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## CrisisWatch:

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

*CrisisWatch* is compiled by Crisis Group's Brussels Research Unit, drawing on multiple sources including the resources of our some 130 staff members across five continents, who already report on some 60 of the situations listed here. Comments and suggestions can be sent to [crisiswatch@crisisgroup.org](mailto:crisiswatch@crisisgroup.org).

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## November 2009 Trends



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## December 2009 Watchlist



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## CENTRAL AFRICA

➤ **Burundi** Tensions continued to rise ahead of July 2010 national elections. Several violent skirmishes over month: opposition CNDD activists in Karuzi province kidnapped by Imbonerakure, youth group affiliated with ruling CNDD-FDD, 1 Nov; riots between Imbonerakure and opposition UPD youth wing erupted 22 Nov, Muyinga province. 5 opposition parties at 23 Nov press conference denounced gov't's allegedly selective distribution of identity cards, required for allocating voter cards, to CNDD-FDD members. Dissident faction of FNL led by Jacques Kenese 21 Nov held hundreds-strong demonstration against FNL leader Rwaswa; officially authorised, the protest increased speculation gov't is fuelling FNL factionalism. Rwaswa confirmed as FNL presidential candidate 29 Nov. Civil society group FORSC 9 Nov threatened to disclose list of suspects associated with April killing of anti-corruption commission VP Ernest Manirumva if current inquiry fails to make progress. Govt 23 Nov revoked FORSC's organisational accreditation.

- ["Upcoming polls to test Burundi's fragile peace"](#), IRIN, 19 Nov. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°63, [To Integrate the FNL Successfully](#), 30 July 2009.

➤ **Central African Republic** Ex-president Patassé, following Oct return from exile, 9 Nov confirmed intention to contest presidential elections scheduled for March 2010, 21 Nov announced he would run as independent candidate. DDR advancing slowly; Economic Community of Central African States 5 Nov agreed to deploy 31 military observers mid Dec to monitor rebel disarmament. CPJP rebel group 26 Nov attacked and occupied northern town of Ndélé, condemning gov't's failure to open negotiations with group; gov't restored control later same day; 2 soldiers, 9 rebels killed. Rebels 27 Nov appointed negotiator for gov't talks. Armed men 22 Nov kidnapped 2 French NGO workers in Birao, far northeast. Ongoing LRA attacks continued to fuel humanitarian emergency in southeast. Ugandan forces in CAR 17 Nov claimed to have killed senior LRA commander.

- ["Back from exile, Central African ex-leader eyes election"](#), AFP, 9 Nov. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°55, [Central African Republic: Untangling the Political Dialogue](#), 9 Dec. 2008.

➤ **Chad** New détente with Sudan looked close to unravelling, with N'djamena mid month lashing out over Sudan's failure to remove Chadian rebels from border, prompting angry retorts from Khartoum. Sudan early month launched air strike against Chadian detachment that had earlier crossed border, killing 1 Chadian soldier. Govt 21 Nov announced creation of national elections office, a request of opposition groups included in 2007 peace accord. Former president Weddeye, following return from exile 16 Nov, stated intent to mediate between gov't/rebels and re-launch peace talks. 5 NGOs and ICRC suspended operations in east early month over security risks. MINURCAT troops increased to 2,749, bringing force to 52% of full capacity.

- ["Sudan slams Chad for delay on normalization of relations"](#), *Sudan Tribune*, 21 Nov. 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°65, [Chad: Escaping from the Oil Trap](#), 26 Aug. 2009.

➤ **Democratic Republic of Congo** Security seriously deteriorated in northwest province of Equateur, following eruption of inter-tribal violence over farming and fishing rights 29 Oct: at least 100 civilians and 26 police reported killed by mid-Nov and tens of thousands displaced internally and to Republic of Congo. UN peacekeeping chief Alain Le Roy 2 Nov announced MONUC had suspended cooperation with Congolese army's 213th brigade, involved in targeted killing of 62 civilians over May-Sept during anti-FDLR operation Kimia II. MONUC command 11 Nov stressed no intention to broaden suspension. Human Rights Watch in 2 Nov report documented killing of hundreds of civilians by Congolese troops since March; UN Panel of Experts report to UNSC, leaked 25 Nov, stated operation had failed to dislodge FDLR, exacerbated humanitarian crisis; also detailed regional and international networks involved in illegal mineral exploitation. Reports emerged UN preparing MONUC exit strategy and President Kabila pressing for a 2010 withdrawal ahead of 2011 presidential elections. UN announced some 12,000 unregistered refugees, thought to be Congolese, arrived in N Kivu from Rwanda; expressed uncertainty over their identity and fears over impact on ethnic and land tensions. UN special envoy Obasanjo during 9 Nov briefing to UNSC said situation in east had "dramatically" improved, announced he and AU envoy Mkapa would scale down mediation roles. FDLR leader Ignace Murwanashyaka and deputy Straton Musoni arrested in Germany 17 Nov for crimes against humanity in DRC. ICC opened trial of 2 militia leaders accused of ordering deadly attacks in Bogoro, Ituri, in 2003.

- Comment by Donald Steinberg (Crisis Group), ["UN Must Stop Backing Congo's Disastrous Operation Against Marauding Rebel Militias"](#), *East African*, 30 Nov. 2009.
- ["Congo fishing rights clashes 'force thousands to flee'"](#), BBC, 20 Nov. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°151, [A Comprehensive Strategy to Disarm the FDLR](#), 9 July 2009.

➤ **Rwanda** ICTR appeals court acquitted 2 Rwandans of genocide, citing inadequate legal basis and errors during original trials. Drew angry response from genocide survivors umbrella group IBUKA, which threatened to stop sending witnesses to the court. Kigali called for extradition to Rwanda of FDLR rebels leader Ignace Murwanashyaka and deputy Straton Musoni following their arrest in Germany for crimes against humanity. Rwanda 29 Nov admitted to Commonwealth. Kigali and Paris 30 Nov announced they had restored diplomatic ties.

- ["Rwanda seeks rebels' extradition"](#), BBC, 18 Nov. 2009.

➤ **Uganda** Parliament 27 Nov passed controversial amendment to land act following trenchant opposition from Buganda Kingdom representatives, who allege law aims to curb region's autonomy. Ugandan special forces continued operations against LRA rebels in neighbouring states, 17 Nov claiming to have killed LRA commander Okello Okutti in southeast CAR and reporting surrender of further 34 fighters, including senior commander Charles Arop, in northeast DRC. Further reports of killings, raids and abductions by suspected LRA rebels in southeast CAR, northeast DRC, S Sudan's Nzara county.

- “Dozens dead in Uganda rebel attack in CAR”, Reuters, 25 Nov. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°146, *Northern Uganda: The Road to Peace, with or without Kony*, 10 Dec. 2008.

## HORN OF AFRICA

➡ **Ethiopia** Ogaden separatist rebels (ONLF) 14 Nov claimed to have captured 7 towns in Ogaden region after 2 days of fighting in which 626 govt troops killed; denied by govt. 27 former and current soldiers of “Ginbot 7” group convicted on various charges including plotting coup in trials heavily criticised by rights groups; several members say confessions exacted under torture. 65 political parties 10 Nov approved new electoral code of conduct; 8 parties rejected, claiming ruling EPRDF had disregarded demands for discussions on national electoral board, release of political prisoners. Ex-president Negasso Gidada and ex-defence minister Seye Abraha late month defected from ruling party to opposition UDJ, Negasso citing need to work for national unity. Opposition coalition FDDE alleged govt manipulating food-for-work schemes to increase support for ruling party ahead of May polls.

- “Ethiopia convicts 27 over coup conspiracy”, Reuters, 19 Nov. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°153, *Ethiopia: Ethnic Federalism and Its Discontents*, 4 Sept. 2009.

➡ **Kenya** ICC chief prosecutor Ocampo 5 Nov met with President Kibaki and PM Odinga in Nairobi, announced opening of formal ICC procedures to establish investigations into chief perpetrators of election violence; Kibaki and Odinga pledged to cooperate. Govt panel 17 Nov published draft constitution, reducing presidential powers and investing PM with executive authority, introducing Senate and Supreme Court, increasing decentralisation; draft to undergo 30-day public consultation before possible referendum in March. Attorney General Amos Wako revealed he was target of travel ban imposed by U.S. in Oct, threatened legal action for “defamation”.

