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## December 2011 Trends



### Deteriorated Situations

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### Improved Situations

Bosnia (p.7)



### Unchanged Situations

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## January 2012 Watchlist



### Conflict Risk Alerts

- 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



### Conflict Resolution Opportunities

- summarises Crisis Group's reports and briefing papers that have been published in the last month.

*CrisisWatch* is compiled by Crisis Group's Brussels Research Unit, drawing on multiple sources including the resources of our some 140 staff members across five continents, who already report on some 60 of the situations listed here. Comments and suggestions can be sent to [crisiswatch@crisisgroup.org](mailto:crisiswatch@crisisgroup.org).

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## Africa

### Central Africa

➡ **Burundi** Defendants in Sept Gatumba massacre case 9 Dec plead not guilty; main defendant 13 Dec accused senior police of responsibility. UN SRSG 7 Dec said Burundi consolidating peace but challenges remain; UNSC 20 Dec extended UN office in Burundi mandate to Feb 2013 citing extrajudicial killings, media repression. Rights group 9 Dec said at least 43 opposition members arrested early Dec for “acts of terrorism”. Trial of 23 accused of terrorism, including RFI correspondent Hassan Ruvakuki due to start 28 Dec suspended to 5 Jan. In New Year speech, President Nkurunziza said govt will not negotiate with opposition. Tensions grew within Uprona party; night watchman killed in 11 Dec clashes, several arrested including former party chairman Jean-Baptiste Manwagari. Anti-Corruption watchdog OLUKOM 26 Dec said govt would be brought before East African court on allegations of embezzlement, misusing \$13.7m debt repaid by Uganda 2005-2007.

- [“UN Council sees ‘grave’ fears over Burundi deaths”](#), AFP, 20 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Central African Republic** UNSC 21 Dec extended peacebuilding office (BINUCA) mandate to Jan 2013; head of BINUCA 14 Dec warned lack of funding for demobilisation could undermine peace efforts.

- [“UN official in Central African Republic urges support for demobilization”](#), UN News Centre, 14 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Chad** President Déby 7 Dec reiterated support for Doha Peace Agreement for Darfur following visit to Sudan. Prior to visit, Sudan security forces reportedly arrested 2nd VP of opposition Union of Resistance Forces Abdelwahid Aboud Makaye, only remaining Chadian rebel leader in Sudan, at request of Chad govt. ICC 13 Dec referred govt’s refusal to arrest Sudanese President Bashir to UNSC.

- [“Chad failed to arrest Sudanese president, ICC tells Security Council”](#), UN News Centre, 13 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Democratic Republic of Congo** Tensions remained high following disputed Nov elections, with continued deadly violence and repression by security forces. President Kabila sworn in 20 Dec despite major and widespread irregularities reported in vote; Kabila 12 Dec admitted flaws in elections but rejected reports by international observers, including EU and Carter Center, that results “lacked credibility”. Counting of ballots for legislative polls continues, without additional international assistance initially agreed by authorities. Human Rights Watch 2 Dec said at least 18 killed in late Nov election violence, 21 Dec said at least 24 killed by security forces, dozens arbitrarily detained since 9 Dec; authorities pledged to investigate. 6 killed in clashes 9-10 Dec after opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi declared himself president; police 23 Dec used stun grenades, tear gas to disperse people attempting to attend Tshisekedi’s self-proclaimed inauguration. MONUSCO 21 Dec announced crackdown on Ituri militias.

- Crisis Group Urgent Media Release, [“DR Congo: Saving the Elections”](#), 8 Dec. 2011.
- [“DR Congo President Joseph Kabila begins second term”](#), BBC, 20 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Rwanda** Gunman 1 Dec killed opposition journalist Charles Ingabire in Kampala; opposition Rwandan People’s Party leader claimed killing politically motivated.

- [“Rwandan journalist is killed”](#), Reuters, 3 Dec. 2011.

### Horn of Africa

➡ **Eritrea** UNSC 5 Dec imposed tighter sanctions on Eritrea for supporting Somalia’s al-Shabaab; govt said sanctions “illegal and unjust”; 24 Dec called on UN to replace “biased” monitoring group on Somalia. Ethiopia-based Eritrean Salvation Front and Red Sea Afar Democratic Organisation rebels 2 Dec said they killed 17 soldiers.

- [“UN slams Eritrea for Islamic militant support”](#), AP, 5 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Ethiopia** Opposition Unity for Democracy and Justice (UDJ) leader Gizachew Shiferaw 11 Dec resigned; new UDJ leader, ex-President Negasso Gidada, 12 Dec accused govt of creating dictatorship. Amnesty International 16 Dec said govt using anti-terror laws to silence opposition, over 114 arrested since March. Court 28 Dec sentenced to 11 years in prison 2 Swedish journalists found guilty of helping, promoting outlawed Ogaden National Liberation Front rebel group. 300 senior officers including 13 generals retired from army 26 Dec as part of leadership succession plan.

- [“Opposition leader labels Ethiopian government ‘dictatorship’”](#), VOA, 12 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Kenya** Military 3 Dec claimed Somalia’s al-Shabaab command structure dismantled, 17 Dec threatened air raids deep in Somalia, said would “never relent” until “Kenya feels safe”. Conducted series of attacks 13-15 Dec on al-Shabaab camps in northern Somalia; 20 Dec killed 10, injured 13 in airstrike in Juba border region; 21 Dec killed al-Shabaab commander, 18 militia in airstrikes near border. Military 25 Dec continued to deny allegations civilians attacked in airstrikes, 28 Dec said 200 al-Shabaab killed in recent air raids. Al-Shabaab retaliatory attacks continued. Series of attacks on security forces at Dadaab refugee camp 11-19 Dec; 9 soldiers injured by landmine 11 Dec near Mandera; explosion wounded 6 in independence day parade in Wajir town 12 Dec; 2 grenades wounded 7 in attack on nightclub in east Wajir. Authorities 21 Dec confirmed death threats against Defence Minister and Deputy Speaker, both ethnic Somalis who supported military campaign against al-Shabaab. Gunman 30 Dec killed head of Community Peace and Security Team, Hagadera camp, Dadaab; gunman 1 Jan killed Somali refugee leader at Ifo camp, Dadaab. 4 killed 4 Dec by suspected Ethiopian raiders on village in Moyale district; at least 10 killed 25-28 Dec, 9 killed 30 Dec in pastoralist clashes near Isiolo town, northern Kenya.

