed to Ugandan Allied Defence Forces (ADF) rebels continued in N Kivu.

- [“Violents heurts en marge d’une manifestation de l’opposition à Kinshasa”](#), *Jeune Afrique*, 15 Sept. 2015.

➔ **Rwanda** Govt 11 Sept appointed commission to work on constitutional reform, including modifications to remove presidential term limit, in move criticised by U.S., UK. Supreme Court 9 Sept accepted opposition Green Party’s request to examine constitutionality of such modifications.

- [“Paul Kagame third term in Rwanda? Supreme Court to hear opposition case challenging constitutional amendment”](#), IBTimes, 9 Sept. 2015.

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## Horn of Africa

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➔ **Ethiopia** Joint anti-terrorism taskforce 15 Sept confirmed armed Tigrayan Peoples Democratic Movement (TPDM) chairman Mola Asgedom 11 Sept surrendered after fleeing to Sudan from Eritrea with unconfirmed number of fighters. Mola's flight followed 7 Sept formation of united coalition opposition movement "Salvation of Ethiopia through Democracy" comprising TPDM, Arbegnoch Ginbot 7 for Unity and Democratic Movement (AGUDM), Afar Peoples Liberation Movement (APLM) and Amhara Democratic Force Movement (ADFM); Mola had been elected deputy chairman of coalition.

- ["Ethiopia says 800 'Eritrea-backed' fighters surrender"](#), Al Jazeera, 17 Sept. 2015.

➔ **Kenya** Security operation "Operation Linda Boni" launched 11 Sept to dislodge Al-Shabaab and affiliated militants from coastal forest enclave of Boni, Lamu county; operation expected to last three months. Kenya National Commission on Human Rights 15 Sept released report detailing alleged rights abuses during govt's counter-terrorism campaign including extrajudicial killings and disappearances.

- Rashid Abdi, ["East Africa's Sufi Path to Countering Violent Extremism"](#), In Pursuit of Peace, 15 Sept. 2015.
- ["Kenyan rights group accuses security forces of murder, torture"](#), VoA, 17 Sept. 2015.

⚡ **Somalia** Instability rose as AMISOM lost ground against Al-Shabaab and factional fighting broke out in the Galmudug Interim Administration (GIA). Al-Shabaab attacks continued including 21 Sept attack on govt convoys leaving Mogadishu's presidential palace Villa Somalia, killing eleven (including three Polish citizens), 23 injured; 8 Sept attack on military convoys in Gedo; 8 and 13 Sept attacks on govt convoys near Beledweyne. Al-Shabaab 1 Sept launched large-scale attack against AMISOM's Ugandan-manned base in Janale, Lower Shabelle; Ugandan army said nineteen killed, six soldiers unaccounted for; Al-Shabaab claimed 61 troops killed and significant ammunition stockpiles seized. Al-Shabaab 5-15 Sept regained control of several Lower Shabelle locations; also regained several towns in Bakool, Gedo and Hiiran during month. Conflict continued to escalate between GIA and ASWJ militias who reject GIA including 9 Sept clash in Abudwaq; 73 Somali National Army soldiers defected to GIA. Relations between GIA and Puntland worsened as GIA warned Puntland against antagonistic rhetoric. Puntland Defence Forces from Godad base, near Galkayo, went on strike 17 Sept over unpaid salaries, entered Galkayo and seized Central Bank offices and regional presidential palace, blocked main road from Galkayo to Bacaadweyn; followed similar strikes in Bossaso and Garowe 10 and 13 Sept.

- ["Deadly car blast targets Somalia presidential palace"](#), Al Jazeera, 21 Sept. 2015.

➔ **South Sudan** "Ceasefire and Transitional Security Workshop" laid out in 12 Aug IGAD Compromise Agreement to end civil war began 13 Sept, attended by members of SPLA, SPLA-IO and Former Detainees; parties agreed on six of seven agenda items, including permanent ceasefire modalities and shared command structure with only size and composition of forces in Juba unresolved. SPLA-IO only partially implementing agreement pending resolution of transitional security arrangements in Juba. Ceasefire largely holding since 16 Sept when parties provided declarations of disposition of forces to mediation though conflict in some locations flared, expanded in parts

of Central and Western Equatoria where small groups taking up arms in response to local land grievances, abuses by security forces. AU late Sept announced it will start work on hybrid war crimes court as called for in peace agreement.

- [“South Sudan rival forces trade accusations over fresh clashes in Unity state”](#), Sudan Tribune, 29 Sept. 2015.

➔ **Sudan** Following meeting with Troika (U.S., UK and Norway), opposition Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) coalition 15 Sept released statement affirming it is prepared to sign six-month cessation of hostilities agreement in Darfur, S Kordofan and Blue Nile, said it would participate in National Dialogue (ND) preparatory meeting but rejected current ND arrangements. President Bashir 22 Sept announced rebel leaders who participate in ND to be pardoned, declared govt willingness for ceasefire in conflict regions. Bashir 4 Sept visited China, signed contracts to buy ships and civilian planes, Sudan awarded China concessions for gas exploration. U.S. Special Envoy Donald Booth visited Khartoum 27-30 Aug, met with FM Ghandour on National Dialogue, sanctions and regional affairs. Khartoum-based members of paramilitary group Rapid Support Forces (RSF) 5 Sept rebelled over delayed salaries, erected roadblocks.

- [“Sudanese govt to mull over SRF proposal for peace and dialogue”](#), Sudan Tribune, 19 Sept. 2015.

➔ **Uganda** Former PM and presidential aspirant Amama Mbabazi 7 Sept re-launched voter consultation program in east after his July attempt was blocked by his arrest and police orders against public meetings. Mbabazi supporters clashed with police during rallies in Soroti and Jinja 9 and 10 Sept respectively; police 14 Sept withdrew permission for Mbabazi’s voter consultation program in north. Mbabazi 12 Sept formally joined opposition coalition The Democratic Alliance (TDA) and submitted nomination to be presidential candidate; TDA members currently split over choice of presidential candidate, with rumours Kissa Besigye, leader of opposition forum for Democratic Change (FDC), will leave coalition if not chosen. President Museveni 15 Nov visited Sudan for first time in over a decade, met with President Bashir and SPLA-IO leader Riek Machar to discuss S Sudan; agreed to reactivate joint security committee with Sudan to enhance military cooperation and intelligence sharing.

- [“Ugandan police fire tear gas at supporters of President Museveni’s rival”](#), VoA, 9 Sept. 2015.

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## Southern Africa

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➔ **Madagascar** President Rajaonarimampianina and National Assembly deputies early Sept signed Pact of Responsibility intended to stabilise govt amid ongoing tensions: president agreed not to dissolve parliament, parliament agreed not to attack executive. Administrative tribunal tasked with assessing all municipal election disputes 17 Sept rejected all appeals, confirming electoral commission’s 11 Aug results.

- [“Pacte de non-agression entre le président et les députés?”](#), RFI, 12 Sept. 2015.

↓ **Mozambique** Series of violent incidents reported between police and Renamo militia in central Manica province following late-Aug breakdown of govt-Renamo peace talks and continued Renamo boycott of talks. Police 25 Sept reported Renamo leader Dhlakama’s convoy opened fire on minibus taxi; ensuing gun battle with police

reportedly left some twenty dead, including at least thirteen members of Dhlakama's convoy. Earlier in month, four Renamo members wounded when unidentified gunmen 12 Sept reportedly opened fire on Dhlakama's motorcade. Dhlakama accused ruling Frelimo party of attack; Renamo Gen Sec Manuel Bissopo 17 Sept said party would seek revenge.

- ["Death toll from Mozambique roadside gun battle rises to 20"](#), EWN, 28 Sept. 2015.

➔ **Zimbabwe** Three parliamentary by-elections held 19 Sept in Epworth, Mbire and Marondera Central constituencies; opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) continued by-election boycott, reiterated demands for electoral and democratic reform. ZANU-PF candidates in all three constituencies retained National Assembly seats. Zimbabwe Election Support Network 20 Sept reported police interference and voter intimidation during by-elections. Former VP Grace Mujuru 9 Sept launched manifesto for new opposition People First party amid rumours of possible alliance with opposition MDC-T leader Morgan Tsvangirai. President Mugabe mid-Sept endorsed donor-supported economic reform agenda, marking major policy shift amid increased political factionalism.

- ["ZESN says weekend polls marred by intimidation, calls for reform"](#), New Zimbabwe, 20 Sept. 2015.

