

1 July 2008, N°59

CrisisWatch:

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

CrisisWatch is compiled by Crisis Group's Brussels Research Unit, drawing on multiple sources including the resources of our some 135 staff members across five continents, who already report on some 60 of the situations listed here. Comments and suggestions can be sent to crisiswatch@crisisgroup.org.

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CENTRAL AFRICA

➡ **Burundi** Govt and PALIPEHUTU-FNL 10 June signed Magaliesberg Communiqué in South Africa, committing to peace and agreeing state institutions, army to integrate rebels. FNL leader Agathon Rwasa 16 June declared end of armed struggle, start of pre-cantonment of fighters; but army accused FNL of breaking truce after 100 alleged new recruits arrested 17-18 June. Govt in controversial moves to regain National Assembly: constitutional court 6 June authorised dismissal of 22 defectors from governing CNDD-FDD. Opposition FRODEBU split 8 June; Minani-led wing of 12 joined gov't, others said gov't strengthening "military dictatorship".

- "Constitutional court decision unseats 22 lawmakers", Human Rights Watch, 17 June 2008.
- "After 15 years, hints of peace in Burundi", *New York Times*, 16 June 2008.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°131, *Burundi: Finalising Peace with the FNL*, 28 Aug. 2007.

➡ **Central African Republic** Govt and APRD, UFDR rebel groups 21 June signed comprehensive peace agreement; third remaining armed group FDPC leader absent, but deal still open. CAR added 12 June to UN Peacebuilding Commission agenda.

- "Central African Republic, rebels sign peace pact", Reuters, 22 June 2008.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°136, *Central African Republic: Anatomy of a Phantom State*, 13 Dec. 2007.

➡ **Democratic Republic of Congo** Insecurity continued in east: Rwandan Hutu FDLR rebels killed 9, displaced up to 5,000 in 4 June attacks on 2 North Kivu civilian camps. Attacks reportedly responding to military operations against Mai Mai and FDLR militias – army claimed 29 rebels killed in month. MONUC head Alan Doss said 8 June would increase eastern activity from forward command in Goma. In ICC's first case, against former Union of Congolese Patriots militia leader Thomas Lubanga, judges halted proceedings 13 June over prosecution refusal to supply defence with confidential documents, called hearing to consider Lubanga release; prosecution request for appeal pending. ICC hearing on charges against 2 other Ituri militia leaders opened 27 June. 13 June MONUC report called for criminal investigation into police killing of 100 in Feb Bas-Congo clashes; gov't dismissed as "mendacious".

- Comment by David Mugnier (Crisis Group), "En finir avec le conflit de l'Ituri", allAfrica.com, 12 June 2008.
- "UN worried by lack of peace progress in east Congo", Reuters, 25 June 2008.
- "Prosecutors seek to salvage ICC's first trial", Reuters, 24 June 2008.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°140, *Congo: Four Priorities for Sustainable Peace in Ituri*, 13 May 2008.

➡ **Rwanda** First senior army officers accused of war crimes arrested by military prosecution 11 June; allegedly killed 13 clergymen in genocide aftermath. ICTR prosecutor 4 June

asked UNSC for extra year for trials. Tribunal ruled for second time against transfer of suspect to Rwandan justice system, provoking accusations of partiality; France transferred former sub-prefect of Gisagara to Tribunal.

- "Rwanda arrests first senior officers over war crimes", Reuters, 12 June 2008.

➡ **Uganda** Further breakdown in peace process with new LRA attacks reported and regional armed forces threatening offensive, following LRA leader Joseph Kony repeated failure to sign final deal. Uganda, DR Congo, South Sudan military chiefs early June agreed to attack Kony, with MONUC support, if deal not signed. Kony broke silence with 22 June radio interview calling for resumption of talks. Gov't welcomed step but said no re-opening of negotiations. South Sudan VP and mediator Machar confirmed commitment to negotiated settlement, urged implementation of non-controversial aspects of deal; 30 June said Ugandan troops should leave Sudan. 8 LRA negotiators reportedly resigned 27 June accusing Kony of frustrating peace efforts. LRA reportedly twice attacked south Sudanese soldiers, including 4 June barracks attack killing at least 20.

- "Uganda says LRA rebels fought Sudan forces", Reuters, 17 June 2008.
- "Assault on Uganda rebels would hold big risks", Reuters, 9 June 2008.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°46, *Northern Uganda Peace Process: The Need to Maintain Momentum*, 14 Sept. 2007.

HORN OF AFRICA

➡ **Chad** National Alliance rebels mounted new offensive against Idriss Deby gov't early June, seizing several eastern towns but not advancing on capital. Gov't claimed victory in major battle in eastern town Am-Zoer, some 160 killed. UN refugee agency suspended operations in 12 camps on Sudanese border, resumed 17 June. Irish EUFOR troops came under fire while monitoring fighting. Gov't accused EUFOR of siding with rebels, Sudanese army of attacking frontier garrison. Chadian and Sudanese army generals met 24 June in Dakar to discuss border patrols.

- "Chad rebels say President Deby rejects dialogue", Reuters, 22 June 2008.
- "N'djamena calm but east still insecure", IRIN, 17 June 2008.

➡ **Djibouti/Eritrea** Fighting erupted at Ras-Doumeira border area following increased tensions over disputed territory. 10-11 June clashes reportedly left at least 9 Djibouti soldiers dead, more injured both sides. AU, UN condemned Eritrea military action. Djibouti said incursions continuing. Eritrea blamed Djibouti for attack, denied border dispute and rejected dialogue.

- "Djibouti president accuses Eritrea over border fight", Reuters, 14 June 2008.

➡ **Ethiopia** Addis dismissed 12 June Human Rights Watch accusations of war crimes in campaign against Ogaden National Liberation Front as "groundless"; satellite images released same day show burned, destroyed villages in Ogaden region. UNICEF 26 June said 4.6m suffering severe malnutrition in country.

- "Satellites confirm Ethiopia destruction – US group", Reuters, 12 June 2008.

➡ **Ethiopia/Eritrea** UNSC 23 June considered disbanding UNMEE peacekeeping mission – mandate up 31 July – after Eritrea forced temporary withdrawal in Feb.

- Comment by Mark L. Schneider (Crisis Group), “[History can be cruel for Eritrea, Ethiopia](#)”, allAfrica.com, 17 June 2008.
- “[UN looks at disbanding Eritrea/Ethiopia force](#)”, Reuters, 23 June 2008.

Crisis Group Africa Report N°141, [Beyond the Fragile Peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea: Averting New War](#), 17 June 2008. The Ethiopia-Eritrea impasse is a major source of regional instability and risks a new deadly war. Following Ethiopia’s refusal to accept virtual demarcation of the border by the Ethiopia-Eritrea Boundary Commission (EEBC), Asmara unilaterally implemented it and forced out the UN peacekeeping mission (UNMEE). A new, strongly supported international action plan is needed.



➡ **Kenya** President Mwai Kibaki’s PNU party won 2 seats, PM Raila Odinga’s ODM 3 in 11 June by-elections; polls relatively peaceful but marred by low turn-out, allegations of rigging in Embakasi. 2 ODM ministers died in plane crash 10 June threatening party mobilisation capacities and Assembly majority. Coalition pledge for new constitution within 12 months ruled out 24 June as impractical. Debate continued over ODM calls for amnesty for those arrested in post-election violence. 17 June Médécins Sans Frontières report accused army of killing, torturing civilians during operations against Mt Elgon Sabaot Land Defence Force. Reports of govt pressure tactics to evict remaining IDPs.

- “[Kenya rules out adopting new constitution within a year](#)”, AFP, 24 June 2008.
- “[Kenya’s leader and PM share by-election spoils](#)”, Reuters, 12 June 2008.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°137, [Kenya in Crisis](#), 21 Feb. 2008.