- [“Kenyan forces destroy al Shabaab camps”](#), *Standard*, 17 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Somalia** Al-Shabaab 20 Dec attacked AMISOM troops in Dayniile in heaviest fighting since their Aug withdrawal from Mogadishu; first elements of 900-strong Djiboutian AMISOM contingent arrived in Mogadishu 20 Dec. Al-Shabaab early Dec banned aid organisations, UN bodies for “fostering secularism”, “amplifying refugee crisis”. 3 aid workers killed 23 Dec in central Somalia. At least 10 killed 28 Dec in clash between Transitional Federal Govt (TFG) troops and al-Shabaab, lower Juba province. Parliament 13 Dec voted to impeach, replace Speaker Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden; violence broke out between MPs 14 Dec when Deputy Speaker

refused entry. At Somali national consultative constitutional conference 21-23 Dec, participants including senior TFG officials, representatives from Puntland and Galmudug states, civil society signed "Garowe Principles" agreeing to finalise constitution by April 2012, reform parliament Aug 2012. Well-known cleric killed 5 Dec in Bosaso; Puntland authority and al-Shabaab accused each other of assassination. Galkayo airport shelled 14 Dec; Puntland administration blamed groups based in Galmudug. 2 killed 26 Dec by gunman in Galkayo; 1 killed 25 Dec and 3 policemen killed 27 Dec by roadside bombs in Bosaso. 7 killed 17 Dec in clash between Ahlu Sunna militia and forces led by Somali MP Abdifatah in Abudwaq town, Galgudud, sparking fears Ahlu Sunna withdrawing support for TFG. Heavy fighting erupted 1 Jan between al-Shabaab and Ahlu Sunna in Galgudud.

- "Al-Shabaab insurgents attack AMISOM forces in Mogadishu", Garowe Online, 21 Dec. 2011.

↳ **Somaliland** 3 killed 12 Dec in area contested by Somaliland and Somalia's Puntland region, in clashes between pro-Somaliland ethnic group and group supporting Puntland. Leader of newly-formed Hizbullah Party arrested 19 Dec for forming Islamist party in violation of constitution.

- "Fighting erupts between two local militias in Taleeh", *Somaliland Press*, 12 Dec. 2011.

↳ **South Sudan** Tensions with Sudan continued to escalate following Nov AU-mediated talks, due to reconvene Jan. Sudan and S Sudan armed forces clashed in disputed Jau territory early Dec. President Kiir 16 Dec accused Sudan of trying to destabilise country with cross-border militia raids, bombings; denied allegations S Sudan supporting militias fighting Sudanese Armed Forces in S Kordofan, Blue Nile states. Govt 21 Dec accused Khartoum of forcibly conscripting southern students; 29 Dec said Sudanese air raid killed 17 in Western Bahr al-Ghazal border state, Khartoum denied. Lou Nuer and Murle joint dialogue postponed to Jan amid escalating violence. At least 40 killed in clashes, cattle raiding in Jonglei early Dec; UN 26 Dec warned thousands of armed Lou Nuer youths planning attack on Murle tribe. VP Riek Machar 20 Dec announced rebel George Athor killed by SPLA following string of rebel attacks near state capital Bor and in Pigi county. U.S. early Dec amended economic sanctions against Sudan to allow U.S. investment in S Sudan oil market.

- "South Sudan accuses Sudan of destabilization efforts", *Al Arabiya News*, 16 Dec. 2011.

↳ **Sudan** Rebel JEM escalated military operations in N Kordofan; stalled by 23 Dec killing of leader Khalil Ibrahim in pinpoint airstrike, raising suspicion of foreign involvement. Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) 3 Dec claimed strategic victory against rebels in S Kordofan, said supply route and SPLA camps near lake Jau captured after clashes near Jau town. AU mediators 20 Dec announced 2 states will resume oil talks Jan. Govt 17 Dec criticised UNSG Ban call for withdrawal of SAF from Abyei, said region belongs to north; UNSC 23 Dec extended UNISFA mandate in Abyei for 5 months. Govt 29 Dec said 350 JEM combatants 28 Dec crossed into S Sudan in armed vehicles, carrying stolen goods, cash, abducted civilians; Khartoum plans to file complaint with UNSC, AU. UNDP 8 Dec said tensions in east renewed, fighters from Beja ethnic group gathered on Eritrean side of border. New inclusive govt announced 7 Dec after 4 months of consultation with opposition. Security services 19 Dec arrested leading opposition

Popular Congress Party (PCP) member Ibrahim al-Sanousi after PCP called for popular revolt.

- Comment by Alain Délatroz, "La guerre et la décomposition planent sur le Soudan d'al-Bachir", *Le Temps*, 8 Dec. 2011.
- "Sudan's government says powerful rebel leader is dead", *New York Times*, 25 Dec. 2011.

## Southern Africa

↳ **Madagascar** AU Peace and Security Commission 9 Dec announced lifting of sanctions on President Andry Rajoelina, indicating satisfaction with efforts to set up consensus govt, urged former Presidents Albert Zafy and Ratsiraka to sign Peace and Reconciliation accord.

- "African Union to lift sanctions against Madagascar", *Afrique en ligne*, 9 Dec. 2011.

↳ **Malawi** ICC 13 Dec referred Malawi to UNSC for refusing to arrest Sudanese President Bashir; govt threatened to withdraw from ICC Statute.

- "Govt recommends review of draconian laws", *Media Institute of Southern Africa*, 13 Dec. 2011.

↳ **Zimbabwe** ZANU-PF conference 10 Dec resolved to clamp down on and de-register international NGOs suspected of supporting "regime change"; President Mugabe said he will lead ZANU-PF in elections. Justice Minister Patrick Chinamasa 20 Dec said Mugabe may dissolve Parliament in order to force elections next year, MDC said prerequisite political reforms not yet implemented. Constitution drafting process stalled 22 Dec as ZANU-PF alleged drafters had included provisions not in National Report; MDC-T 24 Dec questioned authenticity of National Report, alleged it was doctored by ZANU-PF. MDC-N and ZANU-PF agreed National Report reflects original input from outreach process. Mugabe's late Dec promotion of Major General Douglas Nyikayaramba heightened tensions within unity govt; Nyikayaramba previously said PM Tsvangirai constituted "threat to national security", is accused of political interference. Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC) 6 Dec again asked to meet with Police Commissioner Augustine Chihuri to discuss political violence, allegedly partisan police enforcement. 2 Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe (MMPZ) advocates and chairman of public information rights forum arrested 5 Dec; police 6 Dec raided offices of MMPZ, detained director for several hours.

- "Copac stops drafting new constitution", *Herald*, 22 Dec. 2011.

## West Africa

↳ **Côte d'Ivoire** Legislative elections held 11 Dec in relative calm despite 7 Dec rocket blast at campaign rally in Grand-Lahou that killed 3. President Ouattara's Rally of Republicans (RDR) secured 127 of 254 parliamentary seats, Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI) 77; 36% turnout partly due to boycott by former President Gbagbo's Ivorian Popular Front (FPI). 10 injured 15 Dec in shootout in Yopougon between Republican Forces of Côte d'Ivoire (FRCI) and militia loyal to Honoré Sea. Ouattara 20 Dec announced creation of military police to rein in rogue security forces after FRCI elements killed at least 6 in Vavoua 17-18 Dec. 4 killed, 3 injured in clashes 25-26 Dec between indigenous Abidji

and FRCI in Sikensi. Gbagbo 5 Dec appeared before ICC for crimes against humanity; hearing scheduled for June.

- Comment by Gilles Yabi, “[Côte d’Ivoire: Les quatre pièges à éviter en 2012](#)”, *Slate Afrique*, 23 Dec. 2011.
- “[Vavoua: affrontement FRCI-populations fait cinq morts](#)”, *Agence Ivoirienne de Presse*, 18 Dec. 2011.