- “ICC to launch inquiry into Kenya violence”, *Financial Times*, 5 Nov. 2009.

➡ **Somalia** Fighting continued on several fronts, with clashes in Mogadishu, south’s Bakool region, and bomb attacks in north’s Galkayo city targeting govt sites and hotels 30 Oct-1 Nov reportedly leaving dozens dead. Clashes between govt troops and al-Shabaab forces surged again in Mogadishu 7 Nov. Al-Shabaab late month took control of 2 towns in lower Jubba following further battles with rival militia Hizbul Islam. Security deteriorated in Puntland: govt imposed brief curfews in all major towns following string of assassinations and bombings targeting govt officials. Tensions between Puntland and Transitional Federal Govt further increased, over allocation of donor funding and federalism. PM Sharmarke during early month interviews in UK stressed need to reach out to non “ideological” Islamist fighters, called for international anti-piracy policy to focus on livelihoods in coastal regions. Several piracy attacks over month. EU 17 Nov endorsed plans to deploy up to 2,000 military personnel to train Somali forces in Uganda. WFP announced risk of widespread famine in Dec after U.S. suspended aid deliveries over inadequate policing. Al-Shabaab 25 Nov demanded WFP halt imports, procure food locally, empty warehouses by 1 Jan.

- “Somali militants al-Shabab ‘seize southern town’”, BBC, 22 Nov. 2009.

- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°64, *Somalia: The Trouble with Puntland*, 12 Aug. 2009.

➡ **Sudan** 30-day voter registration period ahead of April 2010 elections started 1 Nov, 23 Nov extended to 7 Dec following strong calls from SPLM for extension due to low registration figures, lack of public information, poor preparations by NCP-dominated govt; party also condemned exclusion of 9 regional countries from diaspora vote. Carter Centre, officially observing electoral process, expressed concern over govt restrictions on its staff’s movement, said lack of civic information preventing millions registering. SPLM maintained boycott of parliament; talks with NCP over month on referendum bill failed to break political deadlock. U.S. State Dept following 16-23 Nov visit to Sudan by special envoy Graton announced concerns over “chances for conducting elections and referenda” without greater political will to resolve outstanding CPA issues. Darfur peace talks slated to resume 16 Nov in Doha postponed again as rebel group JEM rejected participation over lack of rebel unity. 6 Nov report by UN Panel of Experts documented evidence of Darfur arms embargo violations by rebel groups and Khartoum. In South: at least 8 killed 1 Nov in tribal clashes near Malakal; agriculture minister injured, 5 others killed in 15 Nov attack on govt convoy; some 47 killed in cattle raids in Lakes State 16 Nov. OCHA reported over 220 killed and 157 abducted in attacks by suspected LRA rebels in southwest over 2009. Tensions between Chad and Sudan again rose as capitals exchanged accusations of delaying progress on steps to normalise relations agreed in Oct.

- “Sudan delays elections by six days”, Reuters, 23 Nov. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°152, *Justice, Peace and the ICC*, 17 July 2009.

## SOUTHERN AFRICA

➡ **Madagascar** Formation of interim govt again faltered amid continuing stand-off between rival political groupings. Political leaders met in Addis Ababa 3-6 Nov under auspices of International Contact Group, holding tense negotiations on post of interim president following ex-president Ravalomanana’s strong objections to de facto leader Andry Rajoelina’s claim. Compromise deal struck 6 Nov, assigning Rajoelina the presidency and creating Presidential Council including 2 co-presidents to be filled by representatives of Ravalomanana and ex-president Zafy. Subsequent statements indicated clear disagreement between parties on co-presidents’ powers. Distribution of cabinet posts and formation of interim govt repeatedly postponed over month amid dispute over control of 5 key ministries. AU 7 Nov stressed Madagascar’s suspension would not be lifted until interim govt in place.

- “Madagascar rivals agree power-sharing deal”, Reuters, 6 Nov. 2009.

➡ **Zimbabwe** PM and MDC-T leader Tsvangirai 6 Nov ended 3 week disengagement from unity govt after SADC leaders set 30-day deadline, expiring 5 Dec, for resolution of all outstanding power-sharing issues. Tsvangirai met President Mugabe (ZANU-PF), Deputy PM Mutambara (MDC-M) for talks 13 Nov, reportedly agreeing to reforms of media, electoral system and improving human rights. South African mediation team 30 Nov held talks with Mugabe, Tsvangirai. Parliament 18 Nov unanimously approved bill reforming Reserve Bank, reducing power of controversial bank

governor Gono. Terrorism trial of Deputy Agriculture Minister-designate Roy Bennett (MDC-T) began 9 Nov, adjourned 27 Nov until Jan after key witness against Bennett, arms dealer Peter Hitschmann, failed to appear in court. Harassment of activists, MDC members continued; union leader Lovemore Matombo detained 8-13 Nov. Kimberly Process team 5 Nov gave Zimbabwe till June 2010 to implement plan to end rights abuses in Marange diamond fields; state media 19 Nov announced army withdrawing from mines.

- “When patience finally runs out”, *Economist*, 12 Nov. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°59, *Zimbabwe: Engaging the Inclusive Government*, 20 April 2009.

## WEST AFRICA

➡ **Cameroon** Ruling RDP officials issued several statements affirming support for President Biya’s candidacy in 2011 elections, in apparent effort to dissipate questions over Biya’s grip on power fuelled by his repeated stays abroad. Turmoil within opposition SDF party intensified: further reports late Oct that leader John Fru Ndi had halted active leadership; senior official 13 Nov defected to RDP. EU diplomat 13 Nov denounced electoral commission as biased. Chad 19 Nov accused Cameroon of violating 1970 border accords, as bilateral tensions mounted following alleged attack by Chadian forces on Cameroonian village along Lake Chad in Oct. Joint security commission opened 19 Nov in Maroua.

- “EU Condemns election management transfer in Cameroon”, *Newstime Africa*, 15 Nov. 2009.

➡ **Côte d’Ivoire** Electoral commission (CEI) 11 Nov confirmed postponement of national elections scheduled for 29 Nov; new date to be announced 3 Dec. Some progress in resolving disputed voters list. CEI 5 Nov announced 877,000 previously unconfirmed voters now verified, 9 Nov handed list to UN for distribution to polling stations; authorities 22 Nov began to display lists in some locations. Remaining 1m disputed names given 38 days to confirm identity.

- Comment by Rinaldo Depagne (Crisis Group), “Côte d’Ivoire: Pour une liste électorale inclusive”, *allAfrica.com*, 30 Nov. 2009.
- “Ivory Coast election chief confirms poll delay”, *Reuters*, 11 Nov. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°62, *Côte d’Ivoire: What’s Needed to End the Crisis*, 2 July 2009.

➡ **Guinea** 10 activists arrested in Conakry late Oct following 5-day hunger strike, calling for justice for victims of 28 Sept violence and dialogue to resolve political crisis. Regional mediator Burkina Faso President Compaoré starting 3 Nov held separate meetings with delegations from ruling CNDD council and opposition/civil society coalition Forces Vives in Ouagadougou, 19 Nov recommended formation of 10-month transitional power-sharing govt with junta leader Camara as interim president and retaining right to stand in presidential polls. Proposal accepted by CNDD junta, strongly opposed by Forces Vives. Reports emerged late Oct junta imported \$45m in arms from Ukraine, allegedly linked to support from South African mercenaries protecting Presidential Guard and training ethnic militia; U.S. urged South Africa to remove mercenaries, Pretoria pledged to investigate. Sanctions regime expanded as AU 7 Nov imposed targeted restrictions on junta leaders. UN International Committee of Inquiry into Sept atrocities began investigation 25 Nov.

- Comment by Louise Arbour (Crisis Group), “Keeping West Africa Stable”, *International Herald Tribune*, 26 Nov. 2009.
- “Most opponents of Guinea military reject power-sharing plan”, *VOA*, 23 Nov. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°66, *Guinea: Military Rule Must End*, 16 Oct. 2009.

➡ **Liberia** Head of anti-corruption commission for public procurement and presidential aide Keith Jubah killed 1 Nov by gunmen near home north of Monrovia; 10 arrested.

- “Liberia’s president vows to hunt down aide’s killers”, *AFP*, 3 Nov. 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°148, *Liberia: Uneven Progress in Security Sector Reform*, 13 Jan. 2009.