➡ **Somalia** Amid continued insecurity, peace deal signed 9 June at UN-backed Djibouti talks, between Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and members of opposition Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) headed by former ICU chairman Sheikh Sharif – cessation of hostilities within 30 days, Ethiopian troop withdrawal within 120 days dependent on UN peacekeeping force deployment. But deal rejected by Islamist groups including Asmara-based opposition and Al-Shabaab militia; Islamist leader Sheikh Aweys 10 June vowed insurgency to continue. Heavy fighting in capital Mogadishu killed some 100 early June; scores killed throughout country – local group recorded over 2,100 deaths in 2008. Peace activist shot dead 22 June, WFP driver 12 June, local BBC journalist 7 June; 10 aid workers reported kidnapped in month, including Mogadishu head of UNHCR, 3 released, some 12 remain missing. UNSC 2 June unanimously adopted resolution authorising states to enter Somali waters to combat piracy. Nigeria reported 800 soldiers available to join beleaguered AU peacekeeping force.

- “[End attacks against aid workers, agencies urge](#)”, IRIN, 24 June 2008.
- “[Somali insurgents kill 10 after rejecting peace](#)”, Reuters, 11 June 2008.

➡ **Sudan** “Road Map” agreed 8 June to end North-South clashes over contested oil town Abyei; joint integrated unit deployed 18 June as per CPA to help re-establish security and assist returning displaced. NCP and SPLM agreed 21 June to submit Abyei border dispute to Hague-based Permanent Court for Arbitration; 1 July reports suggest both sides’ troops failed to meet end-June withdrawal deadline. U.S. accused UN of failing to protect town; UN Envoy Ashraf Qazi rejected claims, saying not UN mandate, but UNSC requested investigation. Khartoum put 39 on trial 18 June for involvement in May JEM rebel attack on capital. EU leaders demanded Khartoum hand over ICC war crimes indictees; warned new sanctions. In 5 June report to UNSC, ICC Prosecutor Moreno-Ocampo said evidence shows “organised campaign by Sudanese officials”, promised to present new case to judges in July. Chinese President Hu Jintao called on Sudan to do more for peace in Darfur, attempting to deflect criticism for ties. Khartoum banned U.S. companies from working with UN peacekeepers in Darfur. SLM-Unity rebels claimed killed some 160 soldiers in North Darfur ambush, promised extension of operations beyond region. Head of Médécins Sans Frontières in South Darfur expelled from region 26 June for refusing to participate in investigation into aid agency misconduct; UN warned of Darfur food crisis as seventh WFP driver killed in country since year-start. Burkina Faso FM Djibrill Bassole appointed joint AU/UN mediator at 30 June AU summit, replacing UN, AU Envoys Jan Eliasson and Salim Ahmed Salim.

- Comment by Caroline Flintoft (Crisis Group), “[Our silence on Sudan shames us](#)”, *Globe and Mail*, 16 June 2008.
- “[Former US special envoy to Sudan warns against ICC Darfur indictments](#)”, *Sudan Tribune*, 27 June 2008.
- “[Concerns rising over Darfur restrictions](#)”, IRIN, 24 June 2008.
- “[Hague court to decide Sudan’s disputed Abyei border](#)”, Reuters, 21 June 2008.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°50, [Sudan’s Comprehensive Peace Agreement: Beyond the Crisis](#), 13 March 2008.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

➡ **Comoros Islands** Anjouan Island presidential elections to replace ousted rebel leader Bacar held 15 June. Interim results give Moussa Toybou win in 29 June run-off, with 52% over Mohamed Djanfaari 48%. Bacar, in French Reunion, given 3-month suspended sentence 6 June. France 24 June again rejected Comoros extradition request, citing risk of persecution; Benin reportedly offered asylum.

- “[Comoros isle of Anjouan headed for second round](#)”, AFP, 16 June 2008.
- “[French court refuses Comoros rebel extradition](#)”, Reuters, 24 June 2008.

➡ **South Africa** Troops withdrawn from Johannesburg, Cape Town townships as security situation stabilised after some 62 killed, 85,000 displaced in May wave of xenophobic violence; sporadic attacks in June. Most IDPs reportedly returned to neighbouring states. Govt 12 June announced plan to reintegrate some 20,000 remaining IDPs before closing camps in 2 months.

- “[Reintegration with trepidation](#)”, IRIN, 23 June 2008.
- “[After the storm](#)”, *Economist*, 12 June 2008.

- ↙ **Zimbabwe** State violence further escalated ahead of 27 June presidential run-off vote, amid mounting condemnation of regime. Mugabe sworn in for sixth term 29 June after 1-candidate poll marked by high police presence, intimidation. Opposition MDC leader Tsvangirai, arrested 5 times over month, 22 June withdrew over election conditions. MDC state media access and most rallies banned; ruling ZANU-PF militia attacked 22 June MDC Harare rally as violence spread to cities; 60 detained in 23 June raid on MDC HQ. MDC say 86 members killed, 2,000 detained since 29 March elections. Beatings, torture continued in rural areas: over 2,500 treated for injuries, up to 200,000 now displaced; food aid restricted to ZANU-PF supporters after aid agencies banned 5 June. Regional mediator South African President Mbeki held separate talks 18 June to broker negotiated solution, but stalled on leadership question. EU, several SADC leaders (excl. Mbeki), G8 states said vote illegitimate. UNSC late month statements condemned violence, urged AU-mediated settlement. ZANU-PF spokesman dismissed criticism, vowed “Zimbabwean” solution to crisis amid calls at 30 June AU summit for transitional govt, suspension from AU.
- Comment by Francois Grignon (Crisis Group), “[Peace advocates deserve support](#)”, allAfrica.com, 25 June 2008.
 - “[Mugabe is sworn in to sixth term after victory in one-candidate runoff](#)”, *New York Times*, 30 June 2008.
 - “[The reign of thuggery](#)”, *New York Review of Books*, 26 June 2008.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°51, [Negotiating Zimbabwe’s Transition](#), 21 May 2008.

WEST AFRICA

- ↙ **Côte d’Ivoire** Ex-rebel FN soldiers rioted in Bouaké 15-17 June over delayed disarmament payouts; govt 19 June said initial payments ready. FN reported 28 June clashes between dissident rebels, FN forces in west with 3 civilians, 1 dissident dead. Events followed UNSC envoy 10 June praise for peace process ahead of 30 Nov elections. Voter identification to begin 1 July. French court 4 June sentenced ex-rebel leader Ibrahim Coulibaly in absentia to 4 years for 2004 coup plot, 8 accomplices received up to 30 months.
- “[Ex-rebel uprising threatens disarmament process](#)”, IRIN, 19 June 2008.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°139, [Côte d’Ivoire: Ensuring Credible Elections](#), 22 Apr. 2008.
- ↙ **Guinea** At least 6 killed, dozens arrested in 17 June army raid on Conakry police HQ to quash 2-day police, customs officials pay protest. 4-day teachers, researchers strike called off 22 June after negotiations; army pay rise approved 13 June after May protests. New PM Soaré 19 June announced expanded 32-strong cabinet; 10 ministers of replaced PM Kouyaté govt retained, but allies of President Conté in several key posts. Electoral commission said voter registration for Dec legislative elections should be complete by Aug, concerns over insufficient funding and participation on polling day.
- “[Elections in doubt for 2008](#)”, IRIN, 25 June 2008.
 - “[Support for prime minister’s new cabinet](#)”, Reuters, 20 June 2008.

Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°52, [Guinea: Ensuring Democratic Reforms](#), 24 June 2008. The political and economic change Guineans demanded in 2007 is in jeopardy following PM Kouyaté’s dismissal and replacement by Tidiane Souaré, a close ally of President Conté. Without concerted pressure, the government will likely break its promise of credible legislative elections in December, compromise economic revival and bury the commission of inquiry tasked with investigating the 2007 crackdown.



