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## CrisisWatch:

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

*CrisisWatch* is compiled by Crisis Group's Brussels Research Unit, drawing on multiple sources including the resources of our more than 100 staff members across five continents, who already report on some 50 of the situations listed here. Comments and suggestions can be sent to [crisiswatch@crisisgroup.org](mailto:crisiswatch@crisisgroup.org).

## April 2005 Trends



### Deteriorated Situations

Afghanistan (p.5) Myanmar/Burma (p.7)  
Ecuador (p.10) North Korea (p.6)  
Egypt (p.12) Togo (p.4)  
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### Improved Situations

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Kashmir (p.5)  
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### Unchanged Situations

Albania (p.8), Algeria (p.12), Angola (p.3), Armenia (p.8), Azerbaijan (p.8), Bangladesh (p.5), Basque Country (Spain) (p.9), Bolivia (p.10), Bosnia & Herzegovina (p.8), Burundi (p.2), Central African Republic (p.2), Chad (p.2), Chechnya (Russia) (p.9), China (internal) (p.6), Colombia (p.10), Democratic Republic of Congo (p.2), Georgia (p.9), Guinea (p.4), Guinea-Bissau (p.4), India (non-Kashmir) (p.5), Indonesia (p.7), Iraq (p.11), Iran (p.11), Kazakhstan (p.4), Kosovo (p.8), Kyrgyzstan (p.4), Liberia (p.4), Macedonia (p.8), Mauritania (p.12), Moldova (p.9), Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan) (p.9), Nepal (p.6), Nigeria (p.4), Northern Ireland (UK) (p.9), Pakistan (p.6), Rwanda (p.2), Saudi Arabia (p.11), Sierra Leone (p.4), Somalia (p.3), Sri Lanka (p.6), Sudan (p.3), Swaziland (p.3), Syria (p.11), Taiwan Strait (p.7), Tajikistan (p.5), Thailand (p.7), Turkey (p.9), Turkmenistan (p.5), Uganda (p.2), Venezuela (p.10), Western Sahara (p.12), Yemen (p.11), Zimbabwe (p.3)

## May 2005 Watchlist



### Conflict Risk Alert

Guinea-Bissau



### Conflict Resolution Opportunity

None

## Crisis Group

Crisis Group is an independent, non-profit, multinational organisation, with over 100 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict. Crisis Group's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts are located within or close by countries at risk of outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict. Based on information and assessments from the field, Crisis Group produces regular analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international decision-takers, and backed up with high level advocacy. Crisis Group is chaired by former European Commissioner for External Relations Lord Patten of Barnes, and its President and Chief Executive is former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans.



## Africa

### CENTRAL AFRICA

➤ Burundi Transitional government mandate extended 4 months at Kampala meeting of representatives of 10 African states, after original 22 April election deadline passed; parliamentary poll now scheduled for 4 July and presidential vote for 19 August. Former Hutu rebel group, CNDD-FDD, froze cooperation with government over dispute over nomination for interior minister. Following talks with Tanzanian government, last remaining rebel group, (Hutu) Forces nationales de libération (FNL) declared unilateral ceasefire, expressed willingness for unconditional peace talks. FNL retained right to self-defence, and sporadic violence continued: army attacked FNL bases north of Bujumbura 20 April following rebel ambush, while FNL killed 6 and injured 5 in attack on Gatumba 23 April. South African troops to remain Burundi until March 2006.

- [“Transition extended by four months, polls due by 19 August”](#), IRIN, 25 Apr. 2005.
- [“Burundi rebels kill six, injure five in attack on Bujumbura outskirts”](#), ReliefWeb (AFP), 24 Apr. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°20, [Elections in Burundi: The Peace Wager](#), 9 Dec. 2004.

➤ Central African Republic March first-round elections failed to produce outright winner. Run-off vote 8 May between President François Bozizé, who won 43% of first-round vote, and former PM Martin Ziguéle. Two first-round candidates announced backing for Bozizé.

- [“Run-off polls set for 8 May”](#), IRIN, 14 Apr. 2005.

➤ Chad Tensions with Sudan continued: Chad accused Sudan of financing and arming 3,000 Chadian rebels based near El Geneina border town. Chad suspended mediation of Darfur conflict; 2 subsequent Sudanese government missions patched up dispute. Chadian officials urged UN to assist local population in border areas now home to over 200,000 Sudanese refugees, with growing concern over water supplies.

- [“New spat over Chadian rebels in Darfur highlights difficult relations”](#), IRIN, 20 Apr. 2005.

➤ Democratic Republic of Congo Firm MONUC approach to disarming Ituri militias produced some results following expiry of 1 April deadline for voluntary disarmament: under 3,000 (from 13,000) remain active. Rolling deployment of reinforced Congolese army units. Leader of PUSIC militia coalition, Kahwa Panga Mandro, arrested 9 April; FAPC militia considered fully disarmed; secretary-general of UPC militia declared end to war 13 April following March arrest of UPC leader Lubanga. In Kinshasa, political debate continued over future constitution; voter registration to begin June, making controversial delay of 30 June elections almost certain. Plans for internationally-backed training of 10 army brigades to provide election security announced. Over 3,300 reported to have fled to Rwanda from North Kivu violence. At International Court of Justice DR Congo demanded compensation from Uganda for invasion, pillage and human rights abuse.

- [“Armies of girls caught up in conflict”](#), *The Guardian*, 25 Apr. 2005.

- [“Army, UN troops kill scores of militiamen in Ituri”](#), IRIN, 20 Apr. 2005.
- [“Security Council extends arms embargo in DR of Congo”](#), UN News, 18 Apr. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°91, [The Congo's Transition Is Failing: Crisis in the Kivus](#), 30 Mar. 2005.

➤ Rwanda UN Security Council urged FDLR Rwandan Hutu rebels in DR Congo to make good their 31 March promise to disarm and be repatriated. Rwanda said FDLR integration into Rwanda's army could only happen on case-by-case basis; would not exclude individual judicial action. Over 3,000 Rwandans have now fled to Burundi and Uganda to escape local gacaca court trials for alleged involvement in 1994 genocide; Burundi confirmed they would not be granted asylum.

- [“FDLR can join army - Sezibera”](#), *The New Times*, 21 Apr. 2005.
- [“France 'should be charged' for Rwanda genocide”](#), Afrol, 6 Apr. 2005.
- For background to ICTR, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°69, [The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda: Time for Pragmatism](#), 26 Sept. 2003.

➤ Uganda Continued attacks on civilians in northern Uganda by Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), including outskirts of Gulu town. LRA leaders reportedly in southern Sudan. Peace moves stalled: chief government mediator, Betty Bigombe, contacted LRA leader Joseph Kony 13 April, but President Museveni expressed preference for military victory. Understanding between ICC and northern Uganda community leaders improved through meetings in Uganda and The Hague. Debate over end to Uganda's no-party system continued ahead of proposed June referendum on constitutional changes which would allow third term for Museveni.

- [“Offering olive branch to a brutal Uganda foe”](#), *New York Times*, 19 Apr. 2005.
- [“President rules out ceasefire”](#), *New Vision*, 19 Apr. 2005.
- [“A long-standing leader's mixed legacy”](#), *The Economist*, 14 Apr. 2005.
- Comment by John Prendergast (Crisis Group), [“End this African horror story”](#), *The Washington Post*, 7 Apr. 2005.
- For background see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°22, [Peace in Northern Uganda: Decisive Weeks Ahead](#), 21 Feb. 2005.

Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°23, [Shock Therapy for Northern Uganda's Peace Process](#), 11 Apr. 2005. The peace process aimed at ending the eighteen-year old conflict in Northern Uganda is near collapse. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) leadership is reorganising for conflict and has launched an aggressive campaign of abductions and mutilations of civilians. Kampala appears to be losing patience with mediation, refocusing instead on a military solution. If the process is to be rescued, Ugandan government mediator Betty Bigombe needs to replace the government's ceasefire-first approach with a deal that includes appropriate security guarantees for LRA leader Joseph Kony and his commanders, and a peace dividend to help rebuild war-ravaged communities. If such a proposal is to be credible, however, it will require increased support from the European troika of Norway, the UK and the Netherlands and a more engaged United States.