**New** Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°83, [Côte d’Ivoire: Continuing the Recovery](#), 16 Dec. 2011. Despite a marked improvement in economic governance and the holding of legislative elections in good security conditions on 11 December in Côte d’Ivoire, the divisions within the security forces carry a risk of violent confrontation while the victor’s justice targeting only former President Gbagbo’s followers hampers reconciliation.

↳ **Guinea** National electoral commission (CENI) 16 Dec announced suspension of activity until 6 Jan, indefinite postponement of legislative elections scheduled 29 Dec, after meetings with political parties, mediators. Standoff continues within major trade union National Confederation of Guinean Workers as judiciary 16 Dec invalidated 2 competing congresses which elected 2 different leaders. Govt 31 Dec forced about 4,600 soldiers into retirement; fears move could anger army.

- “[La CENI suspend ses activités pour 15 jours, reporte les législatives!](#)”, *Media Guinée*, 17 Dec. 2011.

↳ **Guinea-Bissau** Renegade soldiers 26 Dec assaulted Bissau army HQ in attempt to remove army chief Indjai; Angolan MISSANG troops intervened to prevent abduction of PM Gomes Júnior; at least 2 killed. Navy chief Bubo na Tchuto, former army chief Watna na Lai and at least 30 others – including several politicians – accused of orchestrating attack, held in Mansoa military garrison. UNSG Ban 27 Dec condemned use of force to settle differences, AU 29 Dec appointed Burkinabé President Compaoré mediator. Govt, Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP) and ECOWAS failed to reach security sector reform agreement; army chief said deployment of ECOWAS troops could plunge country into turmoil. Tensions continued between opposition and ruling PAIGC over President Sanha’s health, possible replacement by National Assembly President Raimundo Pereira, role of MISSANG troops. UNIOGBIS mandate extended until Feb 2013.

- “[Two dead as Bissau troops hunt ‘failed coup’ suspects](#)”, AFP, 26 Dec. 2011.

↳ **Liberia** Reconciliation talks between ruling Unity Party (UP) and opposition Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) collapsed 19 Dec after reported CDC request for dismissal of justice minister, key govt positions. UNSC 14 Dec renewed panel of experts mandate monitoring compliance with sanctions imposed in connection with civil war, 17 Dec prolonged arms embargo by 12 months, citing political situation as threat to regional security. Police flogging of 3 journalists 17-20 Dec prompted concerns over press freedom. Security forces 23 Dec fired teargas to disperse thousands of youths protesting over govt late payment for part-time jobs; curfew imposed, Information Minister sacked.

- “[UN refuses to suspend arms embargo on Liberia](#)”, *Africa Review*, 17 Dec. 2011.

↳ **Mali** Army 20 Dec announced Algerian troops crossed into northern Mali to assist in counterterrorism operations against groups affiliated to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).

AQIM claimed responsibility for 23-25 Nov abductions of 5 Europeans which left 1 dead. Following raid by Western-Sahara Polisario separatists that saw 1 killed, 3 kidnapped, govt 17 Dec said Polisario incursions on Malian territory would no longer be tolerated. Touareg rebels 22 Dec met President Touré, said ready to work with govt.

- “[Algerian troops ‘in Mali to combat Qaeda groups’](#)”, AFP, 20 Dec. 2011.

↳ **Niger** President Issoufou 18 Dec requested parliament lift immunity for MPs suspected of embezzlement. Former PM Oumarouin 17 Dec demanded independent inquiry into 4 Dec clash between police and protesters demanding release of opposition politician Aboubacar Mahamadou which killed 2, injured dozens; 6 police chiefs sacked as result.

- “[Le président du Niger demande la levée de l’immunité des députés soupçonnés de détournements](#)”, RFI, 20 Dec 2011.

↳ **Nigeria** President Jonathan 31 Dec declared state of emergency after 22-25, 29 Dec Boko Haram bombings and gun attacks across Northeast and in Abuja killing over 100, leaving 90,000 displaced in northeastern Damaru city. Police 19 Dec captured 14 Boko Haram militants, seized bomb-making equipment in Kano after shootout that left 3 police and 4 militants dead. 10 killed 13 Dec in Maiduguri in Boko Haram blast targeting soldiers, who allegedly retaliated with indiscriminate shooting, arson. Bomb factory discovered in Maiduguri after 17 Dec residential blast, large quantities of IED materials, AK-47 rifles, ammunition uncovered. At least 50 killed in 31 Dec ethnic land clash, Ebonyi state.

- “[Boko Haram suspects held after Nigerian shootout](#)”, *Guardian*, 19 Dec. 2011.

↳ **Senegal** President Wade 23 Dec confirmed intention to run for controversial 3rd term in Feb election; opposition parties 1 Dec failed to rally behind single candidate to challenge him. Increasing concerns over reported use of youths by political actors to intimidate rivals; leader of Socialist Party’s youth league Barthélémy Dias 23 Dec opened fire on reportedly armed Wade supporters, leaving 1 dead. Attacks by separatist Casamance Movement of Democratic Forces (MFDC) on military positions 13, 20 Dec killed 13 soldiers; 5 held hostage. During meeting boycotted by separatist hardliners, MFDC moderate Jean-Marie François Biagui 17 Dec announced plan to transform group into political party.

- “[13 killed in Casamance fighting](#)”, WADR, 20 Dec. 2011.

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## Asia

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### Central Asia

↳ **Kazakhstan** At least 15 people killed, 100 injured, around 40 buildings burned down 16 Dec as crowd including sacked oil workers clashed with govt forces in western town Janaozen following 6-month strike. Authorities 17 Dec declared state of emergency, curfew in Janaozen, accused “hooligans” of organising mass disorder, said police fired in self-defence. Phone, internet, and mobile connections into town temporarily cut off. Local residents and oil workers 17-18 Dec rallied in Shetpe and regional capital

Aktau against police use of force. 16 people arrested over 16 Dec violence, which marks growing instability in west, increasing social tensions, state confusion. Eyewitnesses, opposition activists allege 16 Dec casualties much higher, reports of mass arrests and torture. President Nazarbayev visited region 22 Dec, sacked senior company executives, regional governor and son-in-law Timur Kulibayev, though move considered unlikely to affect latter's political prominence. Prosecutor-general 22 Dec invited UN to take part in investigations into clashes, 29 Dec announced criminal investigation into police actions. In separate developments, security services' response to armed jihadist attacks provoking questions about state's ability to handle security challenges. 5 members of Islamist group Jund al-Khilafah and 2 members of elite police force killed 3 Dec in operations in southern Boraldai village; militants believed responsible for killing of 2 police 8 Nov. Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) members 20 Dec agreed establishment of military facilities in member states by outside countries needs approval of all CSTO members.