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## West Africa

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⚠️\* **Burkina Faso** Transitional govt returned to power 23 Sept, following 16 Sept coup by members of presidential guard (RSP) led by General Gilbert Diendéré, former personal military chief of staff of ousted President Compaoré. Coup leaders 17 Sept proclaimed Diendéré president; military 22 Sept entered Ouagadougou to pressure RSP to disarm. Return to civilian rule followed 22 Sept talks between West African leaders and agreement between army and coup leaders in which RSP agreed to step down and army agreed to withdraw to 50km outside capital and guarantee safety of RSP members and families. Coup followed 14 Sept reconciliation commission report recommending dismantling of RSP and late-Aug/early-Sept Constitutional Council rejection of candidacies of many former pro-Compaoré affiliates for 11 Oct presidential and parliamentary elections. Coup also coincided with planned 17 Sept publication of autopsy results of former President Sankara, assassinated in 1987. At least ten killed and over 100 wounded in RSP crackdown on protesters against coup. Govt 25 Sept dissolved RSP, froze assets of alleged coup supporters and created investigation commission. Army 29 Sept defeated last RSP members who refused to disarm, took control of RSP camp; Diendéré reportedly hiding in Vatican embassy with fate still unknown.

- Cynthia Ohayon, ["Burkina Faso's Troubled Legacy of Dictatorship"](#), In Pursuit of Peace, 18 Sept. 2015.
- ["Au Burkina Faso, le président de transition de retour au pouvoir"](#), *Le Monde*, 23 Sept. 2015.

➔ **Côte d'Ivoire** Constitutional Court 10 Sept published final list of presidential candidates; hardline opposition denounced candidacy of incumbent President Ouattara, who they argue is not eligible to run. Youth wing of opposition National Coalition for Change (CNC) organised anti-Ouattara demonstrations same day in Abidjan, Gagnoa, Bayota and Logouta (west), and Bonoua (east); opposition recorded two dead

and a dozen arrested. Ouattara 2 Sept said willing to meet with CNC but not under threat, responding to late-Aug CNC threat to prevent elections if demands for free and fair polls not answered. Peaceful CNC demonstration held 28 Sept in Abidjan, opposition leaders called for fair access to media and reform of electoral commission, which it accuses of pro-Ouattara bias.

- [“Un mort et des blessés dans des manifestations contre la candidature d’Alassane Ouattara”](#), *Jeune Afrique*, 10 Sept. 2015.

➔ **Guinea** Constitutional Court 1 Sept approved eight presidential candidates to run in 11 Oct election. Opposition 4 Sept continued to question govt willingness to implement late-Aug electoral preparations agreement after ruling Rally of the Guinean People (RPG) initially objected to opposition’s proposed electoral commission representative Hadja Ramatoulaye Bah; President Alpha Condé accepted nomination 13 Sept. Govt and opposition 14 Sept signed deal for redistribution of local authorities. UN Special Rep for W Africa Ibn Chambas 15 Sept announced “significant progress” made on electoral preparations. Campaigning began 10 Sept; incident reported of street violence with ethnic undertones 19 Sept between RPG supporters and opposition supporters in Koundara. Former junta leader Captain Moussa Dadis Camara 21 Sept announced he would not take part in or support any candidate in elections.

- [“L’opposition agite de nouveau la menace de boycott de la présidentielle”](#), *Jeune Afrique*, 16 Sept. 2015.

➔ **Guinea-Bissau** Supreme Court 9 Sept ruled PM Dja’s appointment by President Vaz following mid-Aug sacking of former PM Pereira was unconstitutional, said constitution requires President to consult with dominant party before designating PM. Vaz dismissed Dja same day; 17 Sept appointed sole candidate proposed by ruling PAIGC, former VP Carlos Correira; opposition Party for Social Renewal (PRS) 29 Sept refused to join PM Correira’s cabinet. Former chief of staff Zamora Induta transferred from house arrest to Mansoa military prison 22 Sept.

- [“Sa nomination étant déclarée inconstitutionnelle, le Premier ministre démissionne”](#), *Jeune Afrique*, 9 Sept. 2015.

➔ **Mali** Armed Tuareg coalition Coordination of Movements of Azawad (CMA) 19 Sept announced it had resumed control of northern town of Anéfis following gradual withdrawal early/mid-Sept of pro-govt armed group GATIA. GATIA agreed to withdraw following negotiations with govt and pro-GATIA associations in Gao. CMA 28 Sept announced resumed participation in peace agreement implementation committee (“Committee of the Agreement” or CSA) following meetings between CMA and pro-govt armed groups in Anéfis and Bamako. Radical group activity and criminal violence continued in north and centre including: MINUSMA convoy attacked 11 Sept, two Senegalese peacekeepers wounded; officer killed 12 Sept in Ouonkoro, Mopti region, police station also looted and burned; several villages in Timbuktu region attacked and looted 31 Aug-1 Sept by unidentified individuals; three NGO workers attacked 12 Sept in Ouro Aly Tem village, Mopti region. Govt 21 Sept postponed planned 25 Oct regional and municipal elections, citing insecurity in north.

- [“Les ex-rebelles de la CMA affirment être de retour à Anéfis”](#), RFI, 19 Sept. 2015.

➔ **Niger** Nigerien Democratic Movement (MODEN) 13 Sept named Hama Amadou, former National Assembly President exiled in France over accusations of child traffick-



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ing, their presidential candidate. UN Special Rep for W Africa Ibn Chambas 11 Sept called for fair and inclusive elections, said UNOWA willing to assist with electoral preparations. UN 17 Sept condemned worsening humanitarian crisis in Diffa region amid continued Boko Haram (BH) violence including 24 Sept BH attack in N’Gourtoua that killed over a dozen civilians.

- [“Hama Amadou investi candidat à la présidentielle par le Moden”](#), *Jeune Afrique*, 14 Sept. 2015.

➡ **Nigeria** Govt continued operations against Boko Haram (BH): military spokesperson 13 Sept reported army overran four more insurgent camps, 25 Sept reported army recaptured Banki town in Borno State, over 200 BH surrendered. BH continued attacks on several villages in Borno state, over 130 killed. BH suicide bomb attacks continued in Adamawa and Borno state, over 100 killed. Govt mid-Sept said negotiations ongoing with BH over release of 200 schoolgirls abducted in April 2014. Communal violence reported in several states including clashes between Fulani herdsmen and Tiv farmers 15 Sept in Serking Gudu village, Taraba state leaving ten dead; nineteen killed 16 Sept by gunmen during attack on Kadunung village, Plateau state; some 35 killed 22 Sept by suspected Fulani herdsmen in Shiroro local govt area of Niger state; at least thirteen killed by armed gang 24 Sept in two communities in Rivers state. National police chief 28 Sept reported 435 police killed by criminals in last six months.

- [“More than 100 killed by Boko Haram bombings in Nigeria”](#), *New York Times*, 21 Sept. 2015.

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**New** Crisis Group Africa Report N°231, [Curbing Violence in Nigeria \(III\): Revisiting the Niger Delta](#), 29 Sept. 2015. The Niger Delta is rich in resources, but poverty, unemployment and pollution could reignite a rebellion that ended in 2009. Despite the Boko Haram insurgency in the North East, Nigeria must fulfil its promises of support for the southern delta’s economic development, social justice, and environmental regeneration.

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# Asia

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## North East Asia

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➔ **China (internal)** Group of unidentified assailants described by authorities as separatists attacked police in Aksu, Xinjiang with knives 18 Sept; at least 40 reported killed, including five police.

- [“Knife attack at Xinjiang coal mine leaves 40 dead, injured”](#), Radio Free Asia, 22 Sept. 2015.

➔ **China/Japan** Japanese parliament 19 Sept passed controversial security bills allowing Self Defence Forces (SDF) more freedom in overseas military operations. U.S. and Australia welcomed changes; China accused Japan of threatening regional peace. Polls show majority of Japanese opposed to changes. Japan 16 Sept lodged protest with China over its oil exploration activities in East China Sea; China said its work was in waters under Chinese jurisdiction. China 3 Sept held lavish military parade in Beijing to celebrate 70th anniversary of defeat of Japan in WWII, including 12,000 troops and 200 aircraft, tanks, new medium-range “carrier killer” missiles and long-range missiles; in opening speech President Xi announced China to reduce military by 300,000 to two million troops by 2017, to allow for modernisation and streamlining.

- Yanmei Xie, [“Passive-aggressive Rivalry Deepens China-Japan Tensions”](#), *Interpreter*, 2 Sept. 2015.
- [“China warns Japan over expanding military role abroad”](#), BBC, 19 Sept. 2015.