## HORN OF AFRICA

↳ Ethiopia/Eritrea Peace process stalled since closure of Boundary Commission field offices March 2005, citing “obstructive actions” by Ethiopia. Ongoing war of words: Ethiopia said Eritrea trained and airlifted 32 insurgents killed by security forces in Ethiopia’s unstable Ogaden region. Eritrean President Isaias Afewerki told ruling party officials Ethiopian expansionism made renewed conflict inevitable and stepped up military preparedness.

- [“Ethiopia says kills 32 Eritrea-trained raiders”](#), AlertNet, 22 Apr. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°68, [Ethiopia and Eritrea: War or Peace?](#), 24 Sept. 2003.

↳ Somalia Inter-clan fighting southern Somalia claimed up to 34, with similar clashes in central province. Over 100 MPs and ministers defied demands by interim President Abdillahi Yusuf they return to Nairobi, remained in Mogadishu working towards city’s demilitarisation. Transitional government denied claims of split, reiterated commitment to retain Mogadishu as capital, said would move back to Somalia by end of May. Mogadishu security situation remained unstable: grenade attack on children’s hospital and separate killing of aid worker. Following 15 March UN Security Council request, arms embargo monitoring panel re-established. Somaliland’s parliament passed electoral bill paving way for elections originally slated for 29 March.

- [“Somali govt split over security”](#), *East African Standard*, 16 Apr. 2005.
- [“13 reported killed in inter-clan fighting in Mudug”](#), IRIN, 13 Apr. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°88, [Somalia: Continuation of War by Other Means?](#), 21 Dec. 2004.

↳ Sudan North-south peace fragile. Opening of National Constitutional Review Commission, planned to conclude by late March, delayed by opposition objections over allocation of seats; Commission to draft post-Naivasha interim constitution. Concern grew over southern militia groups, potentially peace spoilers; most failed to attend Nairobi “south-south dialogue” meeting with SPLA 18-21 April; all major southern political opposition groups attended. \$4.5 billion development aid, mostly for southern Sudan, pledged at Oslo donors’ meeting, though fears remained over absorptive capacity of southern institutions; U.S. and Germany linked assistance to progress on Darfur. Situation in Darfur remains serious: ongoing insecurity hindering aid delivery; 17 killed in torching of village near Nyala 7 April and numerous Janjaweed attacks. Fifth round of AU-backed peace talks planned for early May in Abuja; SPLA leader John Garang said would attend. Government earlier held talks with smaller National Movement for Reform and Development rebel group in Chad. First UN peacekeeping contingent arrived southern Sudan; main force expected to begin deployment May. In positive move, AU said would increase Darfur peace monitoring force to 7,700 by September. UN passed names of 51 suspected of Darfur war crimes to ICC following March referral.

- [“Big boost to Darfur peace force”](#), BBC, 29 Apr. 2005.
- [“In Sudan, the daily battle to provide aid”](#), *The Washington Post*, 25 Apr. 2005.
- [“Concerns over slow implementation of southern peace accord”](#), IRIN, 15 Apr. 2005.

- [“War-torn Sudan wins pledges of \\$4.5bn in aid”](#), *The Guardian*, 13 Apr. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°89, [Darfur: The Failure to Protect](#), 8 Mar. 2005.

Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°24, [A New Sudan Action Plan](#), 26 April 2005. 

Despite recent Security Council resolutions and a peace agreement covering part of the country, Sudan remains at war, with as many as 10,000 or more civilians dying monthly in Darfur. The UN, NATO and the EU need to get together urgently with the AU, decide who can do what best and then do it without regard for institutional prerogatives. How to maximise cooperation to get fully-equipped additional troops on the ground quickly with the command organisation to be effective is probably the single most urgent and complex issue the international community faces in Sudan. More action is needed to protect civilians and relief agencies in Darfur; implement accountability; build a Darfur peace process; implement the Khartoum-SPLM agreement; and prevent new conflict in the east before it becomes the next major war.

## SOUTHERN AFRICA

↳ Angola Opposition parties walked out of parliamentary commission, complaining National Electoral Commission, designed to oversee 2006 elections, controlled by ruling MPLA party; national assembly subsequently agreed electoral bill 26 April by 120 to 60 votes.

- [“Angola: Opposition protests composition of electoral body”](#), IRIN, 14 Apr. 2005.

↳ Swaziland Agriculture ministry predicted harvests would decline for 4th year running; one third of Swaziland’s population already rely on food aid. King Mswati III spent \$1.7m on birthday celebrations.

- [“Swazis shun royal birthday bash”](#), Independent Online, 20 Apr. 2005.

↳ Zimbabwe Ruling Zanu-PF claimed victory in flawed 31 March polls, taking 78 of 120 seats; opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) secured 41. President Mugabe appointed further 30 MPs giving Zanu-PF two-thirds majority required to change constitution. U.S. and EU criticised election, African Union said election “technically competent” and South African observers endorsed it. MDC filed 16 court petitions challenging results and severed ties with Pretoria; U.S. reviewed sanctions options. Mugabe said would retire at end of current term in 2008. Zimbabwe re-elected to UN Human Rights Commission amidst protest by U.S. and other Western states. Famine fears continued; government announced planned import of 1.2 million tons of maize despite foreign currency problems, while denying food shortage.

- Comment by Peter Kagwanja and Alba Lamberti (Crisis Group), [“Let’s turn the screw on Robert Mugabe”](#), *The European Voice*, 21 Apr. 2005.
- [“Mugabe turns back on west and looks east”](#), *The Guardian*, 19 Apr. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°85, [Zimbabwe: Another Election Chance](#), 30 Nov. 2004.



## WEST AFRICA

🏠 Côte d'Ivoire In major step forward South African mediator suggested – and Ivorian President Laurent Gbagbo conceded – that Gbagbo's principal rival, Alassane Ouattara, could stand in 30 October presidential elections. Followed Pretoria peace deal signed by warring parties 6 April; commitments include militia disarmament, UN supervision of electoral process, return of Forces Nouvelles ministers to government and re-examination of laws not in conformity with 2003 Linas-Marcoussis accords. However, mutual confidence low and details of disarmament process unclear: rebel and government chiefs of staff agreed 14 May start-date and heavy-weapon drawback from 21 April, but timetable open to further discussion at Yamoussoukro seminar 2-6 May.

- "Ouattara hails Ivorian peace move", BBC, 27 Apr. 2005.
- "A perilous peace deal", *The Economist*, 14 Apr., 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°90, *Côte d'Ivoire: The Worst May Be Yet to Come*, 24 Mar. 2005.

🏠 Guinea Continuing instability: President Conté's worsening health raised fears of power vacuum. Security situation on Côte d'Ivoire border deteriorated with bandit attack on Kokota village 6 April and detention of 17 Ivorian combatants from dissident rebel group of IB Coulibaly. Sierra Leone's war crimes prosecutor David Crane claimed former Liberian dictator Charles Taylor behind January 2005 attempt to assassinate Conté. In positive moves, PM Diallo began economic and political reforms; EU lifted Article 96 aid freeze.

- "Taylor plots assassination against Conteh says chief prosecutor", *The Analyst*, 28 Apr. 2005.
- "Guinea holding 17 dissident rebels after border clash", IRIN, 11 Apr. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°74, *Guinea: Uncertainties at the End of an Era*, 19 Dec. 2003.

🏠 🗳️ Guinea-Bissau Growing fears of violence surrounding 19 June presidential election; 2 former presidents – Joao Bernardo Vieira and Kumba Yala – announced intention to run despite ban. Yala said would seize power if candidacy blocked. UN Secretary-General Annan appointed former Mozambique president Chissano as special envoy in attempt to defuse tension.

- "Nino Vieira says he will contest presidential election", IRIN, 18 Apr. 2005.