- "Thicker than oil", *Economist*, 31 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Kyrgyzstan** New 4-party coalition govt formed by incoming president Atambaev; parliament 23 Dec elected close Atambaev associate and highly controversial politician Omurbek Babanov as new PM, UNSG Ban 2 Dec called on new govt to encourage national dialogue, reconciliation. UNHCHR Pillay criticised Supreme Court's 20 Dec confirmation of life sentence for Uzbek activist Azimjon Askarov, jailed over role in June 2010 ethnic violence in south. UN Special Rapporteur on torture Mendez 14 Dec said torture still widely used during interrogations in Kyrgyzstan. Parliament speaker 12 Dec resigned over alleged criminal links.

- "Kyrgyzstan swears in new government, with old faces", RFE/RL, 28 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Tajikistan** Russian ambassador said relations between countries unaffected by Nov dispute involving Tajikistan's jailing of 2 Russian pilots. Regional court convicted 53 people over role in Sept 2010 suicide bombing in northern city Khujand.

- "Russian envoy says relations with Tajikistan 'friendly'", RFE/RL, 23 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Turkmenistan** Govt press service 21 Dec reported 7 candidates to run for presidency against President Berdymukhammedov in Feb elections; all belong to ruling Democratic Party of Turkmenistan, country's only party chaired by President.

- "More candidates nominated in Turkmen presidential race", RFE/RL, 21 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Uzbekistan** Senate 4 Dec adopted bill to change office term for presidents back to 5 years from current 7 years, in move seen by some as attempt by President Karimov to seek 2 more terms in office. Human Rights Watch 13 Dec criticised country's rights record, accused Western govts of turning blind eye to abuses.

- "Experts in Uzbekistan corroborate findings of HRW report", Uznews.net, 15 Dec. 2011.

## North East Asia

➡ **North Korea** State television 19 Dec announced death 2 days earlier of Kim Jong-il; youngest son Kim Jong-un declared "great successor". Funeral took place 28 Dec. Prior to announcement of Kim Jong-il's death, DPRK 19 Dec reportedly test-fired short-range missile on eastern coast. UNSG Ban expressed sympathy to N Korean people, said UN would continue providing assistance. China endorsed new leader, invited him to visit China. U.S. 20 Dec laid out conditions for improved relations with DPRK, stated hopes for progress on denuclearisation, said U.S. continuing with discussions on resuming food aid. U.S. Congress 14 Dec passed legislation introducing sanctions against countries or companies that help DPRK pursue nuclear, chemical or biological weapons or missile programs.

- "Grief and fear", *Economist*, 31 Dec. 2011.

**New** Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°130, *South Korea: The Shifting Sands of Security Policy*, 1 Dec. 2011. Although North Korea has offered unconditional dialogue since Jan, South Korea is maintaining a tough policy line towards the North as Seoul approaches a year of electoral campaign politics. The risk of conflict remains serious, particularly in the area near the Northern Limit Line (NLL), the military demarcation in the Yellow Sea.

## South Asia

➡ **Afghanistan** 80 killed, over 100 injured in Kabul, 4 killed in Mazar-i-Sharif in 6 Dec bomb attacks coinciding with Shia holy day Ashura; Pakistani Sunni militants Lashkar-e-Jhangvi claimed responsibility. 5 Dec Bonn conference on Afghanistan settlement overshadowed by Pakistan boycott; over 90 states and international organisations signed 33-point statement calling for enduring international support beyond 2014. Insurgent attacks continued: 19 killed 7 Dec, 6 killed 13 Dec by roadside bombs in Helmand; at least 20 killed 25 Dec by suicide bomb in Taloq; 10 police killed 29 Dec by roadside bomb, Helmand. High Peace Council said govt will accept Taliban liaison office in Qatar, but no foreign involvement without consent. NATO 19 Dec said night kill-and-capture raids will continue despite repeated protests by Karzai. Senior U.S. commander 20 Dec said U.S. forces could remain beyond 2014 withdrawal date.

- "Afghan President Hamid Karzai blames Pakistan for Kabul attack", AFP, 8 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Bangladesh** 2 killed in Dhaka and Sylhet 18 Dec when police dispersed hundreds of opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) activists. 8 injured in Dhaka 4 Dec as police forcibly dispersed BNP activists participating in general strike. Border Guard Bangladesh 12 Dec protested killing, capture and abduction of citizens by Indian Border Security Force (BSF); govt 19 Dec protested 17-18 Dec killing of 4 nationals by BSF. Authorities 15 Dec announced inquiry into recent spate of killings and disappearances; rights group Odhikar said most victims opposition political activists.

- "Bangladesh inquiry into killings and disappearances", BBC, 15 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Kashmir** Suspected rebels 12 Dec fired on Law Minister Ali Mohammed Sagar in Srinagar, killed policeman. Govt 17 Dec banned public assembly in Baramulla, N Kashmir. Army 15 Dec

said withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan poses security threat; 19 Dec said at least 100 guerrillas waiting to infiltrate Kashmir Valley across Line of Control. Indian army 23 Dec said Pakistan forces violated ceasefire 5, 14 and 23 Dec, claimed army fired on Indian patrol, posts. Suspected guerrillas 24 Dec killed ruling National Conference activist in Srinagar.

- [“Bold attack on Kashmir minister leaves guard dead”](#), AP, 12 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Nepal** Opposition Nepali Congress Party (NC) 1 Dec rejected request by PM Bhattarai to allow additional 2,500 former Maoist fighters to integrate into army. 9 eastern districts closed by strikes mid-Dec as local council, ethnic groups demanded more rights, representation in constitution. 16 protestors detained in Kathmandu 19 Dec during second national strike over prison death of NC youth leader. FM Barshaman Pun 11 Dec said new constitution will be promulgated within 6 months following 29 Nov extension of Constituent Assembly.

- [“Nepal leaders dispute over Maoists’ army integration”](#), BBC, 1 Dec. 2011.

**New** Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°131, [Nepal’s Peace Process: The End-game Nears](#), 13 Dec. 2011. With the future of the Maoist combatants finally settled, Nepal’s peace process has gained momentum after a long stalemate, but challenges remain, particularly the design of a new federal state and evolving coalition and factional dynamics of the parties.

➡ **Pakistan** Tensions between Pakistan People’s Party govt and military leadership escalated as Supreme Court late Dec began hearings on May 2011 memo to U.S. Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff seeking U.S. help to prevent military coup; govt denies allegations memo authorised by former U.S. ambassador Hussain Haqqani, rejects Supreme Court jurisdiction. Army Chief General Kayani and ISI chief General Pasha insist on Supreme Court probe, provoking coup fears. Tensions with NATO continued as govt boycotted 5 Dec Bonn conference on Afghanistan settlement in protest at Nov NATO airstrike; tens of thousands 18 Dec demonstrated in Lahore against NATO. Director-General of Military Operations 8 Dec said airstrike “pre-planned” but govt 19 Dec restored liaison officers at border coordination centres, marking some progress. U.S. 11 Dec vacated Shamsi air base, Balochistan; 24 Dec said drone strikes suspended 6 weeks. PM Gilani 11 Dec said blockage of NATO convoys, initiated after NATO airstrike, may continue for weeks; govt 14 Dec said it would seek to renegotiate agreements concerning supplies and logistics support to NATO but DG ISI General Pasha reportedly met U.S. officials in Doha in attempt to ease tensions. Interior Minister Rehman Makik 12 Dec denied reports govt holding peace talks with Taliban after key militant leader said peace agreement close. Gunmen 8 Dec killed Human Rights Commission coordinator Zarteef Khan Afridi, Khyber district. Taliban attacks on schools, military camps continued throughout month.