➔ **Korean Peninsula** DPRK’s National Aerospace Development Administration 14 Sept announced it is in final phases of building satellite that would be launched into orbit with long-range rocket 10 Oct, founding anniversary date of ruling party. Satellite’s purpose ostensibly for gathering data for weather forecasting, but widely seen as intercontinental ballistic missile in the making; U.S. and ROK said launch would violate UN resolutions against Pyongyang’s testing of ballistic missiles. Speaking at U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee 17 Sept, U.S. Asst Sec Defence said additional sanctions could be imposed in response to a DPRK missile launch; however U.S.-Korea Institute at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies 24 Sept said launch unlikely as no preparation has been detected based on analysis of recent satellite photos. Commander of U.S. forces in the Pacific said he favoured deployment of U.S. anti-missile system in ROK (opposed by China and Russia). ROK 15 Sept deployed Aegis combat system-equipped destroyer in Sea of Japan to detect launch. Satellite imagery 18 Sept reportedly showed new activity at DPRK’s Punggye-ri underground nuclear test site. DPRK Atomic Energy Institute 15 Sept announced it restarted all nuclear facilities, upgrading its nuclear arsenal in “quality and quantity”; said DPRK ready to respond to U.S. hostility with “nuclear weapons any time”. ROK and U.S. 7 Sept launched three-day military exercise to prepare for potential biological attacks, 7-26 Sept conducted joint marine drills. China 16 Sept approved construction deal to build new bridge across Tumen River border with DPRK.

- [“North Korea says it is bolstering its nuclear arsenal”](#), *New York Times*, 15 Sept. 2015.

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## South Asia

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↓ 🇦🇫\* **Afghanistan** Taliban seized control of northern city Kunduz after launching attack 28 Sept; as fighting raged between insurgents and govt forces seeking to regain city with assistance from U.S. airstrikes and German military advisors, MPs called for resignation of President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah. Govt counter-offensive drove back Taliban from Kunduz airport, where some 5,000 troops awaited reinforcements. Taliban issued statement 16 Sept claiming former leader Mullah Omar's family had pledged allegiance to new leader Mullah Akhtar Mohammed Mansour, in attempt to reduce worsening internal clashes following 29 July announcement of Mullah Omar's death and his hasty replacement by Mullah Akhtar Mansour. Some Taliban remain opposed to Mansour's leadership, claim Pakistan's military intelligence agency was behind selection. Representatives of 60 donor countries attending Kabul summit 5 Sept pledged continued support for Afghanistan, conditional on key reforms ahead of planned donor meetings in Brussels and Warsaw in 2016. Members of lower house 16 Sept said Electoral Reform Commission (ERC)'s work incomplete, called for computerised identity cards to enable transparent elections. Earlier in month, security official 7 Sept said operation in central Logar province resulted in deaths of 70 Taliban, four soldiers, many civilians. Taliban reportedly attacked village in Nangarhar province 8 Sept, captured several civilians as the insurgents searched for Islamic State (IS) fighters. Local official 10 Sept said IS running three private jails in Achin district of eastern Nangarhar province, holding 127 people, including nineteen soldiers. Taliban 14 Sept attacked Ghazni city prison and freed over 400 prisoners; four police killed. At least 300 IS fighters reportedly attacked checkpoints in Nangarhar province in east 27 Sept.

- ["Shaken by Taliban victory in Kunduz, Afghans flee another provincial capital"](#), *New York Times*, 30 Sept. 2015.

➔ **Bangladesh** Opposition Bangladesh National Party (BNP) 7 Sept claimed govt engaging in enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings, said six BNP members taken by police 22-30 Aug. National newspaper 1 Sept listed 22,000 court cases against BNP members including party leader Khaleda Zia and her son Tarique Rahman, reported around 17,000 workers and activists currently in detention. Court 17 Sept rejected Zia's petition to quash charges of corruption during her previous tenure as PM. International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) 8 Sept tried nine more accused of war crimes during 1971 independence war, dismissed charges against three, in first such acquittals. High court 14 Sept nullified 2003 Indemnity Law, passed by then BNP-Jamaat govt; 2003 law indemnified security personnel involved in controversial Oct 2002-Jan 2003 military/police "operation clean heart" in which over 11,000 were arrested and 40 died in custody. Police 1 Sept charged five suspected militants with murder of atheist blogger Washiqur Rahman, 10 Sept arrested Ansar Bangla Team (ABT) chief over series of killings. Army and Border Guard Bangladesh late-Aug/early-Sept launched first joint operation with Myanmar armed forces against separatist insurgents operating near border.

- ["Bangladesh's PM rejects claims of repression: 'I do politics for the people'"](#), *Guardian*, 21 Sept. 2015.

➔ **India (non-Kashmir)** Several Maoists reported killed in clashes with police during month, including during operation in Malkangiri district 19 Sept in which three Maoist rebels reported killed including Sonadhar, alleged mastermind of May 2013 massacre that left nearly 30 senior Congress leaders dead in Chhatisgarh's Bastar district. Govt 16 Sept banned National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang (NSCN-K) for five years, reportedly over June attack in Manipur; NSCN-K withdrew from 3 Aug peace accord. NSCN-Khole-Kitovi faction now demanding separate solution for only the Nagas living Nagaland.

- ["Maoists on backfoot as cops make dent in poll-bound Bihar"](#), Times of India, 14 Sept. 2015.

➔ **Kashmir** Hostile rhetoric and deadly exchanges of fire along Line of Control (LoC) dividing Pakistan and Indian-administered Jammu & Kashmir continued, undercutting prospects of productive bilateral engagement. Pakistan 5 Sept called on UNSC to urge India to abide by 2003 ceasefire, accusing India of 36 violations in July and of killing twenty civilians in Aug. India and Pakistan 6 Sept exchanged heavy fire in Sauriyan and Poonch; one civilian killed. India 9 Sept accused Pakistan of injuring two soldiers in LoC cross-firing. Indian home minister 11 Sept told Pakistan Punjab Rangers director "India will not fire the first bullet towards Pakistan along the border". During biannual meeting on border security and cooperation, directors of Pakistan Punjab Rangers and Indian Border Security Force pledged to de-escalate tensions, resolve border management issues, curb smuggling and other illegal border crossings. Soon after, Pakistan accused India of unprovoked shelling/firing killing soldier in Pakistan-administered Azad Jammu & Kashmir 14 Sept, and killing three civilians 17 Sept. Commanders of Indian and Pakistani armies 21 Sept discussed ways to lower tensions along LoC.

- ["India in no hurry to talk to Pakistan"](#), Times of India, 17 Sept. 2015.

➔ **Nepal** Constituent Assembly 16 Sept endorsed new constitution by vote of 507-25 and formally adopted charter 20 Sept, fulfilling milestone 2006 Comprehensive Peace Agreement commitment. However widespread protests continued across southern Tarai region by plains-based Madhesi and Tharu groups against perceived rollbacks of past assurances of electoral provisions, affirmative action and disagreement over delineation of new provincial boundaries. 45 killed in protests in Tarai since early August — reportedly 35 protesters in police firing and ten police at the hands of protesters. Following unsuccessful attempts to start dialogue, Home Ministry 22 Sept relaxed curfews, PM Sushil Koirala 23 Sept cancelled attendance of UNGA to hold talks, and govt 24 Sept agreed to recall Nepal Army soldiers deployed in southern districts as confidence-building measure. Formal negotiations between govt and Madhes-based parties began 28 Sept. Indian Ministry of External Affairs released statement 21 Sept expressing concern over protest-related violence in Tarai region, called on parties to defuse tensions. Movement of freight vehicles from India into protest-affected southern areas obstructed following new constitution's promulgation, resulting in fuel shortages and claims of Indian economic blockade. Former PM Baburam Bhattarai resigned from UCPN (Maoist) and from parliament, citing failure of new statute to address Madhesi and Tharu demands.

- Crisis Group Conflict Alert, ["Nepal: Conflict Alert"](#), 2 Sept. 2015.
- ["Back to basics"](#), *The Kathmandu Post*, 24 Sept. 2015.

► **Pakistan** Dozens killed in attack on Peshawar's Badaber air force base 18 Sept; Pakistani Taliban claimed responsibility. Authorities blamed Afghanistan for failing to prevent militant groups from using its territory to plan and launch attacks. Visiting Islamabad 30 Aug, U.S. National Security Advisor Susan Rice urged Pakistan to take action against Haqqani Network. National Security Advisor Sartaj Aziz 31 Aug told German FM that military operations in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)'s N Waziristan Agency had almost destroyed Haqqani Network, which had shifted operations to Afghanistan. Airstrikes and ground operations in N Waziristan and Khyber agency continued. Military 7 Sept announced its first armed drone strike, killing three militant leaders in Shawal. U.S. drone attacks also continued. Deadly militant attacks and clashes continued in FATA's Bajaur Agency, Khyber agency and S Waziristan. In Balochistan, four bodies found in Kalat district 6 Sept; at least 80 extrajudicial killings reported in province this year. Balochistan home secretary 16 Sept said 8,000 suspected militants arrested and 204 alleged terrorists killed in province this year. In Karachi, gunmen 8 Sept killed technician with private Geo TV channel, and driver and key witness in April murder of rights activist Sabeen Mahmud; former Geo TV anchor shot dead next day. Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) 3 Sept withdrew from negotiations with federal govt on resignations of its parliamentarians, citing failure to investigate arrests and killings of party members in Rangers-led operations.