🏠 Liberia Security situation unchanged, with ongoing worries about inadequate combatant reintegration program. Voter registration for 11 October elections began 25 April. U.S. Congress applying pressure on Nigeria to extradite former Liberian dictator to Sierra Leone's Special Court. Sekou Conneh, former head of LURD militia, announced would run in October presidential elections. Head of UN Mission, Jacques Paul Klein, announced resignation 29 April.

- "U.S. raises the stakes on Charles Taylor", AIIAfrica, 28 Apr. 2005.
- "People start registering for first post-war elections but not in droves", IRIN, 25 Apr. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°87, *Liberia and Sierra Leone: Rebuilding Failed States*, 8 Dec. 2004.

🏠 Nigeria Sporadic violence across Nigeria: ethnic Fulani militias killed 14 in central Benue state while 100 died in land

disputes on border between Cross River and Ebonyi states. President Obasanjo continued anti-corruption drive, challenging political rivals to demonstrate any corruption linked to president.

- "More than 100 killed in Nigerian land dispute", AlertNet, 28 Apr. 2005.
- "Pro-Obasanjo groups emerge at national conference", *This Day*, 23 Apr. 2005.

🏠 Sierra Leone Concern about refugee unrest following World Food Programme plans to reduce food basket by 30%. Sierra Rutile Mines, once biggest industry in country, reopened after decade of closure.

- "Youth, poverty and blood: The lethal legacy of West Africa's regional warriors", Human Rights Watch report, 13 Apr. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°87, *Liberia and Sierra Leone: Rebuilding Failed States*, 8 Dec. 2004.

🏠 Togo Faure Gnassingbé – son of longtime dictator Eyadema Gnassingbé – claimed 60% of votes in 24 April presidential elections. Opposition candidate Bob Akitani said poll was rigged and briefly pronounced himself president; criticized by regional ECOWAS body. Opposition claimed 100 killed by security forces in post-election rioting; 11,500 have fled Togo, according to UN. Gnassingbé call for "unity government" rejected by opposition; ECOWAS, Nigerian mediation ongoing.

- "African mediators try to help end Togo crisis", AlertNet, 30 Apr. 2005.
- "Voters throng polling stations for Togo's presidential election", *New York Times*, 25 Apr. 2005.

## Asia/Pacific

### CENTRAL ASIA

🏠 Kazakhstan Reacting to events in Kyrgyzstan, parliament passed law banning mass gatherings or demonstrations in period between an election day and announcement of official results. Opposition urged President Nazarbayev to veto law.

- "Central Asia: Kyrgyzstan's neighbors tighten laws to prevent revolutions", RFE/RL, 20 Apr. 2005.

🏠 Kyrgyzstan Situation stabilised somewhat, with President Akayev submitting resignation from Moscow exile, and presidential vote set for 10 July. Leading candidates are interim president Kurmanbek Bakiyev and former vice president Feliks Kulov, but Russian-speaking Kulov must first clear Kyrgyz fluency legal hurdle. Court cleared Kulov of criminal charges relating to time in office. Security situation still fragile: thousands of squatters seizing land around capital, Bishkek, risking confrontation with residents and farm owners.

- "New constitutional body debates sweeping reforms", RFE/RL, 28 Apr. 2005.
- "Bishkek residents alarmed at land seizures", IWPR, 15 Apr. 2005.
- "Kyrgyzstan election date decided", BBC, 11 Apr. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°81, *Political Transition in Kyrgyzstan: Problems and Prospects*, 11 Aug. 2004.

↪ Tajikistan Media and civil society remained under pressure: government suspended operations of 2 independent newspapers and television station, and passed law requiring foreign embassies and international organisations to provide advance notice of meetings with civil society, political parties, or media. In Moscow, Russian authorities released Tajik opposition leader Mahmadrusi Iskandarov despite extradition request from Tajik prosecutor-general on terrorism and embezzlement charges, citing inadequate evidence. But Iskandarov then arrested in Dushanbe after reportedly being abducted from Russia and brought back to Tajikistan.

- "Tajik opposition leader arrested", IWPR, 29 Apr. 2005.
- "Central Asia: Kyrgyzstan's neighbors tighten laws to prevent revolutions", RFE/RL, 20 Apr. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°33, *Tajikistan's Politics: Confrontation or Consolidation?*, 19 May 2004.

↪ Turkmenistan President-for-life Saparmurat Niyazov declared presidential elections for 2009, pledged not to run. But his totalitarian grip on Turkmen society continued to tighten: in latest move, government refused to extend licenses of international shipping firms, severing one of last remaining links with outside world.

- "Turkmenistan couriers shut down", BBC, 12 Apr. 2005.
- "Turkmenistan plans surprise vote", BBC, 8 Apr. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°85, *Repression and Regression in Turkmenistan: A New International Strategy*, 4 Nov. 2004.

↪ Uzbekistan Increasing instability and worrying trends: assault on activist who helped farmers protest government policies sparked demonstrations by hundreds in Jizzakh region. Independent journalist Ulughbek Haydarov severely beaten by unknown assailants in Jizzakh; journalists and human rights activists across country reported increased state harassment. New opposition coalition of political activists and business entrepreneurs promised massive acts of protest if economic and political reforms not implemented. Efforts by local authorities in Samarkand to demolish local bazaar led to protests. Significant discontent at government's policy of forcing farmers to grow specific crops – often cotton or wheat – and sell harvests back to state at below-market prices.

- "Angry Uzbek farmers force official climbdown", IWPR, 5 Apr. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°93, *The Curse of Cotton: Central Asia's Destructive Monoculture*, 28 Feb. 2005.

## SOUTH ASIA

↪ Afghanistan Militant activity increased after winter lull. U.S. forces retaliated to rockets fired at base in Khost province 21 April, reportedly killing 12 militants in bloodiest encounter in recent months. Incidents throughout month killed at least 26 suspected Taliban and 12 Afghan police. One U.S. soldier killed Uruzgan province 26 April; U.S.-led air strike on suspected insurgent camp 29 April killed 7. Investigation under way into 6 April U.S. helicopter crash which killed 18. Clashes in Herat 29 April between Afghan troops and police killed 6 in province's worst violence since September 2004 riots. Former presidential candidate Yunus Qanuni and mujahideen allies announced new coalition party, National Understanding Front,

consisting of 11 former mujahideen groups turned political parties. Several Taliban senior members reportedly joined coalition's proposed "allegiance program" designed to bring former Taliban leaders into political fold: not open to 150 senior Taliban leaders. Killing of woman in Badakhshan province for adultery highlighted continuing lack of central government control outside Kabul. Three-week registration period for candidates in 18 September parliamentary elections began 30 April.

- "Airstrike in Afghanistan kills seven", *The Guardian*, 30 Apr. 2005.
- "Registration opens for Afghan parliament hopefuls", Reuters, 30 Apr. 2005.
- "Disarming the militias -- which militias and which arms?", RFE/RL, 20 Apr. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°35, *Afghanistan: Getting Disarmament Back on Track*, 23 Feb. 2005.

↪ Bangladesh Tensions rose across Indian border after separate incidents killed 5. India's Border Security Force and Bangladesh Rifles accused each other of incursions. Meeting to resolve dispute over route of Indian border fence ended without agreement.

- "Bangladesh accuses India troops of border incursion", AlertNet, 28 Apr. 2005.
- "Curfew clamped along Tripura-B'desh border", *Times of India*, 26 Apr. 2005.
- "Border tension simmers down following talks", *Daily Star*, 21 Apr. 2005.

↪ India (non-Kashmir) Developments in northeast: National Democratic Front of Bodoland agreed to extend ceasefire for further 6 months; 17 April attack in Manipur state killed 1; Mizoram government and Bru National Liberation Front signed peace accord to end 8 years of militancy, will allow repatriation of thousands of Bru refugees from neighbouring North Tripura district. Communist (CPI-M) rebels killed 2 politicians and village head in Andhra Pradesh 9 April. Federal government reportedly asked state administrations to intensify anti-Maoist operations in "Naxalite belt" stretching across central India.