- [“Pakistan Islamists rally in support of army”](#), Al Jazeera, 18 Dec. 2011.

**New** Crisis Group Asia Report N°216, [Islamic Parties in Pakistan](#), 12 Dec. 2011. Religious intolerance, sectarian violence and radical Islamic parties threaten to undermine the democratic reforms on which Pakistan’s stability depends.

➡ **Sri Lanka** Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) report presented to parliament 16 Dec, said govt forces did not target civilians but some isolated incidents warrant investigation, LTTE routinely violated international humanitarian law. Tamil

National Alliance (TNA) 19 Dec rejected report, called for international war crimes inquiry. U.S. expressed concern LLRC report incomplete, called for roadmap to implement recommendations, fill in “gaps”. TNA-govt talks stalled due to disagreement over provincial powers, TNA’s non-participation in parliamentary select committee. Budget passed 18 Dec, included spending increase for defence ministry. Ex-army chief Sarath Fonseka 16 Dec lost appeal against 30-month corruption sentence; President Rajapaksa 20 Dec said he would consider formal pardon request. Govt 15 Dec announced decision to implement watered-down 5-year National Human Rights Action Plan. United National Party (UNP) leader Ranil Wickremasinghe re-elected in rare leadership vote; deep divisions in party remain.

- [“New test of India’s global influence”](#), *Global Post*, 19 Dec. 2011.
- Crisis Group [Statement on the Report of Sri Lanka’s Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission](#), 22 Dec. 2011.

**New** Crisis Group Asia Report N°217, [Sri Lanka: Women’s Insecurity in the North and East](#), 20 Dec. 2011. Women in Sri Lanka’s predominantly Tamil-speaking north and east are facing a desperate lack of security in the aftermath of the long civil war.

## South East Asia

➡ **Indonesia** Situation in Papua continued to deteriorate as intensified counterinsurgency operations against local Free Papua Movement (OPM) leader John Yogi in Paniai 13-15 Dec left 17 dead, 75 homes destroyed, thousands displaced. Group with bows and arrows 1 Dec attacked policeman in Jayapura, later died of injuries. OPM suspected in 2 Dec Puncak Jaya attack which left 2 police dead; OPM also suspected in recent shootings along Freeport road. Freeport 14 Dec agreed to 39% salary increase for mine workers, ending 3-month strike. Grenade attack in Aceh 1 Dec as tensions remained high ahead of Feb elections. Communal tensions remain high in Ambon, with clashes between Muslims and Christians 13 Dec, Christian killed by Muslim mob 15 Dec. At least 2 reported killed 24 Dec as police clashed with protestors demonstrating against planned mine in Sumbawa, West Nusa Tenggara.

- [“Aceh’s no win election”](#), Inside Indonesia, 11 Dec. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°128, [Indonesia: Trouble Again in Ambon](#), 4 Oct. 2011.

➡ **Myanmar/Burma** Milestone visit by U.S. Sec State Clinton 30 Nov-2 Dec signaled U.S. ready to begin process of normalising relations; Clinton announced modest policy changes including inviting FM to Washington, U.S. support for multilateral assistance. Thai PM Yingluck 20 Dec offered support to Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK) for upcoming by-elections during historic meeting in Yangon. Other diplomatic visits included Belarus and Bangladesh PMs, Japan, Indonesian and Singapore FMs. President Thein Sein 3 Dec signed law allowing peaceful demonstrations. Govt also announced magazines covering economic, business affairs no longer need to be submitted for censor approval. Political activists held event at Yangon monastery marking 20th anniversary of ASSK’s Nobel Peace Prize. Govt 2 Dec signed ceasefire agreement with Shan State Army (South). Thein Sein 10 Dec ordered military halt offensive actions, troop movements in Kachin State, granted UN humanitarian access to conflict areas in Kachin. Hostilities reported in northern Shan state between army and Kachin Independence Army. Following visit to Kachin Myanmar National

Human Rights Commission made recommendations including increased assistance to IDPs. Authorities 16 Dec jailed Karen rebel leader Mahn Nyein Maung for 17 years for “unlawful association”.

- “Burma orders end to fighting against Kachin rebels”, BBC, 12 Dec. 2011.
- Crisis Group Asia Report N°214, *Myanmar: A New Peace Initiative*, 30 Nov. 2011.

➤ **Papua New Guinea** Constitutional crisis after Supreme Court 12 Dec declared PM O’Neill illegitimate, ruled Michael Somare, replaced as PM in Aug while in Singapore for medical treatment, still in office. Crisis resolved after governor general gave support to O’Neill.

- “Papua New Guinea’s impasse seems to end”, *New York Times*, 20 Dec. 2011.

➤ **Philippines** Govt-Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) peace process appeared back on track with 5-7 Dec talks resulting in statement that Malaysian-led International Monitoring Team (IMT) mandate would be renewed for 2012; talks to resume early Jan. MILF and Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) representatives 6-7 Dec met in Saudi Arabia under Organisation of Islamic Conference auspices to improve coordination. IMT investigation into Oct clashes between govt troops and MILF stalled by Zamboanga Sibugay governor early Dec refusing IMT access to site of clashes in Payao. Australian kidnapped 5 Dec in Ipil, Zamboanga Sibugay. Despite deadly clashes 4 and 12 Dec, govt and New People’s Army (NPA) 15 Dec announced holiday truce until 2 Jan. 5 dead, 2 wounded in 16 Dec NPA ambush. Govt 14 Dec launched ship newly acquired from U.S. to patrol disputed Spratly islands.

- “Draft deal, MILF told”, *Manila Bulletin*, 6 Dec. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°213, *The Philippines: Indigenous Rights and the MILF Peace Process*, 22 Nov. 2011.

➤ **Thailand** Thai and Cambodian military authorities 21 Dec held 8th meeting of Thai-Cambodian General Border Committee in Phnom Penh, agreed to comply with ICJ’s July order to withdraw troops from provisional demilitarised zone near Preah Vihear temple under supervision of Indonesian observers; still no date for deployment of observers. Severe criticism from civil society groups, international community following harsh sentences for 3 people convicted of lese majeste; OHCHR urged authorities to amend laws. Govt 16 Dec returned ousted PM Thaksin’s passport, prompting opposition to seek impeachment of PM and FM. Deputy PM reiterated govt to push forward amnesty law for Thaksin. Fugitive Red Shirt leader Arisman Pongruengrong returned to Thailand 6 Dec to face terrorism charges. In Bangkok police defused 1 bomb 6 Dec, 6 bombs 16 Dec, arrested 1 suspect. Supreme Court 2 Dec sentenced Da-oh Thanam, ex-leader of southern separatist group PULO, 3 other PULO members to life imprisonment. Leader of small Prachatham party shot dead 15 Dec in Narathiwat.