- ["Taliban gunmen attack air force base, 42 killed"](#), Reuters, 18 Sept. 2015.

► **Sri Lanka** OHCHR 16 Sept released report of investigation into alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity, finding "horrific level of violations and abuses" 2002-2011 by govt, pro-govt groups and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), and recommending hybrid special court with international investigators, prosecutors, judges and other experts plus range of legal and institutional reforms for effective investigations and prosecutions and prevention of future crimes. UN Human Rights Council (HRC) 30 Sept debated OHCHR report. In 14 Sept speech on opening day of HRC, FM Mangala Samaraweera announced plans to establish four transitional justice mechanisms: truth commission, offices on missing persons and reparations, and special court for war crimes and other human rights violations; suggested possibility of significant international involvement. Resolution tabled 24 Sept, with govt endorsement, welcomed govt plans and affirmed "importance of participation in a Sri Lankan judicial mechanism, including the Special Counsel's office, of Commonwealth and other foreign judges, defence lawyers, and authorised prosecutors and investigators". Tamil National Alliance (TNA) 25 Sept welcomed resolution as "constructive starting point"; other Tamil parties and organisations rejected it as lacking sufficient international involvement to guarantee independent judicial process. Sinhala nationalist organisations attacked resolution as undermining sovereignty. Parliament 3 Sept approved new national govt of United National Party (UNP) of PM Wickremesinghe and Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) with expanded 48-member cabinet and 45 state and deputy ministers; included numerous ex-Rajapaksa ministers, some of whom face criminal charges/allegations. Parliament speaker 3 Sept appointed TNA leader R. Sampanthan as leader of the opposition. At first Constitutional Council meeting 10 Sept, speaker pledged to appoint full range of constitutionally mandated independent commissions by end-Oct; three independent civil society members formally approved by parliament 22 Sept.

- Crisis Group, ["Statement on the UN Sri Lanka Investigation Report"](#), 18 Sept. 2015.

- [“Sri Lanka lays out plan for reconciliation”](#), *New York Times*, 14 Sept. 2015.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°272, [Sri Lanka Between Elections](#), 12 Aug. 2015.

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## South East Asia

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➔ **Indonesia** Free Papua Movement 9 Sept attacked residents in Papua, kidnapped two Indonesian loggers and took them to Vanimo in bordering Papua New Guinea (PNG). Govt 15 Sept said it would coordinate with PNG; PNG military freed hostages 17 Sept.

- [“Govt draws praise, criticism in kidnapping case”](#), *Jakarta Globe*, 17 Sept. 2015.

➔ **Myanmar** Official campaign period for 8 Nov general election began 8 Sept; some 6,000 candidates from 91 registered parties competing for 1,171 parliamentary seats. Electoral commission rejected 100 candidates, many of them Muslim including Rohingya; about twenty reinstated on appeal, including eleven Muslim candidates. Buddhist Nationalist movement MaBaTha held “celebration rallies” for passage of four nationalist “Race and Religion Protection” laws, urged public not to vote for opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) due to its opposition to laws. President Thein Sein and nine-member team of armed group leaders and negotiators met in Naypyitaw 9 Sept: no conclusive agreement reached, leaving planned Oct signing of Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) uncertain. President agreed “in principle” to all-inclusive deal, but urged this to be achieved “progressively”. Govt did not accept immediate inclusion of three groups fighting its forces in Kokang state. At armed group summit that ended 30 Sep, seven groups decided to sign NCA, ten groups will not, and two undecided. Signing likely to go ahead in Oct, but with only seven to eight groups. Sporadic clashes between govt forces and armed groups also continue in Shan and Kachin states. Shan state army warned political parties to suspend campaigning activities in southern Shan areas where clashes with govt occurred mid-Sept.

- [“In Myanmar, Muslim minority is targeted for hate, not for votes”](#), *Al Jazeera*, 20 Sept. 2015.

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**New** Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°146, [Myanmar’s Peace Process: A Nationwide Ceasefire Remains Elusive](#), 16 Sept. 2015. A ceasefire between Myanmar’s government and armed groups is tantalisingly close. It would end 60 years of armed conflict and ease the path of democratic transition. But time is short before historic elections on 8 November, and any failure to seal an accord could trigger renewed clashes that would be hard to bring back under control.

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➔ **Philippines** Senate President Franklin Drilon and House Speaker Belmonte 23 Sept said Congress aims to pass Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) by 16 Dec. Recent versions of bill now refer to it as Basic Law on the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region (BLBAR). Govt 7 Sept activated National Task Force for the Disbandment of the Private Armed Groups to dismantle private armies in proposed Bangsamoro region. Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) 11 Sept threatened to stop surrendering firearms if BBL is “watered-down”; 18 Sept rejected changes to BBL proposed by congress, accepted govt’s official version of 25 Jan Mamasapano incident and expressed wish to “bury the issue”. Justice department 22 Sept recommended 90 suspects from MILF, BIFF and private armed groups be criminally charged with direct assault, murder and theft in connection with Mamasapano incident. Basilan Regional Trial Court 10 Sept

officially declared Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) a terrorist group. ASG 14 Sept abducted ten civilians. ASG suspected of responsibility for bomb on bus in Zamboanga 18 Sept, killing one and wounding 32. Suspected ASG 21 Sept kidnapped four people including one Norwegian and two Canadian tourists in Samal. Military 21 Sept launched offensive against ASG in Sulu; reported 1,000 marines and army clashed with 30 ASG.

- [“Philippine rebels reject changes in proposed autonomy law”](#), Jakarta Post, 18 Sept. 2015.

➔ **South China Sea (SCS)** Washington-based think-tank Center for Strategic and International Studies 14 Sept released satellite imagery showing Chinese construction of airstrip on a third artificial island in SCS, Mischief Reef, said it could be easily equipped for “full military action” if needed. Japan and Vietnam 15 Sept signed six co-operation agreements, including Japanese pledge to provide further patrol vessels to strengthen Vietnam’s law enforcement capability in SCS. China and Malaysia 17 Sept held first ever joint live-troop exercise in Malacca Strait, largest military exercise between China and an Association of Southeast Asian Nations country. Speaking at U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee 17 Sept U.S. Senator John McCain urged Pentagon to send navy vessels within 12-mile limit of SCS to send clear warning to China. Commander of U.S. Pacific Fleet said U.S. should be allowed to exercise freedom of navigation and maritime flight in SCS; China said it was “extremely concerned” by remarks. South Korea 14 Sept called for Code of Conduct on SCS, signed accord with Philippines to allow confidential military information exchanges.

- Yanmei Xie, [“New Chinese Book Says the U.S.-China 'Feast on Power' is Winding Down”](#), ChinaFile, 21 Sept. 2015.
- [“China building airstrip on 3<sup>rd</sup> artificial island, images show”](#), *New York Times*, 15 Sept. 2015.

➔ **Thailand** National Reform Council (NRC) 6 Sept rejected by 135 votes to 105 the draft constitution prepared by Constitution Drafting Committee; NRC then dissolved, in line with interim constitution. Junta to remain in power for another twenty months with revised roadmap for new constitution and general election. Ruling National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) increased repression of its critics, including detaining former energy minister and Pheu Thai Party (PTP) member Pichai Naripthaphan 9 Sept, PTP member and former MP Karun Hosakul 10 Sept, and journalist for The Nation Pravit Rojanaphruk 13 Sept; all three released 15 Sept. At least 200 demonstrators 19 Sept marched to commemorate anniversary of 2006 coup that ousted PM Thaksin Shinawatra, largest anti-govt demonstration since immediate aftermath of May 2014 coup. Police 28 Sept announced conclusion of 17 Aug Erawan shrine bombing investigation; suspect in custody allegedly confessed to planting bomb. Police stated attack carried out by Uighur people-smuggling gang in revenge for police crackdown. Amid ongoing deadly violence in south, main insurgent group Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) 7 Sept released video message stating intention to continue fighting for independence.

- [“Thai leaders now eye polls in July 2017”](#), *Straits Times*, 17 Sept. 2015.