- ↙ **Guinea-Bissau** UNODC 19 June announced new \$3m EU-funded anti-narcotics police unit for G-B to counter Colombian cocaine flow. EU-led military reform program started 17 June.
- “[Downsizing is next mission for bloated Bissau army](#)”, Reuters, 25 June 2008.
- ↙ **Liberia** At least 19 farm workers killed in 7 June attacks in Margibi, Grand Bassa counties linked to land dispute between 2 senators; Senator Kaine charged with murder, awaits trial. UN arms embargo, monitoring panel extended to 20 Dec.
- “[UN extends Liberia embargo](#)”, Afrol News, 20 June 2008.
- ↙ **Niger** Further clashes between govt and Tuareg Niger Justice Movement (MNJ) in north: at least 17 killed 27 June in heavy fighting near Tezirzait. MNJ 22 June captured 4 French energy workers, freed 25 June. Govt 2 June announced \$5b deal with Chinese petroleum firm CNPC in Diffa region at Chad border; MNJ and allied Toubou-led group FARS condemned deal. MNJ faction split 30 May, formed Front des forces de redressement (FFR). Ex-PM Amadou arrested on corruption charges after parliament 23 June lifted immunity. Nigérien Radio France International journalist Kaka, arrested Sept for MNJ links, remains detained after prosecutor appealed against 23 June release order.
- “[Niger rules out rebel talks, will protect investors](#)”, Reuters, 9 June 2008.
- ↙ **Nigeria** Surge in Niger Delta (ND) violence following 8 June army raids on 3 southern militant bases; 10 naval officers killed 9-10 June. MEND group 19 June struck Shell’s Bonga facility in first assault on deep offshore oilfield; Chevron also shut 120,000bpd output after 20 June Delta State attack. President Yar’Adua 20 June ordered crackdown. MEND 22 June called ceasefire, but army-militants clashes continued: 6 killed, at least 2 civilians, 28 June at Rivers State Shell facility and nearby army base. Progress towards delayed ND peace summit faltered: Delta ethnic leaders protested selection of senior UN official Gambari as chair; militant groups say govt yet to meet key preconditions. In anti-corruption drive Senate 5 June confirmed ex-police Farida Waziri as Economic and Financial Crimes Commission head; Yar-Adua announced investigation into 2007 oil contracts under Obasanjo administration.
- “[Niger Delta: nowhere to hide](#)”, ISN, 27 June 2008.
 - “[Nigeria special report](#)”, *Financial Times*, 24 June 2008.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°135, [Nigeria: Ending Unrest in the Niger Delta](#), 5 Dec. 2007.
- ↙ **Mali** Army said at least 20 rebels killed in major 3-4 June offensive on northern Tuareg base, retaliation for May attacks. Rebels reportedly holding over 50 soldiers hostage. President Touré 5 June announced military chief reshuffle in new strategy to counter rebellion; 8 June said open to talks. ECOWAS warned

northern Mali now central destination for gun-running via regional coastal states; EU anti-terror coordinator 5 June said Sahel extremist groups, using Mali as training base, on rise.

- [“Climate, arms, drugs make lethal mix in Sahel”](#), Reuters, 5 June 2008.

➡ **Senegal** Protests 10 June in Ziguinchor over govt failure to resolve 25-year conflict in Casamance region. 1 killed mid-month by Casamance MFDC rebels near Tendième.

- [“Shadows grow across one of Africa’s bright lights”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 18 June 2008.

➡ **Sierra Leone** Reports of violent ruling APC party attacks on SLPP supporters and property 19-20 June, Kono, ahead of 5 July local elections. Female candidates reportedly facing harassment; UN Envoy Schulenburg arrived late month to assess preparations. Govt 13 June announced formation of second corruption commission, to investigate former Kabbah administration. Hundreds arrested, 4 deported mid-month in drive to expel illegal immigrants, mostly Nigerian, blamed for trafficking crimes. UNSC 9 June removed 5 former fighters from sanctions list imposed during civil war.

- [“Ex-govt ministers under spotlight in Sierra Leone corruption probe”](#), AFP, 20 June 2008.



Asia/Pacific

CENTRAL ASIA

➡ **Kazakhstan** In 11 June interview, official said early parliamentary elections possible late 2009, to show “political pluralism” ahead of 2010 OSCE presidency. Opposition leaders 22 June accused govt of failing on OSCE reform commitments; OSCE assembly president also voiced concerns at 29 June-3 July meeting. Observers alleged smear campaign against Astana mayor Tasmagambetov over reports of son-in-law’s £5m UK property purchase in 2007. Fuel exports halted 1 June in further effort to curb prices. World Bank 20 June agreed \$2.5b Kazak-Russia-Europe transport development programme.

- [“Kazakh opposition says govt backsliding on reform”](#), Reuters, 24 June 2008.

➡ **Kyrgyzstan** President Bakiyev 4 June passed controversial media bill, prompting outcry from rights groups. Parliament 13 June approved new restrictions on demonstrations. Independent paper De Facto raided 14 June, bank accounts later frozen. Regional states (excl. Turkmenistan) 10-11 June met Bishkek to discuss water, energy sharing – meeting reportedly tense. Police 4 June arrested 2 Uzbek border guards, prompting angry diplomatic exchange.

- [“Age-old water problem brings tensions to a boil”](#), RFE/RL, 15 June 2008.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°150, [Kyrgyzstan: The Challenge of Judicial Reform](#), 10 Apr. 2008.

➡ **Tajikistan** Debate over stability of President Rahmon power base continued: late month state footage purportedly showed Rahmon’s brother-in-law, not seen since rumoured 2 May shooting by Rahmon’s son. 200-500 protested 18 June

in eastern Gorno-Badakhshan region over troop build up on nearby Afghan border. Tajik-Gazprom 10 June reportedly signed \$500m gas exploration deal. Court 19 June sentenced 3 Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan branch members for 18-23 years for terrorism, Taliban support.

- [“Plot thickens around banker’s disappearance”](#), EurasiaNet, 8 June 2008.


➡ **Turkmenistan** OSCE reported govt willing to allow first-ever foreign observers at Dec parliamentary elections. Reports authorities forcibly relocated some 2,000 from Turkmen-Uzbek border. Govt cracked down on media, opposition in run up to 24 June first EU-Turkmen human rights conference, Ashgabat; 2 journalists arrested, 1 reportedly tortured in month.

- [“Activists, Journalists Harassed Ahead Of EU Meeting”](#), RFE/RL, 24 June 2008.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°60, [Turkmenistan after Niyazov](#), 12 Feb. 2007.

➡ **Uzbekistan** Rights groups condemned 9 June EU-Tashkent press freedom seminar, alleged extensive govt abuses: journalist Abdurakhmonov arrested 7 June on drugs charges; RFE/RL Uzbek service threatened on state TV. News, opposition websites launched campaign late month against govt block. U.S. 18 June froze accounts of 2 Islamic Jihad Union leaders over 2004 Uzbek bombings and planned attacks on U.S. targets. Political prisoner Odilov released 4 June, activist Tojiboeva 2 June; latter alleged prison torture.

- Comment by Andrew Stroehlein (Crisis Group), [Uzbekistan: ‘Muzzled Again’](#), Transitions Online, 18 June 2008.
- [“Humans rights concerns raised amid sanctions freeze”](#), EurasiaNet, 23 June 2008.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°76, [Political Murder in Central Asia: No Time to End Uzbekistan’s Isolation](#), 14 Feb. 2008.