➡ **Mali** Several aid groups 18 Nov announced expat employees evacuated from north due to insecurity including AQIM attacks. French national kidnapped 25 Nov in north; authorities allege AQIM responsible. Govt 5 Nov reportedly discovered plane wreck thought linked to drug trafficking from Latin America.

- “Aid groups pull personnel from northern Mali”, *Times*, 18 Nov. 2009.

➡ **Niger** Constitutional court 10 Nov confirmed ruling MNDS’s controversial victory at 20 Oct elections, amid continuing protests from opposition parties. Large-scale protest held in Niamey 22 Nov, led by CFDR opposition coalition, calling for President Tandja to restore constitutional order. EU 3 Nov froze non-humanitarian aid, gave Tandja’s govt 30 days to open talks on restoring constitutional order or face suspension of EU cooperation under Cotonou Agreement. ECOWAS mediator Abdulsalami Abubakar 9 Nov met govt delegation, 12 Nov CFDR representatives; latter stressed Tandja must re-establish democracy as precondition for dialogue. Govt confirmed reports Nigerian customs police from 3 Nov began restricting passage of goods to Niger; triggered speculation Nigeria has unilaterally strengthened sanctions with trade embargo, denied by Abuja. Following Oct peace deal with Tuareg rebels govt 27 Nov lifted 2-year security alert in north.

- “Mediator holds talks in Niger crisis”, *AFP*, 18 Nov. 2009.

➡ **Nigeria** Govt continued efforts to consolidate peace in Niger Delta following amnesty program, but security remained fragile. Following President Yar’Adua’s 4 Nov request, parliament approved \$2.3bn for post-amnesty development in region. Yar’Adua 14 Nov met representatives from MEND militant group – the “Aaron team” – and reported “fruitful” discussions. With no attacks on oil installations since July, production up by 500,000 bpd. Govt missed 11 Nov deadline for establishing militants rehabilitation centres; hundreds rallied in Port Harcourt 16 Nov to protest non-payment of Oct disarmament stipends. MEND 17 Nov accused govt of raiding former rebel leader’s home in Rivers State, threatening to retaliate. Signs of further divisions within MEND, with some militants voicing frustration with senior leadership/Aaron team. Leader of Bakassi Freedom Fighters Franklin Dukuku 12 Nov threatened to renounce amnesty pledge following reported expulsion of over 800 Nigerians by Cameroonian Gendarmes from Bakassi region early month. Sporadic insecurity, high-profile kidnappings continued across country. Anti-corruption drive continued: former Bauchi State governor Adamu Mu-azu barred from office, ordered to repay \$10.3m in misappropriated funds; Abba Abacha, son of late dictator General Abacha, convicted of graft by Swiss authorities 20 Nov, and \$350m assets seized.

- Comment by Nnamdi Obasi (Crisis Group), [“Yar’Adua Should Draw Up Roadmap to Delta Peace”](#), allAfrica.com, 30 Nov. 2009.
- [“Nigeria misses militant deadline”](#), BBC, 12 Nov. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°60, [Nigeria: Seizing the Moment in the Niger Delta](#), 30 April 2009.



## Asia/Pacific

### CENTRAL ASIA

- ➔ **Kazakhstan** 19 Nov Parliament bill approving tougher laws on invasion of privacy condemned by opposition as attack on press freedom. Reports emerged mid month govt hired Washington lobbying firm on \$1.5m contract to remove human rights certification requirements for receipt of U.S. aid. Son of Muslim union leader severely beaten 26 Nov, allegedly in retaliation for criticism of authorities by father.
  - [“NGO’s allege Kazakhstan not ready for OSCE chairmanship”](#), EDM, 19 Nov. 2009.

- ➔ **Kyrgyzstan** 6 Nov parliamentary resolution, part of President Bakiev plan for overhauling govt institutions, cut number of parliamentary committees from 12 to 9, leaving opposition Social Democratic Party without committee chairmanships. Key opposition leader Omurbek Tekebayev 19 Nov requested Constitutional Court rule on legitimacy of govt overhaul. Govt 12 Nov announced significant utility price increases 2010-2012. Ruling Ak Zhol party 11 Nov refused to back parliamentary initiative to join UNGA protocol abolishing capital punishment, prompting fears death penalty to be reintroduced. Local media voiced concern over continuing intimidation of journalists after 1 journalist killed, 1 attacked early Nov, reportedly related to professional activities. Activist from rights group Memorial deported 19 Nov while gathering information on alleged abuses against Muslims.
  - [“Kyrgyz parliamentary changes undermine opposition”](#), IWPR, 21 Nov. 2009.
  - For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°176, [Women and Radicalisation in Kyrgyzstan](#), 3 Sept. 2009.

- ➔ **Tajikistan** At 18 Nov Dushanbe conference on Ferghana region, Tajikistan pressed for demining of borders between Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan; Uzbekistan said cannot occur under current Afghanistan security conditions. Govt 11 Nov introduced electricity rationing after nationwide power breakdown; negotiations continued with Uzbekistan on transit fees for electricity imports from Turkmenistan. President Rakhmon 5 Nov signed decree granting amnesty to some 10,000 prisoners; unknown if political prisoners, those convicted of religious extremism to be included. Detentions of alleged IMU members, supporters continued, with 3 women, 1 juvenile arrested in Sughd region early Nov. Govt issued decree obliging public to pay for information obtained from govt; journalists claimed impediment to free speech.
  - [“Is the West showing signs of democratization fatigue?”](#), EurasiaNet, 23 Nov. 2009.
  - For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°162, [Tajikistan: On the Road to Failure](#), 12 Feb. 2009.

- ➔ **Turkmenistan** Caspian Sea legal status working group met in Ashgabat 5-6 Nov; no progress achieved on fundamental issues of disagreement, including defining boundaries, principles of ownership. Govt announced plans to bolster energy, security ties with Iran after high-level meetings 21-22 Nov. Environmental activist arrested Oct released 6 Nov after Moscow threatened to intervene, citing his joint Russian citizenship.
  - [“Washington fines study-abroad controversy”](#), EurasiaNet, 20 Nov. 2009.

- ➔ **Uzbekistan** Tashkent 2 Nov announced possible energy cooperation with EU, 6 Nov reported agreement to export up to 10bn cubic meters of natural gas to China. Govt 25 Nov announced withdrawal from unified Central Asia power system, citing conflicts among member countries. 18 Nov declined to attend Shanghai Cooperation Organization meetings in Almaty. Opposition leader Sanjar Umarov reportedly freed 7 Nov after 4 years in jail in move seen as conciliatory gesture to West. Large Hizb-ut Tahrir cell exposed in Samarkand region 9 Nov; leading activists arrested.
  - [“Is Uzbek guerrilla force planning homecoming?”](#), IWPR, 18 Nov. 2009.

### NORTH EAST ASIA

- ➔ **North Korea** Tensions with S Korea increased, after North and S Korean naval ships 10 Nov exchanged fire in disputed waters off western peninsula coast in first naval clash in over 7 years. 1 NK officer killed, 3 wounded; NK threatened “merciless military measures”. U.S. President Obama travelled to Seoul 18 Nov, announced U.S. to send high-level diplomatic mission to Pyongyang 8 Dec for direct talks. U.S.-sponsored UNSC Resolution 19 Nov condemned arbitrary detention and torture in NK. Chinese Defence Minister Liang Guanglie late month visited Pyongyang, said bilateral relationship “sealed in blood”.
  - [“NKorea says SKorea faces consequences over clash”](#), AP, 11 Nov. 2009.

Crisis Group Asia Report N°179, [Shades of Red: China’s Debate over North Korea](#), 2 Nov. 2009. China’s internal debate following North Korea’s most recent provocations was interpreted in some Western capitals as a sign that Beijing is finally getting tough with its neighbour.



- ➔ **Taiwan Strait** U.S. President Obama during mid-month visit to Beijing called for continued progress in China-Taiwan relations. Surrounding statements underscored tensions over upcoming U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, with U.S. administration indicating sales would continue, and Beijing 25 Nov reiterating “resolute” opposition. Taiwanese Premier Wu 21 Nov announced “time not ripe” for negotiations on cross-strait peace accord.
  - [“Obama firm on Taiwan: aide”](#), AFP, 15 Nov. 2009.