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# Europe and Central Asia

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## Balkans

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➔ **Bosnia** Constitutional Court 9 Sept ruled July decision by Republika Srpska (RS) legislative assembly to hold referendum on authority of national courts and Office of High Representative (OHR) in RS legal, despite veto from Bosniak delegates. State and RS ministers 10 Sept attended “structured dialogue” mediated by EU enlargement commissioner Johannes Hahn, agreed on package of justice reforms. RS ruling Bosnian Serb party SNSD 13 Sept said it will go ahead with planned referendum despite agreement.

- [“Republika Srpska constitutional court upholds decision on referendum”](#), InSerbia News, 10 Sept. 2015.

↑ **Macedonia** Month saw progress in implementation of July EU-brokered agreement between opposition and govt: opposition 1 Sept returned to parliament, ending fifteen-month boycott; political parties 15 Sept agreed on appointment of Katica Janeva as special prosecutor to investigate claims that PM Gruevski’s govt was illegally wiretapping citizens, meeting deadline set in July deal. EU-brokered talks on media reform began late month, opposition said reform essential before elections scheduled for April. Skopje court 2 Sept said tapes possessed by opposition which allegedly prove illegal wiretapping not admissible as evidence in court since they were “illegally obtained”; Gruevski maintains tapes not authentic. Opposition called the ruling provocative, but said will not abandon talks on implementation of July agreement.

- [“Macedonia names special prosecutor for wiretap scandal”](#), RFE/RL, 16 Sept. 2015.

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## Caucasus

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➔ **Armenia** Hundreds of protesters returned to streets in Yerevan 1 Sept in renewed protest against electricity price hike, accusing govt of failing to fulfil its promise to subsidise prices following June protests; police clashed with protesters, arrested five, including one of leaders of June demonstrations. Police 12 Sept forcibly removed protesters blocking main road through city, briefly detained some 48.

- [“Armenian police end latest protest against price rise”](#), Reuters, 12 Sept. 2015.

➔ **Azerbaijan** Amid international condemnation of ongoing govt crackdown on civil society, Baku court 1 Sept sentenced investigative journalist Khadija Ismayilova to 7.5 years’ jail on embezzlement and tax evasion charges, in trial widely believed to be politically motivated. UN human rights chief 8 Sept condemned verdict, EU lawmakers 10 Sept passed resolution calling for Ismayilova’s release. Govt 11 Sept cancelled European Commission delegation visit to Baku, said will review its relations with EU.

- [“EU and Azerbaijan: Breaking up or muddling through?”](#), EurasiaNet, 16 Sept. 2015.

➔ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** Ceasefire violations along contact line continued, including reported use of heavy weapons and civilian casualties. NK de facto authorities 13 Sept held local elections, denounced as illegal by EU, U.S. and Turkey among



others. Armenian and Azerbaijani FMs met in presence of OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs in New York 25 Sept; co-chairs expressed concern over rising tensions, discussed planned visit to region. Both sides held large-scale military exercises: following planned Armenian drills 3-6 Sept, Azerbaijan launched exercises involving 65,000 troops, 700 armoured vehicles and heavy weaponry 6-14 Sept. Sargsyan 7 Sept met with Russian President Putin, said Moscow will lend Armenia \$200mn to modernise army.

- [“Azerbaijan starts war games as Armenia tension escalates”](#), Bloomberg, 7 Sept. 2015.

➔ **North Caucasus (Russia)** Responding to increased Islamic State (IS) presence and recruitment in North Caucasus, Ingushetia leader Yunus-Bek Yevkurov 5 Sept called on Moscow to revoke citizenship of Russians who leave to fight with IS, following similar call from Chechen leader Kadyrov in July and despite constitution forbidding revocation. Six Chechens arrested 1 Sept on suspicion of trying to join IS; two arrested in Moscow 25 Sept after returning from Syria on suspicion of fighting alongside IS. In Dagestan, two masked men 9 Sept shot dead Sufi imam Magomed Khidirov in Novy Kurush village; Salafi mosque closed in response, villagers burnt contents. Salafi imam and twenty parishioners in Novy Kurush detained by police 22 Sept. Two suspected militants killed by their own explosive device 14 Sept near Balakhani village. Eight civilians including local healer killed 15 and 18 Sept in S Dagestan, reportedly by militants. Kadyrov 3 Sept called on Islamic countries to unite and oppose “inhuman policies of Western countries”.

- [“Putin's closest ally - and his biggest liability”](#), *Guardian*, 23 Sept. 2015.

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## Eastern Europe

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➔ **Ukraine** Both sides largely upheld renewed ceasefire starting 1 Sept, with some small-scale violations and reports of civilian casualties in separatist regions. During visit to Crimea, Russian President Putin 12 Sept welcomed cessation of fighting; statement came as observers point to Moscow’s apparent diminishing enthusiasm for separatist cause. Following meeting to discuss implementation of Feb 2015 Minsk peace agreement and withdrawal of heavy weapons from contact line, FMs of Ukraine, Russia, France and Germany 12 Sept reported “significant progress”; however little movement of weapons observed on the ground. NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg 24 Sept said Russian troops still present in east. Amid tensions within separatist leadership, president of self-proclaimed Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR) parliament Andrei Purgin dismissed and detained by DPR security forces 4 Sept, released 8 Sept. Separatist leaders 16 Sept announced local elections in DPR and Luhansk People’s Republic (LPR) to take place 18 Oct and 1 Nov; President Poroshenko said decision contravenes Feb Minsk deal, which stipulates elections in separatist regions take place under Ukrainian law, and extended sanctions against individuals and entities with suspected links to separatist regions. Ultra-nationalist Radical Party 1 Sept left coalition govt following 31 Aug initial approval of law giving more autonomy to separatist regions. U.S. and EU 2 Sept extended sanctions against Russian and Ukrainian individuals with connections to March 2014 Crimea annexation by Russia and violence in east. Parliament 17 Sept approved debt restructuring deal reached with creditors late Aug. Govt 8 Sept accepted International Criminal Court jurisdiction over crimes committed in Ukraine since Feb 2014. Crimean Tatar movements 21 Sept announced indefinite

blockade of food deliveries from Ukraine. President Obama and President Putin 28 Sept met on fringes of UNGA, but little movement from either side on Ukraine.

- Paul Quinn-Judge, [“Syrian Gambits Will Not Erase Putin’s Ukraine Problem”](#), In Pursuit of Peace, 29 Sept. 2015.
- [“Putin tightens reins on Ukraine rebels, putting conflict on ice”](#), Bloomberg, 18 Sept. 2015.

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## Western Europe/Mediterranean

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➔ **Cyprus** Greek Cypriot leader Anastasiades and Turkish Cypriot leader Akinci 10 Sept met with heads of Cyprus’ Orthodox Christian, Armenian, Maronite and Latin Catholic churches, and Turkish Grand Mufti for first time amid ongoing reunification talks. Turkish FM Feridun Sinirlioglu 7 Sept visited Turkish Cypriot North on first official trip as FM, called for sincerity in talks; President of European Council Donald Tusk 11 Sept visited Cyprus, said next three months critical.

- [“Coming months critical for reunification”](#), Cyprus Mail, 14 Sept. 2015.

⚠ **Turkey** Clashes between security forces and Kurdish insurgency PKK worsened in east and south east, while govt also launched seven airstrikes against PKK positions in Turkey and Northern Iraq. Seventeen soldiers killed in PKK attack in Daglica, Hakkari 6 Sept; fourteen soldiers killed in Igdir 8 Sept; 23 civilians reported killed in Cizre district of Sirnak province during nine-day curfew that ended 12 Sept. Interior ministry 11 Sept suspended mayor of Cizre district for allegedly inciting armed uprising and terror propaganda. Since Suruç attack on 20 July, Ankara has reported 135 security officials killed and 278 injured, and 75 civilians killed in PKK attacks as of 28 Sept; PKK’s armed wing People’s Defense Force (HPG) reported 112 insurgents killed in same period, while govt has declared some 131 “temporary military secure zones” in over fifteen eastern provinces, and imposed curfews in Muş, Van, Şırnak and Diyarbakır provinces. Umbrella group Unions of the Communities of Kurdistan (KCK) 15 Sept said willing to participate in negotiations with govt under supervision of mediators as part of strengthened ceasefire and democratic resolution of crisis. Nationwide demonstrations against terrorism 6-9 Sept; over 300 violent incidents against pro-Kurdish HDP party buildings reported. Ahead of snap polls scheduled for 1 Nov HDP co-chair Demirtas 2 Sept said security conditions in east and south east unsuitable for election campaign. Parliament 3 Sept renewed mandate allowing military to conduct cross-border operations in Syria and Iraq, and allowing govt to authorise foreign troops based on Turkish soil. Two soldiers killed, two injured 1 and 9 Sept following cross-border fire from Islamic State in provinces of Kilis and Hatay along Syrian border. Amid escalating European refugee crisis PM Davutoğlu called for more action by international community to address problem.