NORTH EAST ASIA

Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°77, [South Korea’s Elections: A Shift to the Right](#), 30 June 2008.  President Lee’s conservative Grand National Party has had a difficult start, with widespread demonstrations and an opposition legislative boycott. The GNP seeks to improve strained relations with the U.S. and coordination in confronting North Korea’s nuclear program, as well as push for a more business friendly environment in South Korea. While these measures will be mostly welcomed abroad, Lee needs to show more willingness to seek consensus domestically.

Crisis Group Asia Report N°153, [China’s Thirst for Oil](#), 9 June 2008.  The fear of China “locking up” energy supplies around the world is misplaced, and other countries should cooperate with it on both energy and wider security issues. Although Chinese companies’ involvement in conflict-ridden countries and regions has complicated conflict resolution, Beijing is willing to play a more constructive role.

➡ **China (internal)** Tibet reopened to foreign tourists 25 June for first time since March riots as security in region reportedly eased, though armed police deployed to Lhasa streets

beginning of month. Govt announced 20 June some 1100 of the 1315 people detained in riots' wake since released. Beijing announced 12-13 May arrests of 16 Buddhist monks for alleged role in 3 bombings in Tibet in April. Dalai Lama envoys due for talks in Beijing 1-2 July.

- "Tibet reopens to foreign tourists Wednesday", Reuters, 24 June 2008.
- "China says most Tibet rioters released", Reuters, 20 June 2008.
- "Dalai Lama hopes China talks will resume in July", Reuters, 12 June 2008.

 **North Korea** North Korea 26 June submitted long-awaited nuclear declaration; U.S. in response lifted some financial restrictions, set 45-day timeframe for verification – if successful, will remove DPRK from state sponsors of terrorism list. Declaration concerns plutonium-related activities; questions of nuclear arsenal, alleged uranium enrichment program and proliferation efforts still outstanding. New round six-party talks expected shortly. Pyongyang 27 June destroyed cooling tower at Yongbyon nuclear complex (only known plutonium source for DPRK), which it began dismantling end-2007. Japan 13 June announced partial lift of travel sanctions, humanitarian aid exemption after Pyongyang agreed to conduct new probe into Japanese nationals abducted 1970s-1980s.

- "Bush rebuffs hard-liners to ease North Korean curbs", *New York Times*, 27 June 2008.
- "Tokyo eases North Korea policy", *Financial Times*, 25 June 2008.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°62, *After the North Korea Nuclear Breakthrough: Compliance or Confrontation?*, 30 Apr. 2007.

 **Taiwan Strait** Further improvement in cross-Strait relations with agreements reached at first bilateral talks in over decade in Beijing 11-14 June. Mainland President Hu Jintao and chief Taiwan negotiator Chiang Pin-kun agreed resumption of regular charter flights, establishment of visa offices on each others' territories. Taiwan 26 June called for "concrete" Chinese goodwill over island joining international organisations; President Hu late May said might reconsider opposition to WHO membership.


- "Taiwan calls for Beijing 'goodwill'", *Financial Times*, 26 June 2008.
- "Strait talking again", *Economist*, 12 June 2008.

SOUTH ASIA


 **Afghanistan** Taliban fighters launched 13 June raid on Kandahar prison, freeing some 1000 inmates including 350 low-level Taliban detainees. Insurgent forces seized control of villages in Arghandab district bordering Kandahar days later, but driven out by ANA and int'l forces; Afghan official estimates put Taliban dead at 50-100. President Karzai questioned over events 15 June, pointed finger at Pakistan, reserved right to "self-defence", sparking new tension in cross-border relations. 12 June Paris Conference raised \$21bn in pledges, saw launch of 5-year Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). U.S. Gen. McKiernan replaced Gen. McNeill 3 June as ISAF commander. Germany announced 1000 more troops to train ANA in north; Italy said willing to relax restrictions on temporary

redeployments of its 2300 troops in country.


- "Arghandab's two-day war", IWPR, 24 June 2008.
- "Karzai threatens retaliation against Taliban in Pakistan", RFE/RL, 15 June 2008.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°145, *Afghanistan: The Need for International Resolve*, 6 Feb. 2008.

 **Bangladesh** Election Commission (EC) announced 4 Aug date for local polls in 4 smaller cities, 9 municipalities; said emergency measures to be "relaxed" locally from mid-July to allow campaigning. Dhaka, Chittagong elections deferred. EC 25 June announced 80m voters registered, meeting end-June target. BNP and Awami League (AL) continued objection to polls under state of emergency, holding local polls before national; BNP announced will boycott local polls. Police reported 10,000 arrested 1-4 June in "crime crackdown" to improve security ahead of elections; targets included opposition politicians. AL chief Sheikh Hasina freed on bail 11 June to receive medical treatment.


- "Looking for an exit", *Economist*, 5 June 2008.
- "Thousands arrested in Bangladesh", BBC, 4 June 2008.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°151, *Restoring Democracy in Bangladesh*, 28 Apr. 2008.

 **India (non-Kashmir)** 6 senior commanders of United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) rebels announced unilateral ceasefire 24 June. Govt appeared unwilling to accept without full rejection of violence by ULFA leadership. 8 killed in Assam market bombing near Bhutan border 29 June.

- "ULFA commanders declare indefinite ceasefire", Reuters, 24 June 2008.

 **Kashmir** At least 4 killed by police in protests across Indian Jammu & Kashmir after government announced transfer of land adjacent to Hindu Shri Amarnathji shrine. Protesters see transfer as effort to increase number of Hindus in Muslim-dominated Indian Kashmir. Transfer annulled 29 June but protests continued. 4 Pakistani soldiers killed in clash with unknown attackers along Line of Control 19 June. Pakistan, Indian FM's met in New Delhi, 27 June, pledged to continue rapprochement, announced fifth round of Composite Dialogue from 21 July.

- "Land transfer to Hindu site inflames Kashmir's Muslims", AP, 28 June 2008.

 **Nepal** Interim PM Koirala announced resignation 26 June, clearing way for presumptive successor Maoist leader Prachanda. Maoist ministers had earlier resigned from cabinet over delays in forming government. Negotiations over distribution of cabinet posts continue: earlier in month, Maoists dropped demand to be given ceremonial post of presidency. In abdication ceremony 11 June, King Gyanendra handed crown to govt and vacated royal palace, ending 240-year Shah dynasty.

- "Nepalese prime minister resigns", BBC, 26 June 2008.
- "Nepal's former king turns in crown", *Financial Times*, 11 June 2008.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°149, *Nepal's Election and Beyond*, 2 Apr. 2008.

 **Pakistan** Govt launched Frontier Corps operation in Khyber agency 28 June, after PM Gilani approved "force as last resort" to

restore rule of law 25 June. First military operation in region since Feb elections came amidst increased concern at creep of Taliban towards Peshawar. In response, militant Baitullah Mehsud called off peace agreements with govt as security stepped up around country. Some 20 members of govt-sponsored peace committee killed by Mehsud supporters in S. Waziristan 25 June. Cross-border tensions had escalated with threat by Afghanistan President Karzai to send troops into Pakistan to block cross-border attacks 15 June and U.S. cross-border drone attack in Mohmand agency that killed 11 Pakistani troops 10 June; U.S. claimed in "hot pursuit" of Taliban fighters crossing border. Pressure increased on President Musharraf to resign, including calls from PPP leadership: "long march" by thousands of lawyers from 9 June for restoration of Supreme Court judges sacked by Musharraf. 6 killed in 2 June bombing outside Danish embassy in Islamabad.

- "Pakistani forces move in on Taliban", *Washington Post*, 29 June 2008.
- "US bomb kills 11 Pakistani troops", *Guardian*, 12 June 2008.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°74, *After Bhutto's Murder: A Way Forward for Pakistan*, 2 Jan. 2008.