- "Mizoram govt, BNLf militants sign peace accord", Outlook India, 26 Apr. 2005.
- "NDFB extends ceasefire with Centre till Oct 15", *Hindustan Times*, 18 Apr. 2005.
- "Major anti-Maoist operation on the cards", *Khaleej Times*, 14 Apr. 2005.

↪ Kashmir Jubilation of Kashmiris on both sides of Line of Control as bus service, suspended since partition in 1947, resumed 7 April. Separatist groups attempted to intimidate passengers: attacked passengers' housing in Srinagar; exploded landmines on route; and labelled those boarding bus "traitors". Meeting between President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in New Delhi 17 April resulted in joint statement calling peace process "irreversible", promised to work towards "soft border" - opening meeting points for divided families and boosting trade and travel across frontier. At least 40 killed in separate clashes between militants and security forces. Head of largest militant group, Hizbul Mujahideen, reportedly ready for peace talks if invited by New Delhi.

- "Top terrorists fall to Indian guns", *Times of India*, 29 Apr. 2005.


- "Peace 'irreversible'; India, Pakistan soften on Kashmir", AlertNet, 18 Apr. 2005.
- "Hizb chief ready for talks 'if invited'", *Times of India*, 16 Apr. 2005.
- "Fire and rain", *The Economist*, 7 Apr. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Reports N°s 68, 69, and 70 *Kashmir: The View From Islamabad*; *The View From New Delhi*; and *Learning from the Past*, 4 Dec. 2003; and N°79 *India/Pakistan Relations and Kashmir: Steps toward Peace*, 24 June 2004.

➤ Nepal State of emergency formally lifted 30 April, but practical impact and extent of reduction of royal powers uncertain. Battles between Maoists and security forces intensified: at least 100 rebels reported killed western district of Rukum 9 April in deadliest encounter in over year; further 84 rebels reported killed Rukum and Rolpa districts. Widespread disruption caused by general strike imposed by Maoists from 2-12 April. In positive development Nepal agreed to UN human rights monitoring mission: 50-member international monitoring team likely to start deployment across Nepal with wide mandate in May. King Gyanendra met Indian PM Manmohan Singh Jakarta 23 April, claimed India to resume military aid; New Delhi says awaiting progress on democracy. Gyanendra promised elections in over 50 municipalities by April 2006 but parties sceptical. Despite Gyanendra's reassurances of reconciliation former PM Sher Bahadur Deuba arrested 27 April after refusing to appear before Royal Corruption Control Commission panel; student leaders also arrested. Human rights groups believe thousands of political activists remain in custody.

- "Nepal's shrewd, smooth operator", BBC, 30 Apr. 2005.
- "The king and India", *The Indian Express*, 25 Apr. 2005.
- "Rescuing Nepal", *International Herald Tribune*, 16 Apr. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°94, *Nepal: Dealing with a Human Rights Crisis*, 24 Mar. 2005.

➤ Pakistan Precarious ceasefire in place between Bugti tribesmen and approx. 300 paramilitary troops in Balochistan after negotiations: Chaudhury Shujaat Hussain, head of federal ruling Pakistan Muslim League party, and Tribal Chief Akbar Bugti reportedly set up accord and agreed to 3-member monitoring committee though details of agreement yet to be released. Continued stalemate in parliament on central government agreement with Baloch regional parties on economic and political autonomy led to continued attacks by militants on security personnel and government installations. Security forces launched search operations for militants in western tribal region of North Waziristan 21 April. Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) plans for rally for leader Benazir Bhutto's husband Asif Ali Zardari thwarted by massive security operation which saw thousands of PPP supporters arrested: leading PPP politicians, including parliamentarians, later released but many party workers still detained.

- "Bilateral ceasefire in place after Thursday clash: Bugti", *PakTribune*, 29 Apr. 2005.
- "The realities of 'peace' in South Asia", *Asia Times*, 20 Apr. 2005.
- "New lines of control emerging in Balochistan", *Khaleej Times*, 18 Apr. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°86, *Building Judicial Independence in Pakistan*, 9 Nov. 2004.

Crisis Group Asia Report N°95, *The State of Sectarianism in Pakistan*, 18 April 2005.  Sectarian terrorists in Pakistan are thriving, and the government's unwillingness to contain them inhibits international efforts against global terrorism. Despite his promises to tackle extremism, President Pervez Musharraf's policies of Islamisation and marginalisation of secular democratic forces generate an atmosphere of religious intolerance. A widespread and well-organised terror infrastructure persists in Pakistan, jihadi media are flourishing, and madrasas provide endless streams of new recruits. The choice that Pakistan faces is not between the military and the mullahs, it is between genuine democracy and the military-mullah alliance that is responsible for producing and sustaining religious extremism. Regulating madrasas, reforming the public education sector, invoking constitutional restrictions against private armies and hate speech, and removing all laws and state policies of religious discrimination are essential and overdue steps to stem the extremist tide.

➤ Sri Lanka Norwegian peace envoy Erik Solheim continued efforts to bring sides towards deal on joint mechanism for aid distribution amid growing opposition from groups linked to government coalition partner Janatha Vimukthi Perumuna (JVP). LTTE insist mechanism in place before they consider wider talks for solution to conflict. Pro-LTTE Journalist Dharmaretnam Sivaram abducted and killed Colombo 29 April. LTTE factional violence continued with 5 rebels, belonging to breakaway group led by Karuna, killed 15 April.

- "Pro-Tamil Tiger editor shot dead", BBC, 29 Apr. 2005.
- "Sri Lanka warns Tigers against provoking troops, vow to 'protect peace'", ReliefWeb, 22 Apr. 2005.
- "S.Lankan sides near to tsunami aid deal – mediator", AlertNet, 19 Apr. 2005.

## NORTH EAST ASIA

➤ China (internal) Widespread public protests against Japan's UN Security Council aspirations and failure to confront war record appeared to have tacit support from Beijing. Protestors in Hong Kong denounced Beijing decision to limit next Hong Kong chief's term to 2 years as unwarranted interference in internal affairs.

- "Beijing rules on HK chief tenure", BBC, 27 Apr. 2005.
- "China puts brakes on anti-Japan protests", *International Herald Tribune*, 23 Apr. 2005.
- "China 'crushing Muslim Uighurs'", BBC, 12 Apr. 2005.

➤ North Korea Prospects of return to 6-party negotiations increasingly bleak after Pyongyang announced would only return to talks if changed to "mutual arms reduction negotiations". South Korea and China warned Washington against referring Pyongyang to UN Security Council as would exacerbate situation; North Korean spokesman quoted saying sanctions would be seen as "declaration of war". North reportedly preparing to remove spent fuel rods from Yongbyon nuclear reactor - would provide sufficient material to make additional 6 to 8 nuclear weapons. North and South agreed to resume bilateral dialogue. North Korea reportedly tested short-range missile into Sea of Japan 1 May.

- "June seen as North Korean meltdown point", *Asia Times Online*, 30 Apr. 2005.
- "N Korea nuclear talks 'in doubt'", BBC, 27 Apr. 2005.



- "Seoul warns North against nuclear test", *International Herald Tribune*, 25 Apr. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Reports N°87, *North Korea: Where Next for the Nuclear Talks?*, 15 Nov. 2004 and N°89, *Korea, Backgrounder: How the South Views its Brother from Another Planet*, 14 Dec. 2004.

Crisis Group Asia Report N°96, *North Korea: Can the Iron Fist Accept the Invisible Hand?* 25 Apr. 2005. The North Korean regime appears to realise it must change its moribund economy significantly to survive. Facilitating the economic reforms that are underway can help considerably to push the country toward more acceptable international conduct, but the world should not attempt any major new economic engagement until the regime gives up its nuclear weapons. The international community has an opportunity to help North Korea make a successful transition from a Stalinist command economy to one that is more market-driven and integrated into the global economy. There are some important preliminary steps not involving the transfer of meaningful resources that it should take immediately both in order to prepare for what should be done if a nuclear deal is struck and to show Pyongyang why it needs to make that deal in its own interest.