- [“Turkey’s PKK conflict takes toll on Kurdish city”](#), *Wall Street Journal*, 13 Sept. 2015.

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## Central Asia

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➔ **Kazakhstan** President Nazarbayev 11 Sept appointed daughter Dariga Nazarbayeva deputy PM, fuelling speculation she is being positioned to take over when he leaves office. Amid concerns over currency and economy, Nazarbayev 1 Sept an-

nounced new trade agreements with China worth \$23bn. Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) conducted military drills involving some 95,000 Russian and Kazakh troops in Russia. FM Erlan Idrissoev in 26 Sept interview said some 200 Kazakhs are fighting alongside Islamic State in Syria.

- [“New post for Kazakh leader’s daughter sparks fresh succession talk”](#), Reuters, 11 Sept 2015.

➔ **Kyrgyzstan** Campaigning for 4 Oct parliamentary elections began early month amid concerns that electronic voting system might prevent some from casting votes, lead to disputed results. President Atambayev held joint press conference with Iranian President Rouhani 5 Sept; Rouhani said countries should expand security and intelligence cooperation in fight against terrorism.

- [“Kyrgyz election: same again?”](#), Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 25 Sept. 2015.

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**New** Crisis Group Europe and Central Asia Briefing N°76, *Kyrgyzstan: An Uncertain Trajectory*, 30 Sept. 2015. Kyrgyzstan’s relative stability belies its brittle neighbourhood, simmering ethnic tensions, religious extremism and political frustration. Russia, the West and China share interests here, creating a unique opportunity to work together for Kyrgyzstan’s democratic development during and after the 4 October parliamentary elections.

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⚠ **Tajikistan** Deepening concerns over political stability after General Abdukhalim Nazarzoda, former deputy defence minister and previously member of United Tajik Opposition which signed peace agreement in 1997 following civil war, killed amid accusations of planned coup. Unknown assailants 4 Sept opened fire at police station in Vakhdat town and police patrols near Dushanbe leaving at least 22 dead, including eight police. Govt said attacks ordered by Nazarzoda, accused him of planning coup. Attacks followed by clashes between assailants and police near Dushanbe airport; Nazarzoda reportedly fled to Romit Gorge region with unspecified number of supporters, most of whom killed in series of skirmishes. Security forces 16 Sept announced Nazarzoda killed in search operation. Govt said Nazarzoda was member of Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan’s (IRPT) which was banned late Aug amid opposition crackdown; IRPT denied. Thirteen IRPT members arrested 16-17 Sept, govt 29 Sept declared IRPT terrorist organisation. Collective Security Treaty Organisation summit in Dushanbe 15 Sept discussed security threats related to Islamic State, security of Tajik-Afghan border; Moscow reportedly said it will provide further military support on border if necessary or requested.

- [“Abduhalim Nazarzoda, Tajik general blamed for recent violence”](#), RFE/RL, 16 Sept. 2015.

➔ **Turkmenistan** Amid falling oil prices, Council of Elders advisory body 10 Sept proposed to scale back welfare system, abolish subsidies of electricity, cooking gas and water. Military drills to practice defence against Afghan militants took place in strategic Serhetabat and gas-producing Yoloten areas late Aug.

- [“Turkmenistan set to scrap core welfare benefits”](#), EurasiaNet, 10 Sept. 2015.

➔ **Uzbekistan** Following late Aug U.S. suggestion that Uzbekistan should join multinational coalition against Islamic State, President Karimov 1 Sept ruled out foreign military bases in country, said Uzbek forces will not be involved in military activities abroad. Former German MP early month said Berlin paid up to €25mn to Tashkent for lease of Termez military base.

- [“Karimov rules out foreign military bases”](#), Silk Road Reporters, 2 Sept. 2015.

## Latin America and the Caribbean

↑ ✂ **Colombia** Govt and FARC 23 Sept reached breakthrough agreement on transitional justice, establishing special “Jurisdiction for Peace” to try those deemed responsible for most serious and representative crimes committed during conflict. President Santos and FARC leader Timochenko same day agreed final peace agreement will be signed within six months. 41st round of FARC-govt negotiations ended 17 Sept with progress on “end of the conflict” issues, including first visit to Havana of UNSG and UNASUR representatives to discuss options for monitoring and verifying future bilateral ceasefire and disarmament. FARC lead negotiator Iván Márquez 17 Sept said guerrillas ready to start discussing transition to legal political movement. Interior Minister Juan Fernando Cristo 15 Sept sent to Congress constitutional reform project for implementation of future peace agreement; creates Legislative Commission for Peace proportionally drawn from current Congress to accelerate formulation of necessary laws and constitutional reforms, and gives president temporary decree powers to implement final accords. Critics include former President Uribe and FARC, which warned unilateral attempts to design implementation mechanism could jeopardise peace. Chief Commander of National Liberation Army (ELN) Gabino 9 Sept said exploratory talks with gov't nearly complete amid continuing ELN violence; including early-Sept forced displacement of over 200 members of indigenous Embera communities in Carmen de Atrato, Chocó. President Santos 22 Sept launched new counter-drug strategy, emphasising voluntary coca crop substitution and social investment. Army commander General Alberto José Mejía 25 Sept announced complete revision of military doctrine. Tensions with Venezuela over border closure continued (see Colombia/Venezuela).

- Crisis Group Statement, [“Statement on the Transitional Justice Agreement Between the Colombian Government and FARC”](#), 24 Sept. 2015.
- [“Colombia to introduce constitutional reform for peace process”](#), teleSUR, 16 Sept. 2015.

➡ **Colombia/Venezuela** Venezuelan President Maduro and Colombian President Santos agreed 22 Sept to “progressive” restoration of normality following Venezuela’s 19 Aug indefinite border closure; settlement involves seven commitments including investigating social problems at border, reinstating ambassadors. Venezuela implemented restrictive measures throughout month in some 28 municipalities in Táchira, Zulia, Apure and Amazonas states, placing entire corridor bordering Colombia under military control, with rights of freedom of movement and assembly suspended. Venezuela continued to deport Colombians; UN reported over 1,600 deported, 20,000 fled by late Sept.

- Phil Gunson, [“Border Drama \(II\): Tension and Uncertainty in San Antonio, Venezuela”](#), In Pursuit of Peace, 23 Sept. 2015.
- Javier Ciurlizza, [“Border Drama: A First-hand Account from Cúcuta, Colombia”](#), In Pursuit of Peace, 14 Sept. 2015.
- Javier Ciurlizza, [“El impacto de la crisis fronteriza en la región”](#), Semana, 8 Sept. 2015.
- [“Venezuela and Colombia to normalise ties after border row”](#), BBC, 22 Sept. 2015.

↑ **Guatemala** After Congress 1 Sept lifted President Otto Pérez Molina's immunity, allowing him to be formally investigated and prosecuted, president resigned 2 Sept under pressure over alleged involvement in massive customs fraud scheme; jailed same day to await verdict of corruption investigation. Congress 3 Sept swore in VP Alejandro Maldonado Aguirre as acting president; 16 Sept appointed former leader of Presidential Human Rights Commission Alfonso Fuentes Soria new VP. Maldonado acknowledged protesters' demands and said he will take up political reform process. First round of general elections held 6 Sept with record historical turnout of over 70%; Jimmy Morales, television comedian running with nationalist National Convergence Front (FCN), and former First Lady Sandra Torres of National Unity of Hope (UNE) secured places in 25 Oct run-off presidential vote, defeating frontrunner Manuel Baldizón of Renewed Democratic Liberty (Líder). Reformers continued to press for changes in electoral laws and strengthening of transparency and oversight mechanisms ahead of Oct polls.

- ["Guatemala president's downfall marks success for corruption investigators"](#), *Guardian*, 9 Sept. 2015.

➔ **Haiti** Presidential campaign opened 9 Sept ahead of 25 Oct elections, amid opposition protests calling for cancellation of 9 Aug legislative elections and resignations of President Martelly and Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) President Pierre-Louis Opoint. Protests followed 8 Sept withdrawal of leading opposition party Vérité from 25 Oct run-off legislative elections, citing election-related violence in Aug polls and CEP disqualifying its presidential candidate on questionable grounds. Some Vérité parliamentary candidates who qualified for run-off elections said they would still run. Most international and some domestic observers deemed first round of polls "acceptable" despite limited violence; all applauded decision to rerun first round in 25 districts where violence occurred. CEP 27 Sept announced two first round winners in senatorial elections, former Senator Youri Latortue and Jean Renel Senatus, prompting fears announcement could exacerbate political tensions and unhappiness with CEP. Patriotic Unity (INITE) opposition party 8 Sept announced withdrawal from Martelly govt ending Jan political agreement to form broad coalition govt. Migration crisis with Dominican Republic continued, with several hundred Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent reportedly deported.