- **Sri Lanka** Heavy fighting continued in north, with govt forces gaining new territory on Mannar, Vavuniya, Weli Oya fronts. 12 policemen killed in 16 June Vavuniya suicide bombing, while twin bus bombings 6 June, in Kandy and Colombo, killed some 20 and injured roughly 100. Disappearances and political killings – mostly of young Tamil men – on rise. Italian police reported arrest of 30 alleged members of LTTE for extortion, claimed dismantlement of Tigers' fundraising network in Italy.
 - "Italy holds 'Tamil Tiger' members", BBC, 18 June 2008.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°146, *Sri Lanka's Return to War: Limiting the Damage*, 20 Feb. 2008.

SOUTH EAST ASIA

- **Indonesia** Govt issued 9 June decree "freezing" activities of Ahmadiyah sect, stopping short of full ban but giving into major pressure from hardline Islamic groups. 1 June attack on defenders of the sect led by Islamic Defenders Group injured 12. Former deputy intelligence chief Muchdi Purwopranjono detained 19 June in relation to 2004 murder of human rights lawyer Munir, highest-level suspect detained to date. Daily clashes continued in Ternate, North Maluku in dispute over post of governor between Golkar, Partai Demokrat candidates.
 - "Indonesia ex-security chief held over killing", *Financial Times*, 21 June 2008.

Crisis Group Asia Report N°154, *Indonesia: Communal Tensions in Papua*, 16 June 2008. Conflict between Muslim and Christian communities in Papua could erupt unless rising tensions are managed. Numerous factors have increased strains in Papua: continuing Muslim migration; the emergence of new, exclusivist groups in both religious communities; the lasting impact of the Maluku conflict; and the impact of developments outside Papua. Government officials at all levels should avoid support for exclusivist religious groups, and ensure funding for all religious activities is transparent.



- **Myanmar/Burma** Humanitarian access to country reportedly improved in month, after May cyclone left 84,537 dead, 53,836

missing. At Asia Security Summit 1 June, U.S. Defense Secretary Gates accused government of "criminal neglect" for visa restrictions on foreign aid workers, reports of forcible relocation of typhoon displaced. But UN later cited improved cooperation after ASEAN diplomatic efforts yielded joint ASEAN-UN-Myanmar assessment team visit to disaster-affected areas 11-20 June; full report due 20 July. 12 NLD (National League of Democracy) members detained at protest outside leader Suu Kyi's house 19 June. Daewoo-led consortium said 23 June deal reached to sell Burmese natural gas to China.

- "UN reports improvement in cyclone cooperation", IRIN, 30 June 2008.
- "Burmese endure in spite of junta, aid workers say", *New York Times*, 18 June 2008.
- "Burma junta guilty of 'neglect'", *Financial Times*, 2 June 2008.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°144, *Burma/Myanmar: After the Crackdown*, 31 Jan. 2008.

- **Philippines** President Arroyo announced new draft of ancestral domain agreement 18 June; MILF indicated willingness to resume talks. High-profile kidnapping of TV news anchor Ces Drilon and crew on Jolo 8 June, allegedly by Abu Sayyaf, ended 17 June.
 - "Philippines charges mayor in media kidnap probe", Reuters, 19 June 2008.
 - "Arroyo: Gov't draft on MILF ancestral domain approved", *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 18 June 2008.

- **Thailand** Railway service halted indefinitely in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat after suspected insurgents shot dead 1 police officer, 3 railway staff 21 June. Increased political tension in Bangkok as People's Alliance for Democracy pressured government into dropping proposed amendments to constitutional draft that would help parties escape threat of dissolution. PM Samak survived 27 June no-confidence vote.
 - "4 killed in train ambush in restive Thai south", Reuters, 21 June 2008.

- **Timor-Leste** UNPOL reportedly considering handover of command to national police in phased approach from July.
 - "UN police eye East Timor handover", BBC, 16 June 2008.



BALKANS

- **Bosnia & Herzegovina** Long-awaited Stabilisation and Association Agreement with EU signed 16 June. Peace Implementation Council (PIC) in 24-25 June meeting indicated no closure of Office of High Representative this year. Authorities 11 June arrested war crime fugitive Stojan Zupljanin in Pancevo, extradited to ICTY 21 June.
 - "Heading for Europe?", *SEE Times*, 20 June 2008.

- **Kosovo** New constitution entered into force 15 June, transferring main powers from UNMIK to Kosovo govt. UNSG Ban 12 June presented "reconfiguration" plan: status-neutral UNMIK to lead dialogue with Belgrade on 6 areas including police, courts, customs in Kosovo Serb areas; delayed EULEX mission to be deployed under UN umbrella. Italian Lamberto

Zannier appointed new special representative. Serbia and Russia objected to proposal in 20 June UNSC debate. Parallel Serb assembly launched 28 June in Mitrovica. NATO member states 12 June agreed KFOR mandate expansion to train Kosovo Security Force. UN 4 June threatened closure of border with Serbia if customs posts burned down Feb not re-established. Some 560 inmates of Dubrava prison in hunger strike 22-25 June demanding better conditions, amnesty law. Low-level violent incidents: PM Thaci's house attacked 6 June, circumstances unclear; multiple attacks on police in Serb-dominated north left 1 officer dead. Serb, Roma villagers brawled 26 June with ethnic Albanian neighbours building mosque in Berivojce.

- ["UN chief signals shift on Kosovo"](#), *Christian Science Monitor*, 23 June 2008.
- ["Kosovo's rocky road to statehood"](#), RFE/RL, 20 June 2008.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°47, ["Kosovo's First Month"](#), 18 Mar. 2008.

➡ **Macedonia** PM Gruevski's VMRO-DPMNE coalition won 63 of 120 parliamentary seats in 1 June parliamentary elections marked by irregularities, violence between rival Albanian Democratic Union for Integration (DUI) and Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA). Social Democratic Party won 27, DUI 18 and DPA 11. Parliament convened 21 June, DPA boycotted; Trajko Veljanovski elected speaker. President Crvenkovski 23 June gave PM Gruevski 20-day deadline to form new government. State Election Commission 6 June annulled results of 68 polling stations. Partial reruns held 15, 29 June; international monitors noted "significant improvement"; initial outcome confirmed. Name dispute continues: UN Mediator Nimetz proposed several compromises in 27-28 June Athens, Skopje visits.

- ["Macedonia poll results same after new rerun"](#), *BalkanInsight*, 30 June 2008.
- ["Macedonia Supreme Court orders election reruns after vote irregularities"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 24 June 2008.

➡ **Serbia** Pro-European DS and Socialist SPS 26 June signed coalition deal; outgoing Finance Minister Mirko Cvetkovic nominated PM 27 June. Parliament 25 June elected SPS member Dejanovic speaker. Mounting pressure from ICTY: court president Pocar 23 June reported Serbia to UNSC, accused of hindering witness testimony in case against Milosevic ally Milutinovic; chief prosecutor Brammertz criticised lack of cooperation in 6 June UNSC address. Education Minister Lunçar left conference in Oslo in protest against Kosovo Education Minister Hoxhaj representing independent Kosovo. Bomb exploded 7 June at police station in Bujanovac near Kosovo border. Tensions in Muslim Sandzak region as Mufti Zurkolic 16 June accused rival movement List for European Sandzak of storming mosque in Novi Pazar ahead of 23 June elections of religious leaders.

- ["Serb coalition settles on prime minister"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 28 June 2008.
- ["U.N. tribunal reports Serbia to Security Council"](#), Reuters, 23 June 2008.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N° 49, ["Will the Real Serbia Please Stand Up?"](#), 23 April 2008.