### SOUTH ASIA

- ➔ **Afghanistan** Incumbent Karzai re-elected president after Independent Election Commission 2 Nov decided to cancel run-off following ex-FM Abdullah Abdullah’s 1 Nov withdrawal from race. Abdullah 4 Nov ruled out joining new govt. Following widespread Western pressure, Karzai vowed to tackle corruption in 19 Nov inauguration speech; govt 16 Nov said will create new high-level anti-graft unit to investigate senior

officials. UN 5 Nov said will temporarily evacuate 600 foreign staff from Afghanistan due to deteriorating security situation. U.S. President Obama 1 Dec expected to announce U.S. troop increase of 30,000 in new Afghan strategy; U.S. Ambassador Eikenberry in leaked 12 Nov memo warned against troop increase due to corruption of Karzai govt. Suspected Taliban attacks continued: 14 killed in Kapisa province 17 Nov; 17 in Farah province 20 Nov.

- ["Karzai sworn in for second term as president"](#), *New York Times*, 19 Nov. 2009.
- ["U.N. pulls out foreign staff from Afghanistan"](#), Reuters, 5 Nov. 2009.

Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°96, [Afghanistan: Elections and the Crisis of Governance](#), 25 November 2009. Only vigorous constitutional and electoral reforms will prevent Afghanistan from slipping further into instability after Hamid Karzai's fraudulent re-election.



➡ **Bangladesh** First trial of suspected BDR mutineers began 25 Nov, govt said trying all 3,500 suspects could take "years". Police 13 Nov arrested 3 suspected members of Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) militant group, 1 suspected Bangladeshi LeT "leader" 22 Nov.

- ["Bangladesh 'mutiny guards in court' this week"](#), AFP, 23 Nov. 2009.

➡ **India (non-Kashmir)** Govt early month launched first phase of "Operation Green Hunt" to combat Maoists: deployed 1,800 paramilitary troops to Gadchiroli district, Maharashtra. Maoist leader Koteswar Rao 6 Nov said open to talks with govt if mutual ceasefire declared. At least 2 killed 20 Nov after Maoists derailed train in Jharkhand. Separatist ULFA called 9 Nov general strike in Assam after 2 top ULFA leaders arrested in Bangladesh early month; at least 7 killed in suspected ULFA bombing in Assam 22 Nov.

- ["India's 21st-century war"](#), openDemocracy, 5 Nov. 2009.

➡ **Kashmir** High number of infiltration attempts by militants across LoC continued; Pakistan rejected Indian army's early month claim Pakistani troops providing cover fire for militants. Indian army killed 3 militants 4 Nov, 6 militants 14 Nov in infiltration attempts. Pakistan govt 23 Nov accused India of stalling resumption of peace talks after India PM Singh questioned Pakistan govt's control of own army. Pakistan court 25 Nov charged 7 over involvement in Nov 2008 Mumbai terror attacks.

- ["Four killed in Kashmir border clash, incursions rise"](#), Reuters, 4 Nov. 2009.

➡ **Nepal** Maoists launched largest anti-govt street protests since May resignation from govt, blocking infrastructure, access to ministries during 1st half of month; occasional violent clashes with police. Maoists still demand apology for President Yadav blocking ex-army chief General Katwal's dismissal May; leader Prachanda 8 Nov said Maoists may declare "parallel govt" if demands for "civilian supremacy" over army not met. Prachanda called off protests 13 Nov and allowed passage of budget, but as talks with govt faltered 21 Nov called for month-long resumption, including 3-day Dec general strike. U.S., EU 20 Nov expressed "concern" over protests, slow progress on peace process.

- ["Maoists to go on warpath again"](#), *Times of India*, 21 Nov. 2009.

- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°173, [Nepal's Future: In Whose Hands?](#), 13 Aug. 2009.

➡ **Pakistan** Army's offensive against Taliban in S Waziristan continued: 17 Nov claimed capture of main Taliban bases, said will continue operations in countryside; military claimed more than 500 militants killed so far, no independent verification. Dozens killed as wave of terror attacks continued, including 35 killed in Rawalpindi 2 Nov, 10 killed in 13 Nov attack on Peshwar intelligence service (ISI) office. Aid agencies said military continues to block access to 240,000 displaced by fighting. Political uncertainty after 28 Nov expiration of corruption amnesty for some 8,000 people, including President Zardari and 4 ministers, issued by ex-President Musharraf 2007; Zardari retains presidential immunity from prosecution, unclear if others will be charged. Zardari 29 Nov transferred authority over Pakistan's nuclear weapons from himself to PM Gilani; opposition continued calls for Zardari to relinquish more powers. In bid to ease separatist tensions Gilani 24 Nov announced Balochistan reform package, said open to talks with Baloch leaders.

- Comment by Mark Schneider (Crisis Group), ["Fata 101: When the Shooting Stops"](#), *Foreign Policy*, 4 Nov. 2009.
- ["Political storm brews for President Zardari: analysts"](#), *Dawn*, 30 Nov. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°178, [Pakistan: Countering Militancy in FATA](#), 21 Oct. 2009.

➡ **Sri Lanka** Govt 21 Nov announced some 100,000 IDPs released from internment camps in north during month; said remaining 136,000 will have "guaranteed freedom of movement" from 1 Dec, camps to close completely by Feb 2010. UN, rights groups welcomed announcement, humanitarian agencies privately expressed concerns about nature of resettlement: IDPs returned to areas not fully demined, without adequate provisions, infrastructure, or livelihood options; no independent monitoring and movements tightly controlled by military. Former army commander General Sarath Fonseka resigned 12 Nov, accused govt of sidelining him after civil war victory; Fonseka 29 Nov announced will stand as common opposition candidate against President Rajapaksa in 26 Jan 2010 presidential elections. Sri Lanka late month blocked from hosting 2011 Commonwealth summit due to poor human rights record.

- ["Agencies raise concerns over IDP care once resettled"](#), IRIN, 23 Nov. 2009.

## SOUTH EAST ASIA

➡ **Indonesia** Chief of anti-terror unit 19 Nov warned of risk from new terror cells, called for more power to detain suspects. Foreigners targeted in 3 shooting incidents in Aceh: head of German Red Cross delegation injured in 5 Nov attack, EU representative's house fired at 16 Nov, and home of 2 U.S. teachers fired at 23 Nov; motives and perpetrators unknown. Govt began repatriating several hundred West Papuan refugees long resident in PNG. 5 former political prisoners 16 Nov raised banned Morning Star flag in front of Papuan provincial parliament; police quickly broke up peaceful demonstration. In separate case, 3 Papuans sentenced to 2- and 3-year jail terms for raising Morning Star in Manokwari Jan. Amnesty International 30 Nov called for investigation into human rights violations by police in Nabire district. Papuan Council chief rejected link alleged by govt between rebel

leader Kelly Kwalik and recent attacks near Freeport mine.

- "Terrorism in Asia: still a threat", INSEAD, 19 Nov. 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°95, *Indonesia: Noordin Top's Support Base*, 27 Aug. 2009.

➡ **Myanmar/Burma** In highest-level visit in 14 years, U.S. Asst Sec State Campbell 3 Nov met PM Gen Thein Sein, 4 Nov held talks with NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi; junta leader Than Shwe reportedly snubbed delegation. Campbell's deputy Scott Marciel later said U.S. to maintain existing sanctions pending progress. Meeting Thein Sein at ASEAN conference in Singapore 15 Nov, U.S. President Obama called for release of all political prisoners including Suu Kyi. U.S. Sec State Clinton 11 Nov urged China, India to push junta for reforms. Suu Kyi 9 Nov expressed support for U.S. policy of direct engagement, thanked junta for allowing visit; 11 Nov sent letter to regime requesting meeting with Than Shwe. UNGA committee for human rights 19 Nov passed resolution condemning regime for abuses, called for 2010 elections to be inclusive. State media 10 Nov reported some separatist armed groups agreed to become border guards as part of govt plan to incorporate their militias.

- "U.S. diplomat meets Myanmar's top dissident and urges junta to work with her", *New York Times*, 4 Nov. 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°177, *China's Myanmar Dilemma*, 14 Sept. 2009.