- ↳ Taiwan Strait Opposition KMT leader Lien Chan in China for historic 8-day tour; held talks with Chinese President Hu Jintao 29 April: first meeting between Nationalist and Communist Party leaders since Nationalists fled mainland 1949. Joint communiqué released opposing Taiwanese independence; rejected in Taipei as attempt to divide Taiwan's political parties and undermine its elected government, though President Chen Shui-bian urged Beijing to open talks with his administration. Polls indicated slim majority of Taiwanese supported Lien's trip. Political fallout from anti-secession law likely to delay lifting of EU arms embargo on China for at least another year.
  - "Taiwan head seeks Beijing talks", BBC, 1 May 2005.
  - "Taiwan Nationalists reconcile with China", *International Herald Tribune*, 30 Apr. 2005.
  - For background, see Crisis Group Asia Reports N°s 53-55, *Taiwan Strait I: What's Left of 'One China'?*, *Taiwan Strait II, The Risk of War*, and *Taiwan Strait III, The Chance of Peace*, 6 June 2003; and N°75, *Taiwan Strait IV: How an Ultimate Political Settlement Might Look*, 26 Feb. 2004.

## SOUTH EAST ASIA

- ↳ Indonesia Third round talks between government delegation and Free Aceh Movement (GAM) held Helsinki under former Finnish president Martti Ahtisaari. Both sides agreed definition of special autonomy - "self-government of Aceh province within the Republic of Indonesia" but key security issues unresolved; next talks due late May. Clashes between Indonesian military (TNI) and GAM continued. Aceh governor Abdullah Puteh found guilty of graft; sentenced to 10 years 11 April but later released into "city arrest" due to "health" concerns. TNI to give up lucrative enterprises within 2 years as part of reforms but will keep cooperatives and foundations. Violence re-erupted Mamasa district of West Sulawesi province 24 April killing 4; fifth outbreak since Mamasa created 2002. Political parties voted for new (non-parliamentary) heads for next 5 years: House of Representatives deputy speaker Muhaimin Iskandar

- National Awakening; Businessman Soetrisno Bachir - National Mandate Party; Vice President Jusuf Kalla for largest party, Golkar; former president Megawati Sukarnoputri re-elected leader of Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle.
  - "Conflict 'intensifying' in Indonesia's tsunami-hit Aceh: military", ReliefWeb (AFP), 28 Apr. 2005.
  - "Indonesia says no to foreign peacekeepers in Aceh", AlertNet, 27 Apr. 2005.
  - "Four killed in inter-village clash in Sulawesi", The Star Online (AP), 27 Apr. 2005.
  - For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°92, *Recycling Militants in Indonesia: Darul Islam and the Australian Embassy Bombing*, 22 Feb. 2005.

- ↳ Myanmar/Burma Volatile relations between government and ethnic groups worsened. At least 8 Karen rebels killed in clashes with military while pro-Yangon United Wa State Army reportedly attacked key positions held by rebel Shan State Army, heavy casualties expected though exact figures unknown. Exiled Shan leaders previously declared independence - move criticised by both ruling junta and Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy. Junta denied NGO claims chemical weapons being used on Karen rebels. Aung San Suu Kyi remains under house arrest. Bomb in Mandalay killed 2, wounded 16, 27 April.
  - "Myanmar junta blames rebels for Mandalay blast", AlertNet, 27 Apr. 2005.
  - "Burma adamant over Asean chair", BBC, 21 Apr. 2005.
  - "Junta blasts Shan Independence; attacks on Shan continue", Irrawady, 20 Apr. 2005.
  - For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°34, *Myanmar: Update on HIV/AIDS Policy*, 16 Dec. 2004.

- ↳ Philippines Prospects improved for peaceful resolution of MILF separatist rebellion after exploratory talks with government in Malaysia. Both sides announced breakthrough on ancestral land issue though "governance" question unresolved. Talks described as very positive. Formal negotiations to begin June.
  - "Philippines, Muslim rebel group move closer to deal", Reuters, 21 Apr. 2005.
  - "Philippines and rebels hail 'breakthrough' in peace talks", ReliefWeb, 20 Apr. 2005.
  - For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°80, *Southern Philippines Backgrounder: Terrorism and the Peace Process*, 13 July 2004.

- ↳ Thailand Southern insurgency continued with almost daily incidents of violence. Possible policy shift in Bangkok (following PM Thaksin Shinawatra's admission heavy-handed approach failed) but plans for military drawdown on hold after 3 April triple bombing in Songkhla province killed 2, injured 70. Newly-appointed National Reconciliation Committee, composed of 49 mainly non-southern, non-Muslims, chaired by former PM Anand Panyarachun tasked with devising plan to end violence in south, released reports of investigative commissions into Tak Bai and Krue Se incidents from April and October 2004, and held initial consultations with southern community and religious leaders. Government paid approx. U.S.\$600,000 in reparations to 345 families of Tak Bai victims, died or injured at hands of security forces during 25 October 2004 protest, though still refuses to release full report of Tak Bai investigative commission.
  - "Thailand charges 'ringleaders'", BBC, 29 Apr. 2005.

- "Govt widens criteria for compensation", *Bangkok Post*, 28 Apr. 2005.
- Comment by Francesca Lawe-Davies (Crisis Group), "Thaksin's timebomb", *The Diplomat*, 18 Apr. 2005.



## Europe

### BALKANS

- ↳ Albania President Alfred Moisiu declared 3 July 2005 date for parliamentary elections. Parties signed Code of Conduct for electoral process and acceptance of results.
  - "A bright future around the corner", *Financial Times* (subscription), 11 Apr. 2005.
  - For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°153, *Pan-Albanianism: How Big a Threat to Balkan Stability?*, 25 Feb. 2004.
- ↳ Bosnia & Herzegovina NATO foreign ministers, meeting informally in Vilnius, gave favourable review of progress towards membership in Partnership for Peace program.
  - For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°31, *EUFOR: Changing Bosnia's Security Arrangements*, 29 June 2004.
- ↳ Kosovo Intra-Albanian political tension grew after opposition PDK accused government ministers of largest party, LDK, of links to secret security organisation: explosion at headquarters of ORA opposition party 17 April; police takeover of President Rugova's security from private force. Enver Haradinaj, brother of former PM Ramush Haradinaj, shot dead 15 April. Final status preparation among Kosovo politicians stalled, but Contact Group (U.S., UK, Russia, Italy, Germany, France) and EU representatives held talks with Belgrade and Pristina: Contact Group publicly announced principles that Kosovo will not be partitioned, form union with any other state or return to pre-1999 status. Serbian PM Vojislav Kostunica called for solution of "more than autonomy, less than independence". International Commission on the Balkans presented report suggesting Kosovo status progresses in 4 stages culminating with independence in EU.
  - "If Kosovo is left in limbo, it will be a victory for Milosevic", *The Guardian*, 22 Apr. 2005.
  - "Comment: Time to end destructive Kosovo clan warfare", IWPR, 20 Apr. 2005.
  - "The Balkans in Europe's Future", *Report by the International Commission on the Balkans*, 12 April 2005
  - For background see Crisis Group Europe Report N°161, *Kosovo: Toward Final Status*, 24 Jan. 2005.
- ↳ Macedonia Irregularities continued in third round of municipal elections held 10 April. Independent candidate Trifun Kostovski confirmed as Skopje mayor. PM Vlado Buckovski promised electoral law would be changed and abuses prosecuted. Four cases related to 2001 conflict involving members and leaders of former ethnic Albanian rebel force, National Liberation Army, to be transferred from Hague tribunal to Macedonian courts.
  - "Macedonia: Albanian opposition party fights for survival", RFE/RL, 28 Apr. 2005.

- "International Commission on the Balkans says Macedonia is a success story", *Southeast European Times*, 15 Apr. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°37 *Macedonia: Not out of the Woods Yet*, 25 Feb. 2005.