CAUCASUS

➡ **Armenia** Largest post-election rally 20 June in Yerevan saw tens of thousands demanding rerun of Feb presidential poll. In effort to fulfill 17 April PACE resolution, parliament 10 June passed bill allowing opposition to initiate parliamentary debates; established commission to investigate deadly 1-2 March clashes. PACE assembly resolution 26 June noted "insufficient" democratic progress, urged authorities to release all detained in March events, extended compliance deadline to January 2009. European Court of Human Rights 17 June ruled govt to pay €30,000 compensation to private A1 Plus TV channel for refusing broadcasting license.

- ["Summer of discontent"](#), ISN Security Watch, 24 June 2008.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°48, ["Armenia: Picking up the Pieces"](#), 8 April 2008.

➡ **Azerbaijan** Ahead of 15 Oct presidential elections, parliament 2 June amended electoral law to shorten campaign length, ban campaigning in state-owned media; opposition criticised failure to ensure equal representation in election commissions, some parties threatened boycott. PACE summit 24 June demanded release of detained journalists, noted "deteriorating" human rights situation. Police 17 June prevented rally of opposition Musavat party in Baku. First military parade since 1992 held 26 June; President Aliyev claimed military budget "more than 2 billion dollars".

- ["Does Council of Europe matter in Azerbaijan?"](#), RFE/RL, 24 June 2008.
- ["Azerbaijani parliament amends election law, opposition cries foul"](#), RFE/RL, 6 June 2008.

➡ **Chechnya (Russia)** Ongoing violence throughout month saw 3 police, 3 civilians killed in 28, 29 June clashes with rebels; 2 separate assaults on military convoys 16 June left 3 dead in Urus-Martan district, Bamut village; 25-60 armed rebels attacked Benoi-Vedeno village 13 June, killing 3 residents. Bomb explosion in Grozny café 9 June injured 12. 1 policeman shot dead in vehicle shooting 23 June. Russian PM Putin announced 120.6 billion rubles (\$5 billion) to be spent on developing Chechnya in next 4 years.

- ["3 killed, 5 wounded in Chechnya attack"](#), AP, 16 June 2008.

➡ **North Caucasus (non-Chechnya)** In Ingushetia, unidentified militants 16 June killed 1 soldier in Ordzhonikidzevskaya; 2 separate bombs in Nazran 13 June left at least 5 dead; 5 insurgents shot dead 11 June in Karabulak village. Police killed 1 in security operation 3 June. In Dagestan, police killed 3 militants 28 June. Gunmen 23 June shot dead police chief Magomed-Aripa Aliyev in Makhachkala; Russian special forces 7 June killed 3 rebels in Khasavyurt.

- ["Gunmen kill a police chief in Russia's Dagestan"](#), Reuters, 24 June 2008.

Crisis Group Europe Report N°192, ["Russia's Dagestan: Conflict Causes"](#), 3 June 2008. To



halt escalating killings fuelled by indigenous jihadi movements in Dagestan, Moscow and local leaders must implement an efficient anti-corruption policy and reintegrate youth into the economic and political system. The federal authorities need to undertake serious efforts to break the worsening cycle of attacks and reprisals between security forces and militants.

➤ **Georgia** In row with Russia over breakaway Abkhazia, Tbilisi protested 31 May deployment of 400-strong railway force; NATO head de Joop Scheffer called for withdrawal, said Russia “escalating situation”. President Saakashvili, Russian President Medvedev met 6 June in St. Petersburg at CIS summit, no agreement reached. Moscow warned of “bloodshed” if “provocations” continued after 4 peacekeepers briefly detained 17 June in Zugdidi district. European Parliament 5 June adopted resolution calling for revision of peacekeeping format, deployment of ESDP border mission. EU foreign policy chief Solana urged direct negotiations during 5-6 June Tbilisi, Sukhumi visits. Separatist authorities blamed Georgia for 2 bombs 29 June in Gagra, 2 explosions in Sukhumi 30 June; announced border closure 1 July. New parliament first session 7 June; some 11 opposition MPs renounced their seats. In South Ossetia separatist region 1 soldier left dead in 14-15 June clashes between Georgian, South Ossetian forces.

- “Government outmaneuvers opposition with parliament’s kick-off session”, EurasiaNet, 9 June 2008.
- “Domestic pressure on Abkhaz president intensifies”, RFE/RL, 6 June 2008.

Crisis Group Europe Report N°193, *Georgia and Russia: Clashing over Abkhazia*, 5 June 2008. Moscow and Tbilisi need to cease military preparations in and around Abkhazia and cool their rhetoric lest their increasingly dangerous confrontation bring war to the Caucasus. Russia should withdraw troops and equipment it has deployed over the past months and Georgia should adopt a new approach to the Abkhaz.



➤ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** Azerbaijan President Aliyev and Armenia President Sarkisian 6 June met at St. Petersburg CIS summit, agreed to continue talks based on OSCE Minsk Group Madrid proposals. 2 civilians killed by sniper near border 18 June; Baku 22 June accused Yerevan of ceasefire violation.

- “Presidents give green light for continuation of Karabakh talks”, RFE/RL, 12 June 2008.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°187, *Nagorno-Karabakh: Risking War*, 14 November 2007.

EASTERN EUROPE

➤ **Belarus** Expelled U.S. Ambassador Stewart 18 June demanded release of political prisoners before easing of sanctions. Parliament 24 June adopted new media law tightening internet control, easing closure of media outlets. President Lukashenko, Russian President Medvedev 22 June discussed potential merger of countries.

- “Belarus cracks down on internet news”, AP, 25 June 2008.

➤ **Ukraine** Governing coalition 6 June lost parliamentary majority after 2 members quit. NATO delegation in Kiev 16-17 June to assess Ukraine’s membership readiness; Russian President Medvedev 6 June warned against NATO bid.

- “NATO tests Ukraine’s readiness to join”, *International Herald Tribune*, 16 June 2008.
- “Ukraine coalition loses majority”, BBC News, 6 June 2008.

WESTERN EUROPE/MEDITERRANEAN

➤ **Basque Country (Spain)** Regional parliament 27 June approved referendum on autonomy talks, ETA negotiations; Madrid said “unconstitutional”, announced lawsuit. Alleged ETA bomb 8 June targeted El Correo newspaper building in Zamudio.

- “Basque autonomy referendum backed”, BBC, 27 June 2008.

➤ **Cyprus** UN political head Pascoe met separately 18 June with Greek Cypriot leader Christofias, Turkish Cypriot leader Talat in Nicosia. Talat did not attend joint dinner after criticising 5 June UK-Greek Cypriot memorandum of understanding. Representatives of both communities 20 June announced series of bicomunal projects on education, infrastructure, health. Christofias, Talat met again 1 July. EU 16 June agreed relaxation of economic restrictions against north after Cyprus 3 June dropped legal action against EU aid. UNSC 13 June extended mandate of UNFICYP peacekeeping mission to 15 Dec. Former Australian FM Downer 1 July appointed UN special envoy for peace process.

- Comment by Hugh Pope (Crisis Group), “Unexpected Peace”, *Wall Street Journal*, 24 June 2008.
- “EU to relax restrictions on Turkish Cyprus”, AP, 16 June 2008.
- “Cyprus unity hopes rekindled”, BBC, 9 June 2008.

Crisis Group Europe Report N°194, *Reunifying Cyprus: The Best Chance Yet*, 23 June 2008. A new peace process in Cyprus offers the best chance in decades to reunite. Since his surprise election to the Greek Cypriot presidency, Demetris Christofias has moved quickly to reverse the previous government’s hardline rejection of compromise. He and his Turkish Cypriot counterpart Mehmet Ali Talat are demonstrating the political will for the current UN-mediated talks to succeed, and key players like Turkey are playing a constructive role.