➡ **Philippines** Group of local politicians, supporters and journalists abducted 23 Nov by around 100 gunmen in Maguindanao province, Mindanao, while on way to file candidacy for upcoming elections; 57 later confirmed dead. Perpetrators believed linked to political family allied to President Arroyo; local politician charged with murders 27 Nov, several local officials, police, military commanders suspended same day. UNICEF worker shot dead in same province 26 Nov. In 12-13 Nov visit, U.S. Sec State Clinton voiced support for govt-MILF talks, encouraging accord before 2010 elections. Statement followed meeting of senior MILF officials with senior U.S. State Dept official who delivered letter promising U.S. assistance for peace process. First meeting between MILF and govt officials since 2008 in Kuala Lumpur 17 Nov. MILF 12 Nov secured release of Irish priest one month after his abduction by rogue MILF elements; police urged MILF leadership to deliver kidnappers. Violence flared elsewhere in Mindanao as military confronted leftist New People's Army (NPA) rebels in bloodiest clashes in 2 years; NPA killed 8 soldiers, 4 others in 11 Nov attack; military killed 11 rebels in same day counter-attack; 1 soldier, 5 rebels killed in separate clashes.

- "In Philippines strife, uprooting is a constant", *New York Times*, 22 Nov. 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°88, *The Philippines: Running in Place in Mindanao*, 16 Feb. 2009.

➡ **Thailand** Diplomatic row with Cambodia intensified over former PM Thaksin's 10-14 Nov visit to Phnom Penh to take up economic adviser post offered by Cambodian PM Hun Sen in Oct. Both countries 5 Nov recalled ambassadors, Cambodia 11 Nov rejected Thai extradition request for Thaksin to face charges over conflict of interest, saying case politically motivated. Thailand 17 Nov said it was reviewing aid program to Cambodia. In 12 Nov speech to supporters in Phnom Penh Thaksin criticised Thai govt's policy towards Cambodia. 12 injured by small explosion at anti-Thaksin "yellow shirt" protest in Bangkok 15 Nov. Large Thaksin supporter "red shirt" rallies

planned 28 Nov postponed after govt declared it would enforce Internal Security Act. PM Abhisit cancelled 29 Nov trip to pro-Thaksin stronghold Chiang Mai, citing security concerns. Violence continued in south; security forces killed 6 suspected insurgents 17 Nov; 3 civilians shot dead by suspected insurgents 30 Nov. Opposition Puea Thai party chairman Chavalit 2 Nov suggested establishing autonomous region in southern border provinces; Abhisit rejected proposal, said govt favoured increasing people's participation rather than new administrative structure. Proposal followed late-Oct suggestion by Malaysian PM to give degree of autonomy to South to resolve insurgency.

- "A new way to annoy a neighbour", *Economist*, 12 Nov. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°170, *Recruiting Militants in Southern Thailand*, 22 June 2009.

➡ **Timor-Leste** Prosecutors in trial of 28 people accused of Feb 2008 attack on President Ramos-Horta and PM Gusmao 20 Nov refused to release autopsy photos allegedly showing rebel leader Alfredo Reinado executed at close range. Ramos-Horta 12 Nov repeated calls for "mutual reconciliation" with Indonesia. Court of Appeal investigation continued into govt's Aug release of Maternus Bere, Indonesian-era militia leader indicted for crimes against humanity; Bere repatriated to Indonesia 30 Oct.

- "Prosecution stalls on rebel's autopsy photos", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 Nov. 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°87, *Timor-Leste: No Time for Complacency*, 9 Feb. 2009.

## PACIFIC

➡ **Fiji** Accusing Australia and New Zealand of interfering in Fiji's internal affairs, military leader Bainimarama expelled both countries' Commissioners 4 Nov; Australia responded in kind.

- "Coconut dictator", *Economist*, 12 Nov. 2009.



## BALKANS

➡ **Bosnia** Peace Implementation Council 18-19 Nov concluded Bosnia failed to fulfil conditions for closing Office of High Representative, expressed "serious concern" over lack of progress, gave full support to HR Inzko. Decision followed early-month negotiations over Oct reform package, visits by high-level diplomats. Bosnian parties rejected EU, U.S. negotiators' 24-25 Nov revised reform package. UNSC 18 Nov approved extension of EUFOR mandate for another year. Inter-party talks initiated by Bosniak Party of Democratic Action cancelled 11 Nov after other parties refused to participate. Mostar civil servants went on strike 17 Nov after city council failed to elect city mayor, adopt budget for 17th time. Republika Srpska visit by war criminal Biljana Plavsic, recently released from prison by UN War Crimes Tribunal, provoked outrage among Bosniaks, Croats. Karadzic's trial at The Hague postponed until March 2010 after he refused to attend; to be appointed a defence attorney if he refuses to appear in court.

- Comment by Louise Arbour (Crisis Group), "Bosnia's Continuing Chaos", *Foreign Policy*, 18 Nov. 2009.
- "International community stuck in Bosnia", ISN, 27 Nov. 2009.

Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°57,  
[Bosnia's Dual Crisis](#), 12 November 2009.



The international community should take a firm decision to reinforce and transform its engagement in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the 18-19 November meeting of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) or risk growing instability.

➡ **Kosovo** 15 Nov municipal elections, first polls since Feb 2008 declaration of independence, cited by local, international monitors as generally satisfactory. Overall turnout 45%; Kosovo Serb participation highest since Belgrade started calling for Serb boycotts in 2004. Some incidents prior to poll, including gunshots fired at Alliance for Future of Kosovo candidate for Mitrovica mayor 13 Nov. 15 municipalities elected mayors in 1st round: PM Thaci's Democratic Party won 5 municipalities, Alliance for Future of Kosovo 4, Democratic League of Kosovo 2, Serb Liberals 2. 2nd round needed in 21 municipalities, scheduled 13 Dec. Some accusations of fraud including in Gjakova, where rising tensions saw shots fired at municipal building 24 Nov. CEC annulled results of 15 polling stations. Under strong international pressure, Democratic Party of Kosovo 20 Nov retracted 19 Nov threat to break with coalition partner Democratic League of Kosovo, confirmed coalition will continue. ICJ case brought by Serbia refuting legality of Kosovo's independence declaration to begin 1 Dec; court president 20 Nov said Court's advisory opinion will not be "clear yes or no".

- ["Caught between Pristina and Belgrade"](#), ISN, 20 Nov. 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°56, [Kosovo: Štrpce, a Model Serb Enclave?](#), 15 Oct. 2009.

➡ **Macedonia** Talks to resolve name dispute with Greece continued ahead of early Dec EU Council discussion on start date for accession negotiations, which Greece has threatened to block in absence of name solution. Reports emerged of setbacks at UN-mediated talks 16 Nov with Macedonian sources reporting expanded Greek demands for a solution – denied by Greece. No major progress reported at 27 Nov meeting between Macedonian, Greek PMs in Greece. Local media speculation over possible early elections in spring 2010 if Greece blocks EU accession progress in Dec; PM Gruevski denied memo sent to supporters indicated he was considering early elections. EU Council of Ministers 30 Nov lifted visa restrictions against Macedonia, to begin 19 Dec instead of 1 Jan.

- ["Macedonian PM seeks EU support"](#), BalkanInsight, 30 Nov. 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°52, [Macedonia's Name: Breaking the Deadlock](#), 12 Jan. 2009.

➡ **Serbia** ICTY chief prosecutor Brammertz visited early Nov to assess Serbia's cooperation with Court; allegedly favourable report to be delivered to UNSC 3 Dec, though stops short of citing full cooperation. Addressing Dutch parliament EU enlargement debate 12 Nov, Dutch FM noted progress in Serbia's cooperation with UN war crimes tribunal. New military base near Kosovo, Macedonian borders prompted criticism from local Serbian Albanians. EU Council of Ministers 30 Nov lifted visa restrictions against Serbia, to begin 19 Dec instead of 1 Jan.

- ["See you in court"](#), *Economist*, 26 Nov. 2009.

## CAUCASUS

➡ **Armenia/Turkey** Yerevan 2 Nov said expects Ankara to ratify 10 Oct landmark protocols normalizing relations first,

within "reasonable timeframe". Armenian President Sarkisian 2 Nov said will not stop seeking recognition of Ottoman-era mass killings of Armenians as genocide, will not make additional concessions to Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Armenian govt reiterated that Turkey rapprochement and N-K conflict resolution not linked; Turkish FM 17 Nov said will take no further steps on protocols without N-K progress. Yerevan 20 Nov declared no further negotiations with Turkey until ratification completed by parliaments.

- ["Armenian president defends Turkey policy"](#), RFE/RL, 4 Nov. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N° 199, [Turkey and Armenia: Opening Minds, Opening Borders](#), 14 Apr. 2009.