- ↳ Serbia & Montenegro Significant progress towards EU integration: EU Council of Ministers endorsed European Commission's decision to begin negotiations on Stabilisation and Association Agreement 25 April. Two Hague indictees surrendered: former Yugoslav Army chief-of-staff Nebojsa Pavkovic; former Republika Srpska police general Ljubomir Borovcanin. Javier Solana met State-Union officials to resolve functioning of parliament by extending present mandate (had expired 3 March). Serbian government showing increasing signs of flexibility on Kosovo. President Boris Tadic twice publicly offered to meet with Kosovo President Ibrahim Rugova: rebuffed both times. Kostunica publicly stated compromise will be necessary calling for "more than autonomy, less than independence".
  - "Rehn: EU to open talks with Serbia-Montenegro in October", *Southeast European Times*, 19 Apr. 2005.
  - "Belgrade steps towards joining EU", BBC, 18 Apr. 2005.
  - For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°32, *Serbia's Changing Political Landscape*, 22 July 2004.

Crisis Group Europe Report N°162, *Serbia's Sandzak: Still Forgotten*, 8 Apr. 2005. Whenever Balkan politicians discuss Kosovo's future status, they warn of a "domino effect". One area frequently mentioned as a possible flashpoint is Serbia's Sandzak, an ethnically-mixed Muslim-Slav (Bosniak) majority region sandwiched between Montenegro, Kosovo and Bosnia. Extremists on both sides have stoked tensions. Sandzak is poor and has all the problems endemic to Serbia: organised crime, corruption, dysfunctional state structures, and official incompetence. Provided Belgrade deals with both peoples' sense of discrimination and vulnerability and reins in nationalist forces, however, the situation ought to be manageable.

### CAUCASUS

- ↳ Armenia Demonstration by marginal opposition group held 20 April in Sevan violently disrupted; 1 injured by gunfire. Rare united statement of 25 parties, including ruling coalition, condemned the violence. Meanwhile internal squabbling within ruling coalition continued. Parliamentary session 14 April lacked quorum due to high absenteeism by rival coalition factions and continuing opposition boycott.
  - "Opposition figure threatens 'National Revolution' in Armenia...", RFE/RL, 22 Apr. 2005.
  - "Armenia: A spring awakening?", IWPR, 21 Apr. 2005.
  - For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°158, *Armenia: Internal Instability Ahead*, 18 Oct. 2004.
- ↳ Azerbaijan OSCE media freedom representative held discussions with President Ilham Aliyev 11 April, days after several hundred opposition supporters and journalists marched in Baku to protest government rights violations against journalists: several arrested. Opposition leaders and former government officials formed election bloc, New Policy, 12 April – one of several new opposition coalitions to have formed ahead of November parliamentary elections. Council of Europe



released statement calling absence of preconditions for free and fair elections “alarming”.

- [“Council of Europe says preelection situation in Azerbaijan ‘alarming’](#)”, RFE/RL, 26 Apr. 2005.
- [“Azerbaijan: Opposition begins early election campaign”](#), RFE/RL, 19 Apr. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°156, [Azerbaijan: Turning Over a New Leaf?](#), 13 May 2004.

➤ Georgia Georgian and Russian foreign ministers agreed – subject to finalisation by treaty – Russian military base dismantlement by January 2008. Tbilisi continued to seek international monitors Russian border. EU assessment mission deployed early April; OSCE approved new border guard training program to run through end 2005. Two days of UN-brokered talks between Georgian and Abkhaz officials concluded 8 April in Geneva. Chaired by UN Undersecretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Marie Guehenno, talks were first bringing sides together since Rose Revolution. De facto Abkhaz PM Aleksandr Ankvab survived second assassination attempt in 2 months; may be linked to his threatened crackdown on mafia. Georgia announced closure of reservist training camp in South Ossetia conflict zone.

- [“Tbilisi, Moscow report breakthrough over Russian military bases”](#), RFE/RL, 26 Apr. 2005.
- [“Georgia: Tbilisi lobbies EU for border monitors, harder stance on Russia”](#), RFE/RL, 12 Apr. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°159, [Georgia: Avoiding War in South Ossetia](#), 26 Nov. 2004.

Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°38, [Georgia-South Ossetia: Refugee Return the Path to Peace](#), 19 April 2005. Georgia and South Ossetia could blunder into another war unless Tbilisi takes immediate and visible steps to build confidence, most critically on the refugee issue. Georgia's verbal commitment to a just and lasting settlement to a conflict where relations remain tense and exchanges of small-arms fire are frequent has not been matched by concrete, sustained action. It must begin by implementing President Saakashvili's January 2005 pledges, which form the backbone of his South Ossetia Peace Initiative. Resolving the refugee problem -- not the sensitive status issue -- is the place to start in order to build trust for the political compromises that will later be needed. The burden is on Tbilisi to push forward to reincorporate Ossetians as equal citizens in Georgia proper.



➤ Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan) Azerbaijan foreign minister met OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs (Russia, U.S. and France) in Frankfurt 27 April; expressed surprise at absence of Armenian counterpart, who will reportedly meet separately with co-chairs. Earlier, Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers held separate talks with Minsk Group co-chairs in London 15 April. Sides reported some progress; said meeting between Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents “envisaged in mid-May”.

- [“Azerbaijani minister cautiously optimistic about Karabakh talks”](#), RFE/RL, 16 Apr. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Reports N°158, [Armenia: Internal Instability Ahead](#), 18 Oct. 2004, and N°156, [Azerbaijan: Turning Over a New Leaf?](#), 13 May 2004.

## EASTERN EUROPE

➤ Chechnya (Russia) Violence continued as 5 Russian special forces troops and 7 rebels reportedly killed in Grozny 15 April. EU sent first ever fact-finding mission to Chechnya to investigate ways of implementing reconstruction aid; concluded work beyond immediate humanitarian relief now feasible. EU Commission approved €22.5 million in humanitarian aid for North Caucasus, which continues to be plagued by instability: 4 Islamist militants and 1 policeman died in shootout in republic of Kabardino-Balkaria; meanwhile, police in Nazran, Ingushetia, used force to break up protest against Ingushetian president.

- [“Police forcibly end opposition protest in Ingushetia”](#), RFE/RL, 30 Apr. 2005.
- [“Five die in N Caucasus shootout”](#), BBC, 29 Apr. 2005.
- [“European Commission eyes reconstruction work in north Caucasus”](#), RFE/RL, 27 April. 2005.

➤ Moldova Parliamentarians re-elected President Voronin to fresh 4-year term 4 April. Voronin appointed Vasile Tarlev PM; new cabinet won parliamentary approval 19 April. “Revitalised” GUUAM summit opened 21 April with leaders of Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova (Uzbekistan has suspended its participation) meeting in Chisinau. Ukrainian PM Victor Yushchenko presented plan to resolve Transdniestria dispute.

- [“East: GUUAM summit in Chisinau focuses on separatism, regional cooperation”](#), RFE/RL, 22 Apr. 2005.
- [“Moldovan parliament votes for new cabinet”](#), RFE/RL, 19 Apr. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°157, [Moldova: Regional Tensions over Transdniestria](#), 17 June 2004.

## WESTERN EUROPE/MEDITERRANEAN

➤ Basque Country (Spain) Regional referendum on greater home-rule – rejected by Spain's main national parties – derailed by elections 17 April. Moderate nationalist premier Ibarretxe lost 2 seats and failed to win majority, forcing tie-up with Spain's Socialists or Basque communists, representing extreme nationalist vote. Spanish PM Zapatero offered coalition negotiations if Ibarretxe discards home-rule plans.

- [“Zapatero offers backing for Basque nationalists if home rule is scrapped”](#), *El Pais*, 19 April, 2005.

➤ Northern Ireland (UK) Normal politics suspended with campaigning for 5 May election of Westminster MPs. Victories expected for Sinn Fein (SF) – despite evidence of IRA's continued involvement in criminal violence – and for DUP, with marginalisation of moderate SDLP and UUP. SF leader called for IRA to “fully embrace and accept” democratic means; unionists called for action not words. Irish PM and Northern Ireland's top police officer both said IRA continued to recruit and train new members.