➤ **Turkey** Growing tensions between govt and judiciary as constitutional court 5 June reversed lift of headscarf ban; ruling AKP 16 June filed defence arguments in pending party ban case citing political motives, violation of European Court of Human Rights charter; trial started 1 July. PACE urged court to rule according to European principles, in 26 June special session called for work on new constitution, warned agencies should “seriously consider” re-opening monitoring procedure. Ragip Zarakolu convicted 5 years under revised article 301 for “insulting Turkish republic” after publishing book on Armenian genocide. Parliament speaker Toptan 12 June convened representatives of all parties in attempt to ease political tensions. 9 injured in 15 June blast at Istanbul cafe. Army strikes against PKK continued: 10 PKK claimed dead; at least 5 members of security forces killed in 14 clashes or explosions.

- “Turkey’s power struggle is an old feud”, *International Herald Tribune*, 22 June 2008.
- “Publisher convicted of insulting Turkey”, *Guardian*, 20 June 2008.
- “Turkish leaders face tense summer”, BBC, 5 June 2008.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°184, *Turkey and Europe: The Way Ahead*, 17 Aug. 2007.



Latin America / Caribbean

➤ **Bolivia** Massive pro-autonomy votes in Beni, Pando departmental referendums 1 June, Tarija 22 June (all over 80%). Prefects of these departments, plus Cochabamba, Santa Cruz, 23 June said would boycott 10 Aug recall referendum unless complies with autonomy statutes, instead seek early general elections. Opposition candidate Savina Cuéllar won 29 June Chuquisaca departmental elections, promised autonomy referendum. U.S. relations further deteriorated with 9 June violent protests at La Paz embassy, late-June ousting of USAID from Chapare region. Protests followed confirmation that U.S. last year granted asylum to former defence minister Berzain, accused of ordering 2003 crackdown on protesters.

- [“Las zonas ricas de Bolivia boicotean la consulta sobre la gestión de Morales”](#), *El Pais*, 24 June 2008.
- [“Bolivia’s autonomy referendums signal rightist backlash”](#), *Christian Science Monitor*, 3 June 2008.

Crisis Group Latin America Briefing N°18, [Bolivia: Rescuing the New Constitution and Democratic Stability](#), 19 June 2008. To avoid renewed confrontation over sweeping reforms proposed by President Morales and his MAS party, Bolivia’s leaders should engage in an inclusive dialogue before the mandate of the Constituent Assembly (CA) expires in December. All need to recall that Morales’s election was a vote for change and seek consensus, including a compromise between the MAS push to increase the power of indigenous peoples and the drive for autonomy in the Eastern departments.



➤ **Colombia** Venezuela President Chávez 8 June urged FARC to end armed struggle, release all hostages. Ecuador President Correa echoed call 13 June; 2 govt-backed European mediators seeking hostage talks late June with FARC. Following death of top FARC commander “Tirofijo”, announced in May, ELN called for guerilla alliance. Bogotá, Quito pledged 6 June to resume limited diplomatic ties, suspended since March airstrike. Effort broke down 24 June with sides trading accusations. Pressure increasing on President Uribe after Supreme Court 26 June condemned former congresswoman Yidis Medina for accepting bribes before 2004 constitutional amendment vote permitting Uribe’s re-election; Uribe criticised court, called for referendum on re-run of 2006 presidential poll. FARC suspected in Bogotá bomb attacks 9, 10 June and attacks 22, 23 June that forced closure of Caño Limón-Covenas oil pipeline.

- [“Colombia delays restoring Ecuador diplomatic ties”](#), Reuters, 24 June 2008.
- [“Chavez’s call for FARC disarmament takes Washington by surprise”](#), AlterNet, 11 June 2008.
- For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Briefing N°17, [Colombia: Making Military Progress Pay Off](#), 29 April 2008.

➤ **Ecuador** Diplomatic relations with Bogotá still suspended (see Colombia). Govt 1 June asked OAS to examine documents from Raul Reyes’ computer, seized by Colombia in March airstrike. Correa 17 June declined military alliance against FARC

proposed by Peru, Colombia. Constituent Assembly President Acosta, criticised for slow progress, resigned 23 June, further complicating 26 July charter draft deadline.

- [“El presidente de la Constituyente de Ecuador rompe con Correa a un mes de entregar el texto”](#), *El Pais*, 24 June 2008.

➤ **Haiti** Chamber of Deputies 12 June rejected President Préval’s second PM nominee Robert Manuel. Third announced 23 June: economist Michele Pierre-Louis; initial signs of ratification positive. Large-scale Port-au-Prince protests 4 June against rise in kidnappings, which peaked at 36 in May; trend continued into June.

- [“Haitian president nominates new prime minister”](#), Reuters, 24 June, 2008.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Latin America Report N°24, [Peacebuilding in Haiti: Including Haitians from Abroad](#), 14 December 2007.

➤ **Venezuela** President Chávez 8 June urged FARC to end armed struggle (see Colombia). Chávez 10 June revoked intelligence decree-law criticised for violating civil liberties. Govt announced new stimulus package 11 June: set up \$1b fund for key sectors, scrapped financial transactions tax. Comptroller general confirmed anti-corruption ban on 400 mostly opposition candidates in Nov state, municipal elections; national electoral council said would abide by list, urged supreme court rule quickly on appeals.

- [“Master tactician or failing bungler?”](#), *Economist*, 12 June 2008.
- [“Chavez revokes Venezuela spy law”](#), BBC, 11 June 2008.
- For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Report N°19, [Venezuela: Hugo Chávez’s Revolution](#), 22 February 2007.



Middle East / North Africa

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

➤ **Israel/Occupied Territories** Israel and Hamas agreed fragile Gaza ceasefire 18 June. Israel opened borders 23 June, re-closed 25 June after Islamic Jihad rocket attack responding to West Bank raid that killed 2; limited reopening 29 June ended after further rocket attacks. Egyptian-mediated agreement provides for cessation of hostilities, opening of crossings, renewed talks on prisoner swap including Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. Before start of truce rocket killed 1 Israeli 5 June; 12 Palestinians killed 5-16 June; 6 militants dead 19 June. Palestinian Authority President Abbas welcomed ceasefire, following 4 June call for renewed dialogue with Hamas and 8-9 June Senegal-hosted talks. Olmert, Abbas continued peace talks, meeting 2 June. U.S. Sec. State Rice in 15 June visit; French President Sarkozy in 23 June visit called for end to Israeli settlements. Olmert under pressure in corruption probe, agreed 25 June to leadership elections for Kadima party by Sept, avoiding threatened dissolution of parliament. Earlier month Olmert accelerated mediation efforts with northern neighbours (see Syria, Lebanon), upped tensions with Tehran – early June military exercise reportedly dry-run for attack on Iranian nuclear facilities.

- “Can a ceasefire hold?”, *Economist*, 19 June 2008.
- “Bridging the Fatah-Hamas divide”, BBC, 11 June 2008.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report No 73, *Ruling Palestine I: Gaza Under Hamas*, 19 Mar. 2008.

➡ **Lebanon** Focus shifted to formation of national unity govt after 21 May Qatari-brokered deal brought swift halt to 18-month political standoff. Negotiations over new govt continued throughout month, amid clashes in Sunni-Shiite areas – 4 killed in Bekaa Valley on 9, 17 June; at least 8 killed, scores wounded near Tripoli 22-23 June; Tripoli bomb 28 June killed 1, wounded 27. Western leaders welcomed May deal, pledged support to newly elected president Michel Suleiman, PM Fouad Siniora. Israeli cabinet 29 June approved Hizbollah prisoner swap agreed under UN-backed German mediation. Israel 1 June deported Lebanese-born prisoner convicted in 2002 of spying for Hizbollah; Hizbollah same day handed over remains of Israeli soldiers killed in 2006 war. Fatah al-Islam militants 2 June claimed responsibility for 31 May bombing at army post near Nahr al-Bared refugee camp.