➡ **Armenia** Opposition Armenian National Council (HAK) leader and former president Ter-Petrosian 11 Nov suggested readiness to recognise President Sarkisian's legitimacy if govt cooperates with opposition; also denounced "extreme nationalist" demands for land claims against Turkey. Sarkisian 19 Nov formally submitted 10 Oct Turkey rapprochement protocols to Constitutional Court, which must rule on constitutionality before protocols can go to parliament for ratification. Court 23 Nov released opposition journalist Nikol Pashinian, on trial for alleged role in March 2008 post-election violence, removed bar on his candidacy in Jan parliamentary by-election. NATO special representative to South Caucasus 6 Nov announced Armenian troops to go to Afghanistan 2010.

- ["Turkish diplomacy reshapes the Armenian political landscape"](#), EDM, 23 Nov. 2009.

➡ **Azerbaijan** Baku accelerated efforts on alternative gas export routes to Europe, signing agreements with Bulgaria, MoU with Iran. Govt 19 Nov called for security guarantees from NATO in exchange for partnership. Court 11 Nov sentenced 2 youth activists, arrested Aug on charges of hooliganism, to 2/2.5 year prison terms, drawing further condemnation from international community over case.

- ["Azerbaijan accelerates gas export diversification efforts"](#), EDM, 18 Nov. 2009.

➡ **Chechnya (Russia)** President Kadyrov 13 Nov reported security forces killed up to 20 rebels 13 Nov in special operation in Shalazh, 30km SW of Grozny, possibly including head of self-declared North Caucasus "emirate" Doku Umarov. Several other violent incidents reported over month. Russia 24 Nov imposed counter-terrorist operation on part of Achkhoi-Martan district. Parliament Speaker in 2 Nov interview further distanced Grozny from exiled leader of Chechen Republic Ichkeria.

- ["Insurgent violence reported in Chechnya, Ingushetia and Dagestan"](#), EDM, 24 Nov. 2009.

➡ **North Caucasus (non-Chechnya)** Chief of staff of Combined Group of Forces in the North Caucasus Col. Oleg Panarin 8 Nov said situation in NC getting worse, rebel numbers increasing. President Medvedev in address to nation 12 Nov described violence in North Caucasus as biggest domestic problem, said level of corruption and violence "unprecedented", will create cabinet post dedicated to tackling NC problems. Ingushetia president Yevkurov 22 Nov said state corruption helping Islamist insurgency, confirmed law-enforcement agencies behind 8 kidnappings in 2009. Violence continued, including in Dagestan, several militants killed in clashes with security services over month, section of natural gas pipeline damaged by explosion 11 Nov, bomb exploded

under passenger train 30 Nov; in Kabardino-Balkaria electric power substation in Elbrusk district blown up 17 Nov, 2 electric power line pylons blown up in Zolsky district 19 Nov, 2 policemen found beheaded in capital Nalchik 24 Nov.

- [“Ingushetia’s president loses his lustre in his first year in office”](#), EDM, 13 Nov. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°192, [Russia’s Dagestan: Conflict Causes](#), 3 June 2008.

- ➡ **Georgia** Increased tensions with Russia following accusations from Moscow, South Ossetia (SO), Abkhazia of Georgian military activity in breakaway republics, and arrests of Georgians by Russian troops reported near Abkhazian, SO administrative borders; latter included 4 teenagers arrested 4 Nov on charges of illegal border crossing, possession of explosives, triggering international outcry over detention of minors. Russia-Georgia Geneva talks 11 Nov focused on issue of border arrests; no agreement reached on new security regime on ground. EU Monitoring Mission 13 Nov announced plans to use satellite imagery to monitor conflict zones, provoking protest from SO, Abkhazia. SO 19 Nov pulled out of latest round of security talks with Georgian officials citing “procedural divergences”. Car belonging to Abkhaz opposition party official and office of its presidential candidate’s company blown up 19, 20 Nov; no casualties reported.
- [“Russian border opening plan under scrutiny”](#), IWPR, 20 Nov. 2009.
  - For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°53, [Georgia-Russia: Still Insecure and Dangerous](#), 22 June 2009.

- ➡ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** Azerbaijani President Aliyev and Armenian president Sarkisian 22 Nov met under auspices of OSCE Minsk Group in Munich, reported “important progress”. French co-chair, Armenian, Azerbaijani FMs 23 Nov commended constructive nature of discussions. Prior to meeting, Aliyev had threatened to reclaim N-K by force if talks failed to produce diplomatic solution.
- [“Mediators note progress in Munich Karabakh talks”](#), RFE/RL, 24 Nov. 2008.
  - For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°55, [Nagorno-Karabakh: Getting to a Breakthrough](#), 7 Oct. 2009.

## EASTERN EUROPE

- ➡ **Belarus** EU FMs 17 Nov decided to extend sanctions regime for Belarus, mainly comprising travel bans on top officials, for another year, but continue suspending sanctions; will also offer talks on easing visa rules. Easing in response to Belarus’ recent release of political prisoners, dialogue with Brussels. Italian PM Berlusconi in Minsk 30 Nov, first Western leader to visit Belarus in 10 years. Belarus 27 Nov signed customs union with Russia, Kazakhstan.
- [“‘Pragmatic’ EU keeps Belarus sanctions in suspension”](#), RFE/RL, 17 Nov. 2009.
- ➡ **Moldova** Election of govt coalition’s presidential candidate Marian Lupu blocked by opposition Communist walkout of parliament 10 Nov, leaving insufficient deputies required for valid ballot; new vote to be held 10 Dec.
- [“No quick fix for Moldova’s political crisis”](#), RFE/RL, 30 Nov. 2009.
- ➡ **Ukraine** Russia 2 Nov warned EU president Sweden of possible disruption to Europe gas supplies due to problems

with Ukrainian energy payments, urged EU assistance to help Ukraine pay bills. Ukraine 6 Nov told EU it has sufficient gas stored to ensure flows. Russian PM Putin 11 Nov warned Russia will cut Europe deliveries if Ukraine siphons off gas for its own use. Fear over Ukraine’s ability to pay bills fuelled by IMF early Nov delaying release of \$3.8b loan instalment, following govt’s Oct contravention of loan agreement; EU FMs 18 Nov announced support for strict conditionality on IMF loan instalments to encourage reforms. President Yuschenko 19 Nov urged Kremlin to revise terms of Jan 2009 gas agreement; PM Tymoshenko same day told Putin Ukraine would fulfil deal.

- [“Ukraine relying on IMF payments for Russian gas purchase”](#), EDM, 18 Nov. 2009.

## WESTERN EUROPE/MEDITERRANEAN

- ➡ **Basque Country (Spain)** ETA political wing Batasuna 14 Nov called for talks with govt based on Northern Ireland peace process principles; did not condemn ETA use of violence. Police detained 36 suspected ETA supporters 24 Nov, and 34 suspected members of ETA’s youth wing Segi 26 Nov. Shots fired between policeman and suspected ETA terrorists believed to be planting bomb at police barracks 29 Nov.
- [“ETA’s political arm calls for peace talks in Spain”](#), Reuters, 14 Nov. 2009.

- ➡ **Cyprus** Greek Cypriot leader Christofias’s late-Oct statement that deal to reunify island “still not in sight” followed by string of proposals to encourage agreement. UN 10 Nov announced renewed UK offer to hand over half its 117km2 sovereign territory in Cyprus to help speed up settlement, conditional on sides agreeing peace deal and approval by referendum. Greek Cypriot FM responded saying no additional incentives needed; Ankara expressed approval of offer. Ankara’s 17 Nov proposal for 5-party conference, under UN supervision, on reunification rejected by Christofias. Turkish Cypriot leader Talat proposed marathon-style intensive talks to continue until agreement reached. At their 53rd meeting 20 Nov leaders discussed future of negotiations, decided on new phase beginning Jan with intensive 3-4 day talks, possibly including give-and-take process. Sides also discussed property 13, 17 Nov, and citizenship, immigration and asylum 24 Nov, including Turkish “settlers” in north. Talat indicated progress on categorization of properties. Christofias 26 Nov in letter to EU member states warned Nicosia will block Turkey’s EU accession bid unless Ankara recognizes Cyprus; Ankara responded calling for restrictions on Turkish Cypriots to be lifted, will not open ports to Cyprus before agreement reached to reunify island.
- [“UN envoy focuses on progress in unification talks”](#), *Financial Times*, 9 Nov. 2009.
  - For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°201, [Cyprus: Reunification or Partition?](#), 30 Sept. 2009.