- ["Haiti elections officials: Two senators elected in Aug. 9 balloting"](#), *Miami Herald*, 28 Sept. 2015.

➔ **Mexico** Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI), appointed by Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR) to monitor investigation into Sept 2014 disappearance of 43 students in Iguala, issued report 6 Sept finding errors, omissions and inconsistencies in federal investigation; called on govt to pursue new lines of investigation and continue working to clarify students' fate. Experts rejected federal prosecutors' assertion that criminals working with local police killed and incinerated students at local dump; cited multiple flaws in investigation; also presented evidence federal military and police aware of attacks on students but failed to intervene. Federal official 14 Sept said govt would ask IACHR to extend GIEI mandate for six months; 24 Sept said govt would appoint a special prosecutor to investigate cases of disappearances throughout country, but refuses to consider all international commission prosecutors. Federal police 16 Sept captured Gildardo López, alias "El Gil", senior

member of Guerreros Unidos gang that allegedly collaborated with municipal police to kidnap students; López alleged to have ordered students' killing and incineration.

- [“Experts dismiss Mexico's account of apparent student massacre”](#), Reuters, 7 Sept. 2015.

➡ **Venezuela** Opposition Democratic Unity (MUD) alliance leader Leopoldo López, in military prison for over eighteen months, sentenced 10 Sept to fourteen years' jail for allegedly instigating violence early 2014 when he led “La Salida” movement which mounted protests demanding President Maduro's resignation or removal by constitutional means. President of electoral authority (CNE) Tibisay Lucena 17 Sept announced several multilateral bodies would be invited to “accompany” 6 Dec elections, including Mercosur, Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America (ALBA) and UNASUR – all seen as aligned with Maduro govt. Lucena reiterated rejection of observers from Organization of American States (OAS) or EU. Tensions with Colombia over border closure continued (see Colombia/Venezuela). Govt continued to frame border closure and suspension of constitutional guarantees as essential to halt smuggling of vital goods across border and resolve shortages, denied closure causing economic damage; main employers' federation 15 Sept put daily losses at some \$3mn. MUD leaders reiterated allegations that restrictive border measures were govt attempt to affect outcome of 6 Dec elections, noted suspension of constitutional guarantees would be used to restrict opposition campaign and harass candidates; said govt trying to rally supporters by inciting nationalist sentiment.

- Phil Gunson, [“Venezuela: ¿observación electoral? No gracias...”](#), *Semana*, 23 Sept. 2015.
- [“Venezuela opposition braces for challenging election after leader's jailing”](#), *Guardian*, 12 Sept. 2015.

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# Middle East & North Africa

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## Eastern Mediterranean

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➔ **Israel-Palestine** Clashes broke out between Israeli police and Palestinian protesters at Al-Aqsa Mosque starting 10 Sept after govt, fearing violent escalation at site during visits by religious Jews during Jewish New Year (Rosh Hashana), revived limitations on Muslim access 9 Sept. According to Jordanian officials, access restrictions are violation of Nov 2014 commitment made by PM Netanyahu to Jordan. Following intervention by Western and Arab leaders, Netanyahu mid-Sept agreed to roll back limitations. Clashes resumed late month. Tensions also increased in Gaza, which saw protests over worsening electricity shortages 12-15 Sept in central and southern Gaza. Hamas 18 Sept called for protests in W Bank; Palestinian national security forces violently broke up peaceful protest outside Azza refugee camp. Rockets fired from Gaza same day, responsibility claimed by Salafi-jihadi group; Israeli air force responded by bombing three targets in Gaza. Egypt continued operations against Gaza-Sinai tunnels, flooding Gaza-Egypt border with seawater 18 Sept. Emergency session of Palestinian National Council cancelled 9 Sept, postponed for at least three months. PA President Mahmoud Abbas spoke at UNGA 30 Sept, said Palestine no longer bound by agreements which Israel “continually violated”, Israel must assume responsibilities as occupying power; Netanyahu called speech “deceitful”. Abbas also attended ceremony raising Palestinian flag outside UN. While fourteen Palestinians in Israeli prisons continued protesting their administrative detention, Israel 16 Sept rearrested Mohammed Allan, high-profile hunger-striking Palestinian prisoner, on his release from hospital. Palestinian reported killed by premature detonation of grenade in his attempted attack on Israeli soldiers near Hebron 21 Sept; Palestinian woman shot dead by Israeli soldier at Hebron checkpoint 22 Sept. Israel 27 Sept struck Syrian army targets in Golan Heights in response to “errant” rockets from Syria.

- [“Abbas out of options, out of synch with angry Palestinians”](#), *New York Times*, 28 Sept. 2015.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°162, [No Exit? Gaza & Israel Between Wars](#), 26 Aug. 2015.

➔ **Lebanon** Protests in Beirut over garbage crisis, which began mid-July, continued throughout month: 1 Sept sit-in in environment minister’s office demanding his resignation violently dispersed by police; at least 30 detained and several injured as police clashed with protesters 16 Sept; thousands rallied 20 Sept. At emergency meeting 9 Sept govt decided to give local municipalities authority to treat waste. MPs and ministers met for “National Dialogue” same day to discuss ongoing political crisis and deadlock over presidency; no agreement reached at this or subsequent sessions. Parliament 2 Sept again failed to elect new president, and again 30 Sept due to lack of quorum; vote postponed to 21 Oct. Security forces 22 Sept reported arrest of Syrian citizen suspected of involvement in Nov 2013 bombing of Iranian embassy in Beirut.

- [“Lebanon’s rubbish crisis is a chance to clean up the polluted political system”](#), *Guardian*, 2 Sept. 2015.

↓ **Syria** Russia initiated significant increase in its military support for President Assad's govt, sending marines, fighter jets armed for air-to-air combat, surface-to-air missiles, tanks, attack helicopters and other equipment to expanded airbase near coastal city Latakia; 30 Sept launched first airstrikes in Syria, primarily targeting non-IS rebels including at least one faction reportedly backed covertly by U.S. Speaking at 4 Sept press conference, Putin portrayed move as part of ongoing effort to support Syria govt against "terrorist aggression". U.S. early Sept initially condemned Russian military build-up, later in month initiated talks between defence ministries in effort to "de-conflict"; 28 Sept meeting on sidelines of UNGA between Presidents Obama and Putin yielded no apparent narrowing of gap between them on Syria. Top U.S. general 16 Sept acknowledged \$500m U.S. scheme to train and equip Syrian rebels to fight IS had generated only "four or five" fighters operating in Syria. U.S.-led coalition, including France and Australia, 16 Sept announced extended air campaign over eastern Syria targeting Islamic State (IS); France 27 Sept carried out first airstrikes against IS in Deir al-Zour, north-east Syria. Following series of clashes between pro-regime Hizbollah and Jaish al-Fateh rebel coalition, Islamist group Ahrar al-Sham and Iranian govt renewed talks, 20 Sept agreed ceasefire in rebel-held Zabadani and Madaya towns near Lebanese border and regime-held Fouaa and Kafraya villages in Idlib province. Most of Syria's leading non-jihadi rebel groups 15 Sept signed joint statement publicly accepting for the first time 2012 Geneva Communiqué as basis for political process and ultimate transition – though emphasising that Assad and "pillars of his regime" must be excluded. Islamist-led Jaish al-Fateh coalition 9 Sept seized strategic Abu Duhur air base in Idlib province, one of last remaining regime stronghold in Idlib. Rebel rocket and regime airstrikes continued, including at least two dozen civilians reported killed in 21 Sept govt attack on Aleppo. Amid escalating refugee crisis in Europe, EU leaders 23 Sept pledged additional €1bn to support refugees in Syria's neighbouring countries.

- Joost Hiltermann, "[Tackling the Syrian Refugee Crisis](#)", In Pursuit of Peace, 15 Sept. 2015.
- "[U.S. begins military talks with Russia on Syria](#)", *New York Times*, 18 Sept. 2015.

**New** Crisis Group Middle East Report N°163, *New Approach in Southern Syria*, 3 Sept. 2015. Syria's civil war is stuck in a vicious cycle, and the U.S. is best placed to change the appalling status quo. Washington should take advantage of opportunities in southern Syria to launch a new policy to improve the chance of a political settlement, chiefly by deterring regime aerial attacks on rebel-held civilian areas.