- “Temple troops to be withdrawn”, *Bangkok Post*, 22 Dec. 2011.

**New** Crisis Group Asia Report N°215, *Waging Peace: ASEAN and the Thai-Cambodian Border Conflict*, 6 Dec. 2011. The violent border clashes between Thailand and Cambodia earlier this year have challenged the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to turn its rhetoric into action, but to achieve peace and security more robust diplomacy is required to end a still unresolved conflict.

➤ **Timor-Leste** Fighting between members of PSHT and rival martial arts groups in Comoro area of Dili 19 Dec killed 1, injured 3, further raising concerns of potential for violence in 2012 elections. Govt announced 20 police under investigation for alleged role in fighting.

- “Chefe da aldeia de Komoro pede reforço da segurança”, *JournalDigital*, 21 Dec. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°129, *Timor-Leste’s Veterans: An Unfinished Struggle?*, 18 Nov. 2011.

## Europe

### Balkans

➤ **Bosnia** Leaders of 6 main parties 28 Dec announced agreement to form state govt, ending 14-month political deadlock following Oct 2010 elections, and resulting in adoption of budget days ahead of 1 Jan deadline which would have seen state institutions shut down, intensified political crisis. New govt to comprise 4 Bosniak ministers, 3 Serbs, 3 Croats. Leaders also reported agreement on laws required for progress on EU membership.

- “Bosnia’s December surprise”, *Economist*, 30 Dec. 2011.

**New** Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°66, *Brčko Unsupervised*, 8 Dec. 2011. The international community should start a process to close its supervision of Bosnia’s Brčko District at its meeting next week and develop a new strategy to better help domestic institutions address governance challenges and corruption, while retaining the ability to sanction any attempts to undermine security.

➤ **Kosovo** At 8th round of EU-brokered talks Kosovo and Serbia 2 Dec reached agreement on Integrated Border Management (IBM); Belgrade later denied deal meant Serbian de facto recognition of Kosovo. Following IBM agreement and late Nov call by Serbian president Tadic to remove barricades, Serbs at Jagnjenica and Jarinje border crossings 5 Dec agreed to remove barricades in return for KFOR removing vehicles blocking roads; however, still no freedom of movement for EULEX, and fresh barricades erected prior to European Council’s 9 Dec delay of decision on Serbia’s EU candidacy (see Serbia). Russian aid convoy 16 Dec delivered goods to Kosovo Serbs after being held up at border for several days over disagreement with EU on how aid delivered. Kosovo Serbs 14 Dec offered to negotiate peace initiative with international peacekeeping officials. Serbia 20 Dec arrested 2 Kosovo Serb brothers, one of whom identified by KFOR as coordinator of recent violence at border, on suspicion of involvement in arms production. In line with agreements reached earlier in year, Serbia 20 Dec started to hand over to Kosovo copies of civil registry books seized in 1999, 26 Dec implemented freedom of movement agreement allowing Kosovo citizens to enter with ID cards, drive vehicles with Kosovo plates and drivers licences. Growing tensions between govt and opposition on issues including trade relations with Serbia, ongoing dialogue. EU appointed outgoing Slovenian FM Samuel Zbogar head of new EU office in Pristina.

- “Kosovo, Serbia agreement on IBM draws doubts”, *SE Times*, 5 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Macedonia** ICJ 5 Dec found Greece guilty of breaching UN 1995 deal with Macedonia by blocking its NATO membership bid in 2008; did not order Greece to stop blocking Macedonia from joining international organisations in future. European Council 9 Dec again declined to give start date for accession talks with Macedonia.

- [“Call it what you want”](#), *Economist*, 10 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Serbia** European Council 9 Dec decided to delay decision on granting Serbia candidate status until March; Council President Van Rompuy said Serbia needs to improve relations with Kosovo. President Tadic claimed Brussels had asked Serbia to recognise Kosovo independence in return for candidacy status; denied by EU.

- [“EU candidacy delay causes deep divisions in Serbia”](#), *SE Times*, 17 Dec. 2011.

## Caucasus

➡ **Armenia** Ruling HHK party 1 Dec named Samvel Nikoyan candidate for parliament speaker; opposition HAK criticised Nikoyan's role in parliament commission into 2008 post-election violence, which found use of force against protesters justified.

- [“Armenian opposition slams choice of new parliament speaker”](#), RFE/RL, 6 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Azerbaijan** OSCE expressed concerns over amendments to law on political parties, including registration procedure, requirements for state funding, disclosure of funding sources.

- [“Does Rasul Guliyev fancy himself as Azerbaijan's Bidzina Ivanishvili?”](#), RFE/RL, 8 Dec. 2011.

➡ **North Caucasus (Russia)** Widespread fraud reported in North Caucasus republics during 4 Dec Russian parliamentary elections: ruling United Russia party gained 99.5% of vote in Chechnya (99.45% turnout), 91.4% of Dagestan vote, 91% in Ingushetia, 89.9% in Karachay-Chircessia (KCHR) 81.9% in Kabardino-Balkaria (KBR). Dagestan branch of Russian Communist Party staged small protests 6 and 21 Dec claiming rigging. Caucasian Knot website reported 1,248 victims of armed conflict in NC in 2011, including 714 killed, 536 injured; Dagestan most violent (383 killed, 322 injured), then Chechnya, KBR. Continuing insurgent violence across region. Prominent Dagestan journalist Khadzhimurad Kamalov, founder of Chernovik newspaper and highly critical of police abuses, shot dead 15 Dec by unidentified gunman outside Makhachkala office; folk healer and wife killed in Khasavyurt district 29 Dec; senior police investigator killed by insurgents in Kaspiisk port 14 Dec; 3 suspected militants killed in Khasavyurt district 12 Dec; 1 policeman killed, 4 people injured in Kizlyar district 8 Dec. 3 suspected militants killed in Malokarachaeovsky, Karachaevo-Cherkessia 19 Dec; 4 suspected militants killed in Karachay district 7 Dec. In KBR police officer killed in Nalchik 17 Dec; Interior Ministry investigator shot dead in Baksan district 12 Dec; 3 residents of Elbrus district found shot dead in car mid Dec; Russian soldiers shot dead 4 suspected militants 14 Dec. In Ingushetia, deputy health minister injured in gun attack in Nazran 9 Dec; 3 army engineers injured by roadside bomb 14 Dec.

- [“Russian parliamentary election results in the North Caucasus questioned”](#), EDM, 7 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Georgia** Following disputed late-Nov de facto presidential election in breakaway republic South Ossetia (SO), supporters of disqualified apparent victor Alla Dzhioyeva continued to protest, 4 Dec announced they would stage an inauguration for Dzhioyeva. Incumbent president Kokoity's term officially ended 7 Dec. Dzhioyeva and Kokoity 9 Dec reached Russian-brokered compromise deal; Dzhioyeva agreed to acknowledge legality of Supreme Court ruling and end protests; Kokoity agreed to step down, fire 3 officials. Uncertainty continued however after Dzhioyeva 10 Dec alleged Kokoity violated agreement with new appointments, and parliament failed to endorse agreement. During 18th round of Geneva talks, mediators proposed Russia commit to refrain from use of force, implement 2008 ceasefire agreements; instead, Abkhazia and SO, backed by Russia, proposed removal of issue of “international security arrangements” from discussions. Billionaire businessman Bidzina Ivanishvili 11 Dec launched new public movement Georgian Dream ahead of 2012 parliamentary elections; several thousand attended launch. Tbilisi court 27 Dec upheld Oct presidential ruling stripping Ivanishvili of Georgian citizenship. Parliament 27 Dec passed new election code, 28 Dec passed controversial amendments restricting party funding.