- [“SDLP urged to rethink coalition”](#), *The Belfast Telegraph*, 22 Apr. 2005.
- [“Adams urges IRA to embrace peace”](#), BBC, 6 Apr. 2005.

➤ Turkey Nomination of Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani as Iraqi president allayed fears of creation of Kurdish state in northern Iraq. Turkish security operation in southeast near Pervari town killed 21 Kurdish insurgents; further operation near Diyarbakir resulted in 1 death. Bomb in western Turkish resort of Kusadasi killed 1 policeman 30 April.

- ["Rebel Kurd group claims bloody blast at Turk resort"](#), AlertNet, 1 May 2005.
- ["Turkey kills 21 Kurdish fighters"](#), BBC, 15 Apr. 2005.
- Crisis Group Middle East Report N°35, [Iraq: Allaying Turkey's Fears Over Kurdish Ambitions](#), 26 Jan. 2005.

## Latin America / Caribbean

- ◀ Bolivia Political unrest continued with ongoing disagreement over energy policies. Senate approved controversial hydrocarbon law increasing taxes on foreign oil companies 29 April: President Carlos Mesa opposes bill. Mesa refused to accept Foreign Minister Juan Ignacio Siles' resignation after lower house censure for failing to defend Bolivia's interests in water dispute with Chile. Movement Towards Socialism leader Evo Morales proposed presidents of Argentina, Brazil and Venezuela help resolve water dispute and praised government verdict that outlaws concessions to foreign oil companies accused of exploiting domestic gas and oil without Congressional approval.
- ["Pressure builds again in Bolivia"](#), *The Economist*, 21 Apr. 2005.
  - ["Bolivia leader on collision course with Congress"](#), AlertNet, 21 Apr. 2005.
  - For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Report N°12, [Coca, Drugs and Social Protest in Bolivia and Peru](#), 3 Mar. 2005.

- ◀ Colombia Talks with AUC paramilitaries in northern Santa Fe de Ralito remained stalled as AUC object to government's "justice and peace" bill which fails to give assurances against extradition to U.S. Negotiations with left-wing National Liberation Army (ELN) on hold after they rejected Mexico as mediator. FARC killed 17 soldiers in ambush in eastern province of Arauca 6 April; launched attacks on 5 southern towns killing 5 wounding 30, 14 April. Five paramilitary fighters, including army sergeant died in clash with security forces near town of Cucuta on Venezuelan border 17 April. Elsewhere security forces killed at least 15 leftist guerrillas in northern provinces Antioquia and Choco. Four army generals sacked 27 April by minister of defence for opposing armed forces modernisation. U.S. Sec. State Condoleezza Rice reaffirmed support for Uribe and fight against drug trafficking and terrorism despite failure to significantly reduce drug flow to U.S.
- ["United States remains committed to aiding Colombia, Rice says"](#), ReliefWeb, 28 Apr. 2005.
  - ["Politics, drugs and the gun"](#), *The Economist*, 28 Apr. 2005.
  - For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Report N°11, [War and Drugs in Colombia](#), 27 Jan. 2005.

- ◀ Ecuador President Lucio Gutierrez third leader to be toppled by popular unrest in 8 years. Violent street protests erupted in Quito after Gutierrez' hand-picked and stacked Supreme Court dropped corruption charges against key political ally, former President Abdala Bucaram. Congress branded him dictator for meddling with court, military commanders withdrew support, Congress replaced him with vice president Alfredo Palacio 20 April. Gutierrez given 2 years asylum in Brazil.
- ["OAS shooting the wounded in Ecuador"](#), *The Washington Post*, 28 Apr. 2005.
  - ["A coup by Congress and the street"](#), *The Economist*, 21 Apr. 2005.

- ◀ Haiti Bloody clashes pitting peacekeepers and police against ex-soldiers and gangs intensified. Five killed during pro-Aristide demonstration 27 April; police claimed returned fire, others said police fired without provocation. UN troops and Haitian police carried out joint operation in Port-au-Prince slum, killing up to 10 gang members, including suspect in fatal shooting of Filipino peacekeeper. Police killed former soldier Remissainthe Ravix, who helped oust former president Aristide, and notorious gang leader Grenn Sonnen. UN Security Council fact-finding mission suggested MINUSTAH likely to be reinforced by additional civilian police; current mandate expires June. Voter registration campaign started 25 April though hampered by logistical difficulties. National Dialogue process launched by interim president 7 April; Aristide's former party Lavalas and other key civil society groups refused to take part.
- ["Police kill five at Haiti protest"](#), BBC, 28 Apr. 2005.
  - ["U.N. Security Council concludes Haiti trip"](#), *The Washington Post* (AP), 16 Apr. 2005.
  - Crisis Group Special Briefing, [Update on Haiti for the UN Security Council](#), 8 Apr. 2005.
  - For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Briefing N°7, [Haiti's Transition: Hanging in the Balance](#), 8 Feb. 2005.

- ◀ Venezuela Troops captured 5 Colombian right-wing AUC paramilitaries on Venezuelan soil in latest border incident 18 April. President Hugo Chavez cut military ties with U.S. after accusing American instructors of attempting to foment unrest. Chavez continued to bolster his military forces with new 20,000 strong military reserve to help deter "imperialist aggression".
- ["Venezuela ends military ties and evicts some U.S. officers"](#), *New York Times*, 25 Apr. 2005.
  - ["Venezuelan troops nab Colombian paramilitaries"](#), AlertNet, 18 Apr. 2005.
  - For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Briefing N°5, [Venezuela: Headed Toward Civil War?](#), 10 May 2004.

## Middle East / North Africa

### EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

- ◀ Israel/Occupied Territories Informal truce between Israel and Palestinian militants under increasing strain, with marked escalation of incidents initiated by both parties. Three Palestinian children killed southern Gaza 11 April, Israeli soldier wounded near Gaza border 21 April, and series of shooting and rocket incidents in Gaza and to lesser extent West Bank. Israeli PM Ariel Sharon met U.S. President George W. Bush at Texas ranch 11 April. Bush endorsed Sharon's Gaza pullout plan, urged Israel to stop settlement expansion but assured Sharon U.S. would not expect Israel to give up all West Bank settlements in future negotiations. Week after meeting, Israel announced plans to build 50 homes in northern West Bank settlement of Ariel. Sharon likely to announce 3-week delay in Gaza withdrawal, from late July to 15 August. Russian President Vladimir Putin visited region in bid to boost Russian role in peace process.
- ["Abbas vows 'iron fist' against militants"](#), *The Washington Post*, 28 Apr. 2005.
  - ["Sharon shrugs off U.S. concerns about settlement growth"](#), *The Daily Star*, 22 Apr. 2005.
  - ["Israel plans new West Bank homes"](#), BBC, 18 Apr. 2005.

- "Bush prods Sharon on peace", *The Washington Post*, 12 Apr. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Briefing N°16, *After Arafat? Challenges and Prospects*, 23 Dec. 2004.

Lebanon Pro-Syrian moderate Najib Mikati appointed PM following resignation of Omar Karami; formed cabinet 19 April, breaking 6-week deadlock between opposition and government. Mikati's government won vote of confidence 27 April; legislative elections scheduled to begin 29 May. Vote came day after final Syrian withdrawal of troops and intelligence agents in accordance with UNSC Resolution 1559. But leader of Hizbollah, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, vowed to defy UN demands for Hizbollah to disarm and join political process, saying would keep arms as long as Israel remained threat.

- "Lebanese Cabinet wins overwhelming vote of confidence", *The Daily Star*, 28 Apr. 2005.
- "Lebanon enters era with Syrian pullout", *The Daily Star*, 27 Apr. 2005.
- "Lebanon PM forms new government", BBC News, 19 Apr. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Briefing N°7, *Hizbollah: Rebel Without a Cause?*, 30 July 2003.