- “Israel to free prisoners”, *Washington Post*, 30 June 2008.
- “Faction fighting continues in northern Lebanon”, AP, 23 June 2008.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Briefing N°23, *Lebanon: Hizbollah's Weapons Turn Inward*, 15 May 2008.

➡ **Syria** Israeli and Syrian negotiators completed second round Turkish-mediated talks 16 June; scheduled 2 more for July. Israel said talks “serious, positive and constructive”. France 15 June invited President Assad to 13 July Paris summit of new European-Mediterranean union; Israeli PM Olmert also due to attend. Damascus 3 June agreed to UN IAEA inspection of Al Kibar alleged nuclear site, destroyed in 6 Sept Israeli airstrike; denied access to 3 other sites. Inspectors completed 4-day visit 25 June, said “good start” but more investigations needed.

- “Syria opens site to U.S. atom probe”, Reuters, 25 June 2008.
- “Israeli envoys propose Olmert meet Syria's Assad”, Reuters, 16 June 2008.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°63, *Restarting Israeli-Syrian Negotiations*, 10 Apr. 2007.

GULF

➡ **Iran** Delegation led by EU foreign policy chief Solana in 13 June Tehran visit presented latest offer on nuclear program. Package is enhanced version of rejected 2006 deal; proposes state-of-art technology light-water reactors, guaranteed fuel supplies, trade benefits and lifting UN sanctions – in exchange for suspension of enrichment and opening negotiations. Accompanying letter from UNSC P5 plus Germany and EU said Tehran to face further sanctions if deal refused. Tehran again rejected suspension but said would review package. EU 23 June imposed asset freeze on Iran's largest bank, added names to travel ban list. Iraqi PM Maliki met President Ahmadi-Nejad in Tehran 8 June to discuss security, amid concerns of proposed pact between Baghdad and Washington (see Iraq). Israeli military exercises early June threatened possible strike on nuclear facilities.

- “It's later than you think”, *Economist*, 26 June 2008.
- “Iran defiant in nuclear row”, Reuters, 15 June 2008.

- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°51, *Iran: Is There a Way Out of the Nuclear Impasse?*, 23 Feb. 2006.

➡ **Iraq** Relative calm after 10 May ceasefire with Sadrist militias in Baghdad's Sadr City and Iraqi army takeover, but punctuated by devastating attacks. Iraqi forces swept southern city Amara from 18 June in further crackdown on Shiite militias. Governor of western Anbar province 26 June said U.S. to transfer security to Iraqis – postponed 27 June; Diwaniya handover postponed 30 June. Bombings continued including huge car bomb near Baghdad market 17 June killing at least 63; suicide attack 26 June at Anbar tribal council meeting killing 20, including 3 U.S. marines; Mosul car bomb same day with 18 dead. PM Maliki in Tehran 7-8 June; Iran urged security cooperation, criticised possible long-term U.S.-Iraq security pact. Maliki 13 June rejected U.S. proposals; but President Talabani, U.S. President Bush in discussions 25 June. Change in Sadr strategy mid-month with decisions to set up elite wing in Mahdi army to fight Americans and run Sadrist candidates as independents in upcoming provincial council elections. Australia 2 June ended combat operations, started return of 550 troops. UNAMI 5 June presented long-awaited stage-one proposal concerning disputed territories, recommending initial allocation of 4 districts. Negotiations with major energy firms to develop 6 oil blocks, 2 gas fields continuing.

- “Sadrist to back candidates outside their movement in Iraqi elections”, AP, 15 June 2008.
- “Iran urges closer defense ties with Iraq”, *Washington Post*, 9 June 2008.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Reports N°74 & N°75, *Iraq after the Surge*, 20 Mar. 2008.

➡ **Saudi Arabia** Govt 25 June reported 701 suspected of al-Qaeda links arrested in 2008; 520 still in custody. OPEC members 22 June committed to increase supply; Riyadh earlier promised to increase by 200,000bpd from July.

- “Saudi al Qaeda seen under control despite arrests”, Reuters, 30 June 2008.

➡ **Yemen** Limited reports of fighting after Apr-May escalation between al-Houthi Shiite rebels and govt forces in north. Yet 20 June al-Houthi statement said clashes continuing with several civilians killed, hundreds of homes destroyed. Opposition socialist party official 20 June said no electricity, water in Saada city and number of displaced growing. Court 9 June sentenced man to death, jailed 13 others for forming armed group linked to al-Houthi Shiite rebels. Govt said arrested suspected al-Qaeda member and 4 others in east 25 June.

- “Humanitarian situation in the north ‘deplorable’”, IRIN, 25 June 2008.
- “For Yemen's leader, a balancing act gets harder”, *New York Times*, 21 June 2008.

NORTH AFRICA

➡ **Algeria** Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) 14 June claimed responsibility for 8 June bomb attack east of Algiers killing French engineer, plus 3 other bombings in month. Gunmen killed 4 police 26 June in ambushes east of Algiers; AQIM blamed. AFP bureau chief, Reuters correspondent had accreditation

withdrawn for alleged misreporting of terrorist activities.

- [“Ragtag insurgency gains a lifeline from al Qaeda”](#), *New York Times*, 1 July 2008.
- [“Al-Qaida branch claims recent attacks in Algeria”](#), AP, 14 June 2008.

Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°76, [Egypt’s Muslim Brothers: Confrontation or Integration?](#), 18 June 2008. The three-year clash between the government and the Muslim Brothers is damaging Egypt’s political life and should be ended by integrating the Brothers into the political mainstream. The regime should recognise the Brothers’ ambition to create a legal political party, set clear standards for integration and end its campaign of mass arrests under the draconian Emergency Law. The Muslim Brothers should finalise and clarify their political program to reassure their critics.



- **Egypt** Thousands clashed with police in northern coastal town Burolos 7 June over suspended flour rations; 30 arrests reported. Govt official 10 June said inflation hit 21% in May. Hundreds of Muslims attacked Coptic Christian homes, businesses south of Cairo 20 June over Christian woman’s conversion to Islam; 20 arrested. Incident followed 31 May attack on monastery, leaving 1 Muslim dead and 4 Copts injured. Cairo late June reported discovery of tunnels near Rafah crossing, large weapons cache in Sinai, following Gaza ceasefire agreement (see Israel/OT).
 - [“Arrests after attacks on Christian property in Egypt”](#), AFP, 22 June 2008.
 - [“Egypt police clash with protesters, arrest 30”](#), Reuters, 7 June 2008.

- **Mauritania** Security chief 2 June said weapons cache seized early May believed linked to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Following escapes, new prison established on military base to hold some 30 AQIM suspects, including accused in Dec 2007 French tourist murders.
 - [“Mauritania builds new jail for al-Qaida”](#), UPI, 3 June 2008.

- **Morocco** Security forces sent to retake Sidi Ifni port 7 June after week-long blockade protesting high living costs, unemployment. Parliamentary commission formed to investigate claims of abuses. Al Jazeera Rabat bureau chief charged 13 June with publishing false information regarding alleged deaths. 29 from “Tetouan Cell” sentenced 10 June to 1-8 years for forming terror group with intent to carry out attack, recruiting volunteers to fight in Iraq.
 - [“Jazeera Morocco bureau chief charged over report”](#), Reuters, 13 June 2008.
 - [“Morocco sentences 29 for recruiting Iraq fighters”](#), Reuters, 10 June 2008.

- **Western Sahara** Polisario Front leader Muhammed Abdelaziz said in June interview “there can be no military solution to this conflict”. No major developments since UN-mediated talks ended March.
 - [“Refugees of a tangled, forgotten conflict in Western Sahara”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 4 June 2008.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°66, [Western Sahara: Out of the Impasse](#), 11 June 2007.

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President William J. Clinton, 5 March 2007

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