- [“Richest Georgian finds wealth is no political protection”](#), *Washington Times*, 1 Jan 2012.

➡ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** OSCE meeting in Vilnius 6-7 Dec resulted in few concrete steps. Amid low expectations, Azerbaijani and Armenian presidents scheduled to meet Jan for 1st time since June. Russia reportedly delivered 2 attack helicopters to Azerbaijan, amid continued reports of Azerbaijani arms build-up.

- [“Medvedev says Karabakh peace ‘still possible’”](#), RFE/RL, 27 Dec. 2011.

## Eastern Europe

➡ **Belarus** Dozens arrested 19 Dec during banned vigil marking anniversary of Dec 2010 post-election protests. Deputy interior minister arrested over role in crackdown on Dec 2010 protests, for possible abuse of office. EU 16 Dec imposed sanctions on 2 officials involved in trial of rights activist Ales Byalyatski.

- [“Belarus' brutal crackdown – the 19 December anniversary”](#), EU Observer, 19 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Moldova** Second round vote in breakaway republic Transnistria 25 Dec saw former parliament speaker Yevgeni Shevchuk win 74% of votes, ahead of Russian-backed candidate. Incumbent Igor Smimov, president for 20 years, placed third in 11 Dec first round. Shevchuk pledged improved freedom of movement across border of separatist region with rest of Moldova. In Chisinau parliament 16 Dec again failed to elect president.

- [“Transnistria's new leader seeks better ties with neighbours”](#), RFE/RL, 27 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Ukraine** At EU-Ukraine summit 20 Dec European Council president Van Rompuy reported negotiations with Ukraine on association agreement completed, but signing depends on political developments, following Oct jailing of former PM Tymoshenko for abuse of office. Appeals court 23 Dec upheld Tymoshenko's guilty verdict and sentence.

- [“Which way will Ukraine turn?”](#), *Economist*, 19 Dec. 2011.

## Western Europe/Mediterranean

➡ **Cyprus** Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot leaders held weekly meetings in context of reunification negotiations, including on 5 Dec (external relations and property), 12 Dec (property), and 19 Dec (EU matters). Following 12 Dec meeting, UNSG's special adviser Downer expressed frustration over lack of progress, told Greek Kathimerini 2 leaders remain on opposite sides ahead of 5th trilateral summit with Ban in New York 22 Jan. No agreements yet announced on 6 chapters under discussion. UNSC 14 Dec extended UNFICYP mandate until July 2012, called on 2 leaders to increase momentum of negotiations, resolve key outstanding issues before Ban meeting. Late Nov population census in Turkish Cypriot north found de facto population had only gone up 30,000 since 2006 to 295,000. Greek Cypriot trade minister late Dec said considering plans to export natural gas found south of island via Turkey, but only possible when solution found to Cyprus problem.

- "Cyprus gas find boosts country's energy hopes", Reuters, 28 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Turkey** Waves of arrests under anti-terror laws for alleged links to PKK including pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) members, journalists, lawyers, activists and academics; 80 arrested 7-18 Dec; and 38 people, mainly pro-Kurdish journalists including AFP photographer, detained 20 Dec in 7 different cities. Violence in SE continued. Scores of PKK militants killed by security forces including around 50 militants killed 21-22 Dec in Hakkari, Sirnak, Diyarbakir provinces. Turkish military air strike killed 35 Turkish Kurd smugglers on Iraqi border 28 Dec, mistaking them for PKK, triggering nationwide outrage. 1 Turkish soldier killed 22 Dec in landmine blast in Hakkari. EU Council report 9 Dec called on Turkey to improve freedom of expression, especially on freedom of media. French national assembly 22 Dec passed bill which, if passed by Senate, will criminalize denial of genocide including 1915 mass killing of Armenians by Ottoman Turks; Ankara withdrew ambassador, cancelled economic, political and military cooperation. FM Davutoğlu 9 Dec warned Syria it would act to protect itself if Syrian govt crackdown on protesters threatened regional security and unleashed tide of refugees. Opposition Syrian National Council 14 Dec opened HQ in Istanbul.

- "Turkey acknowledges killing civilians in Iraq strike", Reuters, 29 Dec. 2011.

## Latin America/Caribbean

➡ **Bolivia** Following Sept-Oct indigenous protest, govt 4 Dec approved law prohibiting highway construction through indigenous territory in TIPNIS national park; coca growers and some indigenous groups organised pro-highway demonstrations 9, 17 Dec. Ernesto Suarez Sattori, opposition Governor of Beni, suspended 16 Dec on charges of corruption; Santa Cruz Governor denounced "systematic annihilation" of opposition.

- "Acuerdo sobre el tipnis limita la intangibilidad", La Razon, 5 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Colombia** Widespread protests against FARC 6 Dec following Nov killing of 4 hostages; FARC 27 Dec pledged to free 6 of 11 police and military still held hostage. 31 Dec bomb attack on police station in South killed 2; FARC believed responsible. President Santos 19

Dec met Ecuadorian President Correa in Quito (see Ecuador). Controversial judicial reform bill advanced 14 Dec with Congress approval in 4th of 8 debates. UN, rights groups expressed concern over expansion of military courts jurisdiction; reform also opposed by high courts, attorney general and public prosecutor fearing concentration of power within legislative, executive branches. Justice Minister 8 Dec said state would prosecute "false victims" of 1997 Mapiripán massacre who allegedly fraudulently claimed reparation money; Inter-American Court of Human Rights to reconsider its ruling on case. 21-23 Dec surrender of 284 fighters from Anti-terrorist Popular Revolutionary Army of Colombia (ERPAC) spurred controversy after only 19 members, including leader "Caracho", initially detained; judges later issued remaining arrest warrants. Episode raised questions over govt role, lack of legal norms, power vacuum in group's Eastern Plains strongholds, fate of estimated up to 900 fighters who did not surrender.

- Comment by Silke Pfeiffer and Hugo Eduardo Ramirez, "Más Allá de la Diplomacia: Retos en la Frontera Colombo-Venezolana", Razonpublica.com, 4 Dec. 2011.
- "Colombia's FARC rebels announces plans to release 6 hostages", AP, 27 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Ecuador** President Correa 19 Dec met Colombian President Santos in first visit by Colombian president since 2008 air strike on FARC camp in Ecuador; agreed to set up 3rd border crossing point, reinforce fight against illegal mining.

- "Santos y Correa normalizan relación bilateral", Infolatam, 20 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Guatemala** Outgoing President Colom 15 Dec apologised to relatives of victims of 1982 massacre in Dos Erres. Guatemala, Colombia, Honduras air forces conducted exercise aimed at controlling drug trafficking.