Crisis Group Middle East Report N°39, *Syria After Lebanon, Lebanon After Syria*, 12 Apr. 2005. Recent developments have brought close the prospect of Syrian withdrawal and free Lebanese elections. But ensuring a peaceful and successful transition requires insulating Lebanon from wider regional dynamics. The assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri has heightened pressure on Syria, and brought together once disparate actors -- the U.S., France, and Lebanese activists -- on core demands, including complete withdrawal of Syria's military and intelligence; truth on Hariri's assassination; and free elections under international supervision. But for Lebanon, awash with weapons and on the verge of a major power redistribution, the means and motivations for violence abound. The U.S. must avoid temptations to use the situation to achieve its larger regional objectives and should focus on the goal of a sovereign, stable Lebanon.

Syria Bending to international pressure, Syria withdrew all troops and intelligence agents from Lebanon in accordance with UNSC Resolution 1559. Final withdrawal followed 26 April release of UN report characterising Syrian interference in Lebanon as "heavy-handed". U.S. Sec. State Rice welcomed progress, but said Syria yet to fully end covert activities.

- "Rice: Syria must halt covert activity in Lebanon", *Haaretz*, 28 Apr. 2005.
- "UN report slams 'heavy handed' Syrian meddling", *The Daily Star*, 27 Apr. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Reports N°s 23 and 24, *Syria Under Bashar (I): Foreign Policy Challenges*; *Syria Under Bashar (II): Domestic Policy Challenges*, 11 Feb. 2004.

## GULF

Iran Negotiations with EU-3 (France, Germany, UK) over Tehran's nuclear program ended in London 29 April without agreement. Earlier, Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi had threatened that Iran would resume nuclear enrichment if talks failed. Sides expected to meet again in New York 2 May on sidelines of arms control summit. At least 5 people died during

violent demonstrations in southwestern province of Khuzestan, after allegedly forged letter appeared claiming government planned to change ethnic composition of majority Arab region; senior clerics blamed Israel and America.

- "Iran 'may resume' uranium project", BBC, 30 Apr. 2005.
- "A crisis of compliance", *The Economist*, 28 Apr. 2005.
- "Thousands rally in restive Iran oil province", *The Daily Star* (AFP), 23 Apr. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Briefing N°15, *Iran: Where Next on the Nuclear Standoff?*, 24 Nov. 2004.

Iraq First democratically elected government for 50 years approved by interim National Assembly - though achievement overshadowed somewhat by surge of violence and immensity of remaining political hurdles. Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani sworn in as new president; Shiite leader Ibrahim Jaafari appointed prime minister. Jaafari announced partial list of cabinet members after bitter negotiations; list approved by National Assembly 28 April, remaining 7 positions to be filled before 7 May constitutional deadline for forming government. Delay caused in part due to reported deadlock with interim PM Allawi over distribution of ministries, and efforts by some Kurdish leaders to force out Jaafari. Amid political uncertainty, violence surged in April after relative lull since 30 January elections. Militants increasingly targeting Iraqi civilians and police. Coordinated blasts in Baghdad and southern town of Maidan 29 April killed at least 17; car bomb at Shiite mosque in Baghdad 22 April killed 11; bombs in Tikrit and Shiite neighbourhood of western Baghdad 24 April killed at least 36. Female MP Lamia Abed Khadouri shot dead 27 April. 1,213 Coalition soldiers, including 1,106 Americans, and thousands of Iraqis killed by hostile fire since declared end of combat operations 1 May 2003.

- "At last, an Iraqi government. Now what?", *The Economist*, 29 Apr. 2005.
- "Iraqi Parliament approves long-delayed cabinet", *International Herald Tribune*, 29 Apr. 2005.
- "Sectarian strife rises in Iraq as dozens of bodies found", *The Washington Post*, 21 Apr. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°38, *Iran in Iraq: How Much Influence?*, 21 Mar. 2005.

Saudi Arabia Security forces clashed repeatedly with Islamist militants: gunbattle in northern town of al-Ras reportedly left 14 militants dead, including Abdulkarim al-Mejjati, alleged mastermind of May 2003 Casablanca bombings; shootout in Mecca 21 April killed 2 militants and 2 policemen. Meanwhile, final round of voting in municipal elections took place 21 April. Candidates backed by clerics, including the controversial Safar al-Hawali, swept to victory in Jeddah; moderate Islamist candidates won all seats in every major Saudi city.

- "Conservatives 'win Saudi polls'", BBC, 23 Apr. 2005.
- "Saudi forces, militants clash in Mecca", CNN, 21 Apr. 2005.
- "Troops end three-day Saudi gunbattle", BBC, 5 Apr. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°31, *Saudi Arabia Backgrounder: Who are the Islamists?*, 21 Sept. 2004.

Yemen Authorities captured rebel strongholds in north after weeks of clashes with followers of radical Shiite cleric killed by security forces in 2004; at least 170 soldiers and militants reported dead. Aid agencies increasingly concerned about



conflict's effect on humanitarian situation. U.S. and UK embassies briefly closed due to security fears.

- ["Yemen says controls rebel stronghold after clashes"](#), AlertNet, 12 Apr. 2005.
- ["Yemen: Concern over humanitarian situation as conflict resumes in Sa'ada"](#), IRIN, 10 Apr. 2005.

## NORTH AFRICA

➡ Algeria President Bouteflika's amnesty moves for both insurgents and military personnel – believed responsible for over 6,000 disappearances in 1990s – continued despite upswing in violence. Bouteflika said security "largely re-established" in speech 7 April; following day, Armed Islamic Group (GIA), previously thought largely defunct, blamed for shooting 14 civilians at roadblock near Larbaa, 30 km south Algiers. Interior ministry later said it had arrested GIA leader Boulenouar Oukil. Salafi Group for Preaching and Combat blamed for other attacks throughout month and across country, especially Boumerdes province. Human Rights Watch criticised amnesty plan, warning it would leave families without truth or justice.

- ["No pardon for journalists in Algeria"](#), Afrol, 25 Apr. 2005.
- ["Amnesty law risks legalizing impunity for crimes against humanity"](#), Human Rights Watch press release, 14 Apr. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°29, [Islamism, Violence and Reform in Algeria: Turning the Page](#), 30 July 2004.

⬇️ Egypt Violence targeted at tourists returned: bomb attack in Cairo's Khan al-Khalili bazaar 7 April killed 1 American, 2 French tourists and wounded 17; 2 women opened fire on tourist bus 30 April before killing themselves; suicide bomber detonated near museum same day, wounding 9. Democratic challenges to regime continued: student protests joined by

academics while judges' union threatened to not supervise October and November elections unless granted greater judicial independence. Opposition Kifaya ("Enough") staged illegal nationwide protests 27 April; 75 arrested, most later released. Ongoing harassment of opposition groups; Muslim Brotherhood said multi-candidate elections meaningless without reform of 1981 emergency law. President Mubarak launched re-election campaign in series of 2-hour televised interviews starting 24 April.

- ["How enough is enough?"](#), *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 28 Apr. 2005.
- ["Police arrest 30 in connection to Cairo bombing"](#), CNN, 11 Apr. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Briefings N°s 12 and 13, [Islamism in North Africa: Legacies of History](#) and [Egypt's Opportunity](#), 20 April 2004.

➡ Mauritania Up to 20 leaders of Islamist opposition arrested 26 April, including spiritual leader Sheikh Mohamed El Hacem Ould Deddew, accused by government of links to Algerian-based Salafi Group for Preaching and Combat; Islamist opposition claimed arrests were political crack-down. Critics suggested government has been exaggerating Islamist threat to gain U.S. acquiescence in internal repression.

- ["Terrorist cell said linked to Al Qaeda dismantled, police"](#), IRIN, 28 Apr. 2005.

➡ Western Sahara Notwithstanding improvement in regional political climate, UN report bemoaned lack of progress; Security Council renewed MINURSO mandate for further 6 months 28 April. European Parliament warned emergency aid required for 158,000 refugees from Western Sahara living in camps near Tindouf, Algeria.

- ["Improved political climate has not ended Western Sahara stalemate"](#), UN News, 21 Apr. 2005.

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