- ➡ **Northern Ireland** Independent Monitoring Commission 4 Nov reported dissident republican threat at highest level for almost 6 years; Real IRA and Continuity IRA working more closely together, seeking to launch attacks on mainland Britain. Several incidents over month blamed on dissident republicans: mortar bomb found by police in Armagh 18 Nov; gun attack on police officers in County Fermanagh 21 Nov, several men arrested including reserve soldier in Irish Army; 180kg bomb left outside Policing Board HQ in Belfast 21 Nov; unexploded pipe bomb found 30 Nov near police station in Strabane. Deal on devolution of justice and policing appeared

under threat with unionists pressing for maintenance of Ulster's full-time reserve police force.

- "Devolution of justice years away says DUP man", BBC, 30 Nov. 2009.

➡ **Turkey** Interior Minister Besir Atalay 10 Nov presented govt initiative before parliament for resolving Kurdish conflict through greater minority rights, amid strong protests from main opposition parties. Second group of 8 PKK members surrendered to authorities 11 Nov after return from N Iraq. Rally by pro-Kurdish DTP in western city Izmir 22 Nov sparked clashes. Naval colonel briefly detained 11 Nov in connection with alleged plot to discredit AKP govt revealed in June. Chief prosecutor mid-month launched investigation into allegedly politically motivated govt wiretaps of senior politicians, judiciary officials. European Parliament 26 Nov adopted draft European Council document before Dec summit, omitting sanctions against Turkey for failing to open ports to Greek Cypriot traffic.

- "Turkey unveils reform steps for Kurdish minority", Reuters, 14 Nov. 2009.



## Latin America / Caribbean

### LATIN AMERICA

➡ **Bolivia** President Morales intensified campaigning in opposition-controlled eastern departments ahead of 6 Dec presidential, legislative elections. Govt-controlled lower house 18 Nov approved report on April killing of 3 foreign mercenaries accused of plotting to kill Morales: report accused key Santa Cruz department opposition figures of funding plot; opposition denied, said findings politically motivated.

- "Evo seduce a las clases medias", Infolatam, 3 Dec. 2009.

➡ **Colombia** Tensions with Venezuela escalated throughout month (see Venezuela). 9 soldiers killed in 9 Nov FARC attack on army base in Cauca department, largest FARC attack of 2009; govt deployed further 2,500 troops to Cauca in response. In blow to bid for referendum on constitutional change to allow possible 3rd term for President Uribe, group of associate judges called upon by National Electoral Council 12 Nov declared signatures and funding supporting referendum initiative invalid; Constitutional Court to make final decision early 2010 on whether to hold referendum. Govt 4 Nov made text of military base deal with U.S. public: controversy in South America over the fact that text does not explicitly assure that bases will only be used for operations inside Colombia.

- "Referendo reeleccionista queda sin piso legal", *Semana*, 12 Nov. 2009.

- For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Briefing N°21, *The Virtuous Twins: Protecting Human Rights and Improving Security in Colombia*, 25 May 2009.

➡ **Ecuador** Ecuador and Colombia took further steps towards re-establishing diplomatic relations: 13 Nov named charges d'affaires, 19 Nov reactivated binational border commission; Ecuadorean judge 4 Nov suspended arrest warrants for Colombia army commander General Freddy Padilla, ex-Defence Minister Juan Santos. Private media outlets 21 Nov said govt's new proposed Communications Law restricts "liberties and rights".

- "Colombia, Ecuador move toward normalizing ties", Reuters, 13 Nov. 2009.

➡ **Haiti** Ex-Planning Minister Jean-Max Bellerive 11 Nov sworn in as new PM after early month confirmation by Congress, Senate; followed Senate's 30 Oct dismissal of PM Pierre-Louis for "inefficiency in office." National electoral council 26 Nov banned 16 parties, including influential Lavalas, from participating in Feb 2010 parliamentary elections over registration protocol issues.

- "Haiti bans prominent party from 2010 election", AP, 26 Nov. 2009.

➡ **Honduras** Late Oct deal to end political crisis all but collapsed as de facto President Micheletti 6 Nov named transitional govt without ousted President Zelaya. Zelaya had refused to name his representatives after Congress delayed vote on his restitution until after 29 Nov presidential elections; Congress to vote 2 Dec. Zelaya 14 Nov said would refuse to return to power "under any deal". Conservative PN party candidate Porfirio Lobo 29 Nov elected new president with 55% of vote; questions raised over vote's legitimacy after OAS refused to send observers. Govts across the Americas divided over whether to recognise new govt: Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Venezuela against; U.S., Colombia, Costa Rica for.

- "United States, Brazil at odds over Honduras crisis", Reuters, 30 Nov. 2009.

➡ **Venezuela** Tensions with Colombia increased significantly as President Chávez stepped up aggressive rhetoric following Bogotá's controversial 4 Nov military base deal with U.S.. Chávez 9 Nov said U.S. or Colombian attack would trigger "100-year war", urged military and population to "prepare for war". After claiming 11 bodies found in Venezuelan border region in Oct were part of Colombian "paramilitary infiltration plan", Caracas 5 Nov deployed 15,000 border troops to combat drug-trafficking and strengthen security. Colombia in response 13 Nov protested to UNSC, lodged complaint with WTO over Venezuela's partial blocking of trade across border. Venezuelan military 19 Nov blew up 2 cross-border bridges.

- "Jaw-jaw war", *Economist*, 12 Nov. 2009.

Crisis Group Latin America Briefing N°22, *Venezuela: Accelerating the Bolivarian Revolution*, 5 November 2009. Against the spirit of the constitution, President Hugo Chávez is accelerating his "Bolivarian Revolution" by implementing radical laws that affect basic rights and liberties and thwart the political opposition's fair chances in the September 2010 legislative elections.



## Middle East / North Africa

### EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

➡ **Israel-Occupied Palestinian Territories** Citing stalled U.S. peace initiative, Palestinian Authority President Abbas said early month he would not run for re-election; 20 Nov said elections scheduled for Jan 2010 would be postponed because Hamas refused to participate. Palestinian chief negotiator Erekat 15 Nov announced plan to unilaterally seek UNSC endorsement of Palestinian state, but backtracked after U.S., EU called move

premature; Israeli PM Netanyahu said Israel would respond with own unilateral steps, called for talks. Palestinians rejected 10-month freeze on new settlement construction announced by Netanyahu 25 Nov; decision excludes E Jerusalem and 3,000 housing units already under construction or approved. U.S. envoy Mitchell said move “falls short” of complete freeze but could advance peace efforts. U.S. President Obama condemned 17 Nov Israeli approval of 900 new homes in E Jerusalem Gilo settlement. UNGA 5 Nov passed resolution drafted by Arab states endorsing Goldstone report accusing Israel, Hamas of war crimes and possible crimes against humanity in Dec-Jan Gaza war. Israel 20 Nov arrested 5 members of Palestinian security forces in W Bank. Israeli army killed 1 Palestinian at Gaza border 13 Nov; 13 injured, 1 reported killed in 18, 22, 27 Nov Israeli airstrikes on Gaza smuggling tunnels, alleged weapons factories following rockets fired into S Israel. Late month reports that Israel, Hamas nearing deal to trade captured Israeli soldier Shalit for some 1,000 Palestinian prisoners.

- “Will he jump?”, *Economist*, 12 Nov. 2009.

Crisis Group Middle East Report N°91, *Palestine: Salvaging Fatah*, 12 November 2009. President Mahmoud Abbas's threat not to run in the next elections is only the latest sign of the crisis facing Fatah, the movement he heads. Fatah's challenge is to clearly define its agenda, how to carry it out and with whom.



➡ **Lebanon** PM-designate Hariri formed national unity cabinet 9 Nov after 4 months of deadlock with opposition parties over ministry allocations. Draft of new cabinet's policy statement prepared 25 Nov endorsed Hizbollah's retention of arms to resist Israel despite objections of March 14 parties. President Suleiman 12 Nov held talks with Syrian President Assad in Damascus. Hizbollah 5 Nov denied link to alleged Iranian arms shipment seized by Israel 4 Nov in Mediterranean.

- “Impasse over, Lebanon forms cabinet”, *New York Times*, 9 Nov. 2009.