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## Gulf

➔ **Bahrain** FM 10 Sept said explosives smuggled from Iran and seized by authorities in July sufficiently powerful to destroy Manama, urged Iran to stop interfering in Bahrain's internal affairs and rethink its foreign policy. Govt late Sept announced 1.4 tonnes of explosives found in Nuwaidrat district south of Manama, several arrests made. Bomb attack targeted police station in Khamis village 10 Sept, no injuries. Prosecutor 7 Sept said man arrested for "insulting" troops participating in Yemen campaign on social media. 32 countries mid-month expressed concerns over Bahrain's human rights record at UN HRC.



- [“Iran explosives enough to destroy capital”](#), Al Arabiya, 10 Sept. 2015.
- ➔ **Iran** Parliament’s special agreement for reviewing nuclear agreement held numerous sessions to debate content amid deepening political infighting ahead of Feb 2016 elections to parliament and Assembly of Experts; committee seen as unlikely to block agreement. U.S. Senate Democrats early Sept blocked legislation to quash Iran nuclear deal. IAEA 21 Sept said significant progress made in investigation into possible military dimensions of nuclear program, Iran submitted environmental samples from Parchin military site. President Rouhani 25 Sept said “conditions were ripe” to begin implementing nuclear agreement. Rouhani late month attended UNGA, 26 Sept called for investigation into reported deaths of some 1,000 at hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia.
- Joost Hiltermann, [“Western Dream of Regime Change in Iran is Over, so What’s Next?”](#), Reuters, 15 Sept. 2015.
- Ali Vaez, [“Key Features of Iran’s Nuclear Program”](#), In Pursuit of Peace, 10 Sept. 2015.
- [“Iran rushes to meet terms of nuclear deal to lift sanctions”](#), *Guardian*, 25 Sept. 2015.
- ➔ **Iraq** Reforms in response to Aug street protests continued: PM Abadi 9 Sept fired 133 deputy ministers and director generals, following dismissal of three VPs and cuts in number of bodyguards allotted to senior politicians; Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani continued to support reforms, called on protesters to show patience, warned against manipulation by Shiite factions keen to oust PM, and called for prosecution of corrupt officials. Tensions between four main Kurdish parties continued in Kurdistan Regional Administration following end of President Barzani’s term 18 Aug. Islamic State (IS) attacks and bombings continued including 17 Sept bombing of Baghdad market that killed at least 23; ongoing clashes with govt troops and affiliated militias around Ramadi. Turkish airstrikes against PKK rebels continued, Turkish ground forces crossed into Iraq (see Turkey).
- [“Iraq’s top shi’ite cleric calls for corrupt officials to be prosecuted”](#), Reuters, 4 Sept. 2015.
- ➔ **Kuwait** Seven sentenced to death and eight to two-fifteen years in jail mid-Sept for involvement in 26 June bomb attack on Shiite mosque in Kuwait city; those on trial included Kuwaitis, Saudis and Pakistanis. Prosecutor 1 Sept announced 26 Kuwaitis, one Iranian charged with possessing weapons and contact with Iran and Hizbollah in order to plot attacks.
- [“Kuwait mosque attack: seven sentenced to death”](#), BBC, 15 Sept 2015.
- ↓ **Yemen** Violence increased again as front lines in battle between Huthi/Saleh forces and Saudi-backed coalition moved north, reaching stalemate around Taiz city to south and Marib to east of capital Sanaa. Airstrike on reported wedding party in Al-Wahijah village, Taiz province, 29 Sept killed dozens: widely condemned including by UNSG Ban; coalition denied responsibility. Fighting especially intense in Marib province, source of Sanaa’s gas and electricity supplies and home to strong anti-Huthi, Sunni tribal resistance: 77 coalition forces killed 4 Sept in reported rocket attack by Huthi/Saleh fighters; coalition responded with heaviest aerial bombardment of Sanaa to date, targeting military camps and buildings but also striking civilian areas. Progress on political front remained minimal: UN special envoy Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed 10 Sept announced Yemeni govt and Huthi/Saleh bloc agreed to talks; govt withdrew 13 Sept. FM Riyadh Yassin 26 Sept criticised UNSC response to crisis, said it had

not put sufficient pressure on Huthis. Huthi/Saleh delegation 20 Sept met with UN special envoy, released two U.S., one UK and three Saudi hostages. PM Baha and several other ministers 16 Sept returned to Aden, President Hadi visited 22 to 25 Sept. Islamic State (IS) claimed responsibility for 24 Sept suicide bombing of mosque in Sanaa that killed at least 25. Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula increased presence and activities throughout south.

- [“Saudi-led coalition ramps up airstrikes against rebels in Yemen”](#), *Wall Street Journal*, 20 Sept. 2015.

➔ **Saudi Arabia** Letters published mid-late Sept from senior Saudi prince calling for regime change; calls coincided with annual hajj pilgrimage during which some 1,000 pilgrims reported killed in 24 Sept stampede in Mina valley, outside Mecca, and at least 107 killed 12 Sept by collapse of construction crane at Mecca’s Grand Mosque; Iranian President Rouhani called for investigation. Offensive against Huthi/Saleh block in Yemen continued (see Yemen).

- [“Saudi royal calls for regime change in Riyadh”](#), *Guardian*, 28 Sept. 2015.

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## North Africa

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➔ **Algeria** President Bouteflika 13 Sept announced retirement of General Mohamed “Toufik” Mediene after 25 years as head of intelligence services (DRS), to be replaced by General Athman Tartag, former DRS top officer and presidential adviser on security. Govt 12 Sept confirmed Aug arrest of former head of counter-terrorism General Hassan. Iranian FM visited 1 Sept to discuss joint efforts to stabilise Syria and Yemen, bilateral cooperation.

- [“Algeria power struggle intensifies with arrest, sackings”](#), *News24*, 4 Sept. 2015.

➔ **Egypt** Govt of PM Mohammed Mehleb resigned en masse 12 Sept following corruption scandal; former Oil Minister Sherif Ismail appointed as new PM. Preparations underway for Oct and Nov parliamentary elections: Love of Egypt party list comprising most major political parties expected to take most of 120 seats reserved for party lists; observers predict competition between rival pro-regime factions and concentrated around, other 448 seats reserved for individual candidacies. President Sisi 27 Sept said Egypt in “ferocious war” with terrorists. Military operations against Islamist militants in Sinai continued: two police killed, sixteen injured 26 Sept in attack claimed by Islamic State. Twelve killed, including eight Mexican tourists, by army helicopter attack in western Wahat region 12 Sept, raising questions about country’s campaign against terrorism. Interior Ministry 25 Sept said security forces killed nine suspected terrorists near Cairo who were planning attacks to coincide with Eid al-Adha. Sisi 23 Sept pardoned and released some 100 prisoners including two Al Jazeera journalists jailed for disseminating “false news”.

- [“Egypt swears in new government”](#), *Wall Street Journal*, 19 Sept. 2015.

➔ **Libya** UN-led attempts to reach political agreement and consensus on Govt of National Accord continued to falter. 20 Sept deadline set by UN Special Envoy Bernardino León missed as delegations representing Tobruk-based House of Representatives (HoR) and Tripoli-based General National Congress (GNC) continued to disagree on

proposed text. GNC continue to insist on vacation of top military post, held by controversial Tobruk-backed General Haftar, if future PM and his two deputies fail to reach agreement on post within fourteen days of signing agreement; also want text to explicitly state all current GNC members will be included in future State Council. León included requests in new draft: HoR 15 Sept refused to accept changes, some 50 members called for withdrawal from talks; GNC 17 Sept reiterated refusal to support deal without changes. Various local constituencies lobbied for alternative plans to overcome political impasse. Meanwhile, violence continued including heavy clashes in Benghazi late Sept pitting forces loyal to HoR against fighters allied to Tripoli government and Islamist groups (including affiliates of Islamic State, IS). Intra-tribal clashes killed dozens in Kufra and Sebha early Sept. IS-affiliates attacked prison near Tripoli airport 18 Sept.

- [“Fighting in Libya’s Benghazi raises UN talks tensions”](#), Reuters, 20 Sept. 2015.

➔ **Morocco** Ruling Islamist Justice and Development party (PJD) 4 Sept won several major cities in local elections, though rival Authenticity and Modernity Party (PAM) won majority of local seats due to strong performance in rural areas.

- [“Morocco’s Islamists win key urban posts in local elections”](#), Reuters, 5 Sept. 2015.

➔ **Tunisia** Some 1,500 activists demonstrated in Tunis 12 Sept against President Es-sebi’s proposed economic reconciliation law, which opposition says could endanger transitional justice process. UNSG Ban 28 Sept welcomed Tunisia’s counter-terrorism efforts and work to establish foundations of democracy and respect for human rights.

- [“Tunisia protests corruption amnesty law”](#), *Deutsche Welle*, 12 Sept. 2015.