➡ **Syria** Israeli PM Netanyahu said he was prepared for direct peace talks with Syria in 11 Nov meeting with French President Sarkozy. During 13 Nov visit to Paris, President Assad rejected offer as “word play”, called on Israel to return to indirect Turkish-mediated talks. IAEA 17 Nov announced new inspection of Damascus research reactor, citing Syrian explanations for previous uranium traces as unsatisfactory; IAEA head 26 Nov said Syria not fully cooperating with investigation. Human Rights Watch report 25 Nov criticised detention of Kurdish activists, disruption of Kurdish political, cultural gatherings by security services.

- “Syria turns to France to defuse tensions”, *National*, 14 Nov. 2009.

## GULF

➡ **Iran** Iranian response to Oct IAEA-brokered proposal to transfer low-enriched uranium stockpile to third country for higher enrichment remained ambivalent; FM Mottaki 18 Nov said Iran would not send uranium for enrichment abroad; other officials called for further guarantees, but insisted not rejecting deal. After IAEA board 26 Nov passed resolution censuring Iran for concealing construction of Fordo enrichment facility, govt 29 Nov announced plan for 10 new enrichment plants. 4 Nov counter-demonstrations by anti-govt protesters in Tehran on official commemoration of 1979 U.S. embassy seizure met with harsh security force

response, arrests; anti-govt protests also reported in other major cities. Sporadic protests at several universities during month; tens of student activists reportedly arrested. 5-8 year prison terms given to several prominent reformists, some released on bail, as political trials continued mid-late month. Judiciary 17 Nov said 5 death sentences, 81 prison sentences issued for post-election unrest. Authorities executed member of Jundallah armed group 3 Nov, Kurdish member of banned opposition group 11 Nov. 3 U.S. hikers arrested Aug charged with spying 8 Nov. 5 British yachters detained in Gulf by Iranian navy 25 Nov. Military 21-25 Nov held exercises aimed at defending nuclear facilities.

- “Iran's nuclear announcement seen as chest-puffing bluster”, *National*, 30 Nov. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Briefing N°28, *U.S.-Iranian Engagement: The View from Tehran*, 2 June 2009.

➡ **Iraq** After repeated delays, parliament 8 Nov approved election law including open candidate lists, provisional status for Kirkuk results. VP Hashimi 18 Nov vetoed law, citing lack of refugee representation; MPs approved amended law 23 Nov despite Sunni Arab walkout and Hashimi threat to veto again. Ongoing hold-up over law likely to delay elections beyond constitutional 31 Jan deadline. Awakening militia leader Mustafa Kamal Shabib arrested 5 Nov by Interior Ministry. Court 19 Nov issued death sentence for former Awakening leader Adil Mashhadani on terrorism charges. Gunmen in military uniform 16 Nov executed 13 including local Awakening leader near Abu Ghraib. Numerous deaths in smaller bomb attacks across country during month including in Musayyab, Kirkuk. Govt initialled deals with international oil companies to develop Zubayr, West Qurna oilfields 2, 5 Nov. President Talabani, senior ministers held economic, military talks in France 16-18 Nov.

- “Iraqi lawmakers hunt for election compromise”, *New York Times*, 25 Nov. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°90, *Iraq's New Battlefield: The Struggle over Ninewa*, 28 Sept. 2009.

➡ **Saudi Arabia** Saudi forces 4 Nov launched ongoing offensive against Yemen-based Houthi rebels after rebels 3 Nov killed 2 security force members during incursion in Jabal Dukhan area. Officials 8 Nov said Jabal Dukhan retaken, 4 civilians, 3 soldiers dead; 28 Nov said Jabal al-Dood area cleared of rebels. Strikes against rebel positions in Yemen continued (see Yemen). Unicef 13 Nov reported 240 villages in border area evacuated.

- “Tent cities raised as Saudis flee border bombardment”, AFP, 15 Nov. 2009.

➡ **Yemen** Saudi forces 4 Nov launched ongoing offensive against Houthi-led rebels in Saada province following rebels' 3 Nov cross-border incursion in Jabal Dukhan area (see Saudi Arabia). Saudi authorities 8 Nov reported 4 Saudi civilians, 3 soldiers killed recapturing Jabal Dukhan; 3 further soldiers reported dead 22 Nov. Rebels 27 Nov said 9 Saudi soldiers captured. Saudis also claimed tens of rebels killed, over 200 captured. Despite initial denials of widespread reports that Saudi airstrikes and shelling hitting Yemeni territory, Saudi officials mid-month said strikes enforcing 10km buffer zone inside Yemen. Saudi navy 10 Nov imposed coastal blockade; forces thwarted rebel attack on Midi port 22 Nov. Yemeni forces reported killing 3 rebel commanders 18 Nov, repelling rebel attacks on Saada city 20, 28 Nov. UNHCR 10 Nov said total displaced by conflict now over 175,000. 3 protesters, 2 soldiers killed in 25 Nov clash at Southern pro-secession rally in Ataq, Shabwa province; pro-secession

protesters blocked Sanaa-Aden road 26-27 Nov. Large-scale security crackdown in Aden prevented demonstrations on 30th anniversary of South Yemen independence from Britain. Jihadi militants attacked prison in Abyan province 1 Nov. 3 senior security officers, 4 guards killed in 3 Nov ambush attributed to al-Qaeda near Saudi border, Hadramawt. 7 al-Qaeda suspects arrested 12 Nov.

- [“Pity those caught in the middle”](#), *Economist*, 19 Nov. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°86, [Yemen: Defusing the Saada Time Bomb](#), 27 May 2009.

## NORTH AFRICA

➡ **Algeria** Rioters 15-16 Nov attacked Egyptian-owned businesses in capital following 14 Nov defeat by Egypt in World Cup football qualification match held in Cairo. Egypt summoned Algerian ambassador over violence 16 Nov; recalled Egyptian ambassador in Algiers 19 Nov for consultations after alleged Algerian attacks on Egyptian fans following 18 Nov playoff match held in Khartoum. 3 Moroccan nationals given 3-year sentences by Algerian court for seeking to join militant groups in Iraq 10 Nov. 2 former Guantanamo detainees 22 Nov acquitted of terrorism charges.

- [“Egypt summons Algerian envoy after World Cup unrest”](#), AFP, 17 Nov. 2009.

➡ **Egypt** Violence between fans inflamed tensions around 14 Nov Egypt-Algeria World Cup football match in Cairo. Protest near Algerian embassy in Cairo over alleged attacks on Egyptians by Algerian supporters turned to violent clashes with police 19-20 Nov. Egypt 19 Nov recalled ambassador to Algeria; Mubarak 21 Nov said Egypt would defend dignity of

citizens abroad. Police 10 Nov arrested 12 Bedouin in Sinai near Gaza border in clash over alleged cement smuggling; in 20 Nov clash sparked by arrests, police killed one protester in Baluza, north Sinai. Muslims attacked Christian shops in southern town Farshut 21 Nov in riot over alleged sexual assault. Ruling NDP held annual conference 31 Oct-2 Nov; speeches by President Mubarak and son Gamal avoided presidential succession issue.

- [“This time, Egyptian riot over soccer, not bread”](#), *New York Times*, 20 Nov. 2009.

➡ **Mauritania** 4 suspects in Aug bombing of French embassy claimed by al-Qaeda reportedly extradited from Senegal early month. Prosecutor 23 Nov indicted suspect for Sept 2008 Tourine attack which killed 12 soldiers. 3 Spanish aid workers kidnapped on Nouakchott-Nouadhibou road 29 Nov. 3 journalists from Al Jazeera channel detained 7-8 Nov. Ruling UPR party won most seats in partial senate elections 8 Nov.

- [“Three Spanish aid workers kidnapped in Mauritania”](#), Reuters, 29 Nov. 2009.

➡ **Western Sahara** Moroccan authorities 4 Nov ordered Swedish diplomat to leave country for allegedly passing state documents to Polisario Front; 13 Nov expelled Sahrawi rights activist Aminatou Haidar to Canary Islands. UNSG 23 Nov expressed concern at growing Morocco-Polisario tensions, called on parties to cooperate with further talks. U.S. Sec State Clinton expressed continued support for UN-mediated talks in 6 Nov Morocco visit.

- [“Clinton stands by UN mediation for Western Sahara”](#), VOA, 6 Nov. 2009.

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Quentin Peel, International Affairs Editor, *Financial Times*, January 2008

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