- "Guatemalan President Colom apologises for 1982 massacre", BBC, 15 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Haiti** President Martelly 6 Dec published controversial order naming commission to reconstitute army, expected to present plan for reconstitution within 40 days. Martelly 30 Dec dismissed 9-person electoral council to make way for planned legislative, local elections. Police officer killed early Dec by unidentified assailants, bringing total number killed in 2011 to 30. Criticism of MINUSTAH continued as National Network for Defence of Human Rights accused Brazilian patrol of beating 3 men in Cité Soleil. UN OHCHR 27 Dec urged authorities to investigate, prosecute police suspected of unlawful killings and torture after 2 UN reports raised concerns that illegal use of force by police may have led to 9 deaths since Oct 2010. Car of rights activist Kettly Julien attacked by unidentified assailants 27 Dec.

- "Martelly signs order appointing army commission", DefendHaiti, 6 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Mexico** Security forces 12 Dec killed 11 gunmen near U.S. border, same day captured founder of Los Zetas drug cartel Lucio Hernandez and third-in-command in Cordoba, 20 Dec found 10 bodies believed related to drug violence in Durango state. Women's rights activist Norma Andrade shot, injured outside home in Ciudad Juarez 3 Dec. Entire Veracruz police force disbanded 21 Dec in effort to root out corruption; military took over policing duties. Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) head Humberto Moreira forced to step down 2 Dec over financial scandal; Enrique Peña

Nieto named PRI candidate for July presidential election. International NGO named Mexico most dangerous country for journalists for 2nd consecutive year.

- [“Mexico’s drugs war: lessons and challenges”](#), BBC, 1 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Peru** Following bitter protests over large mining project in northern Cajamarca region, President Humala 4 Dec declared 60-day state of emergency, lifted after Cajamarca governor 13 Dec announced end of mining strike. Dialogue between central and regional govts reinstated 19 Dec. Comrade Artemio, regional leader of weakened Shining Path guerillas, admitted in 6 Dec press interview that armed struggle “no longer possible”, called for political solution. Govt reported over 230 social conflicts in country, mostly over natural resources, mining.

- [“Peru’s Shining Path defeated, rebel leader admits”](#), BBC, 7 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Venezuela** Representatives from 33 countries met in Caracas 2-3 Dec for launch of Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC); U.S. and Canada excluded. U.S. President Obama in Venezuelan daily El Universal 19 Dec criticised Venezuela’s rights record, ties to Iran and Cuba; Chavez responded by calling him “clown”. Local NGO reported 2011 murder rate 53 per 100,000.

- [“Hugo Chávez inaugura primera cumbre del CELAC”](#), BBC, 2 Dec. 2011.

## Middle East/North Africa

### Eastern Mediterranean

➡ **Israel/occupied Palestinian Territories** During series of meetings 18-22 Dec in Cairo on Palestinian reconciliation, Hamas leader Meshal and PA President Abbas announced plans for Hamas and Islamic Jihad to join PLO; for formation of unity govt 26-31 Jan; and for Palestinian legislative, presidential, PLO elections in 2012. Israeli PM Netanyahu 25 Dec said Israel will not negotiate with PA if Hamas joins Palestinian govt. Israel 18 Dec completed second and final phase of mid-Oct Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal, releasing remaining 550 of 1,027 Palestinian security prisoners. 3 days of extremist Jewish violence 12-14 Dec including attack on army base in West Bank and torching of mosques. EU members of UNSC 22 Dec condemned Israeli settlement building and growing settler violence; Israel accused them of interfering in its domestic affairs. Sporadic violence across Gaza border including 4 Palestinians killed 8-9 Dec after barrage of rockets fired into Israel, chief of al-Qaeda-linked Army of Islam killed 30 Dec.

- [“Rivals who may need each other”](#), *Economist*, 31 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Lebanon** 5 French UN peacekeepers, 1 civilian injured 9 Dec by roadside bomb near southern port city Tyre; Syria and Hizbollah denied French accusations of involvement. Hizbollah 9 Dec publicised names of 10 supposed CIA officers who worked in Lebanon. U.S. prosecutors 15 Dec filed civil suit against Lebanese and U.S. businesses alleged to have laundered money for Hizbollah. 3 people killed 28 Dec by Syrian army near unofficial border crossing at Raydani in north. 1 Lebanese woman wounded 11 Dec by rocket fired at Israel from southern village which fell short of border. 1

killed 18 Dec in clashes between Fatah members and suspected Islamist extremists in Ain el-Hilweh refugee camp in south.

- [“5 French peacekeepers wounded in Lebanon bombing”](#), AP, 9 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Syria** UN reported over 5,000 people killed in 9-month crackdown on anti-regime protests; regime said over 2,000 security force members killed. Hundreds of thousands continued to protest against President Assad as violence intensified. Increasing defections to Free Syrian Army and attacks on security forces. General strike started early month along with numerous forms of civil disobedience. EU 2 Dec imposed sanctions on 3 Syrian oil firms, including state-owned Sytrol. Regime 12 Dec signed Arab League (AL) peace plan, agreeing to let in monitors, pull troops from protest-hit towns, free political prisoners and start talking to opposition. UNGA 19 Dec condemned Syria for crackdown and rights abuses; UNSC continued to debate resolution. Regime escalated crackdown ahead of arrival of Arab League observers, with over 200 people killed 19-20 Dec. Advance team of AL monitors arrived 22 Dec, nearly 100 by end-Dec; over 150 people reported killed since monitors’ mission began. Twin car bomb attack 23 Dec on security buildings in Damascus killed 44, injured over 150; officials blamed al-Qaeda, opposition figures accused govt of staging attack. Govt 28 Dec said 755 prisoners released in compliance with Arab League plan.

- Comment by Peter Harling, [“Sauver les Syriens ne passe pas nécessairement par une intervention”](#), *Le Figaro*, 13 Dec. 2011.
- [“Twin suicide bombs shake Syrian capital, kill 44”](#), AP, 23 Dec. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Middle East Briefing N°31, [Uncharted Waters: Thinking Through Syria’s Dynamics](#), 24 Nov. 2011.

### Gulf

➡ **Bahrain** Security forces 23 Dec attacked HQ of main Shiite opposition party Al-Wefaq in Manama after group challenged new govt ban on its weekly protests. Clashes between security forces and demonstrators 15-18 Dec near Manama; man died 17 Dec reportedly from tear gas inhalation. Police also broke up protests 7, 9, 31 Dec in Manama with tear gas and rubber bullets. Govt 8 Dec announced prosecutors will investigate allegations of abuse by security forces throughout 10-month uprising; UNHCHR Pillay 21 Dec said Bahrain still failing to prosecute security forces. Authorities 24 Dec said free speech charges will be dropped against 343 people. Small explosion 4 Dec near UK embassy.

- Comment by Joost Hiltermann and Kelly McEvers, [“Barricaded in Bahrain”](#), *New York Review of Books*, 27 Dec. 2011.
- [“Bahrain forces attack opposition headquarters”](#), Al Jazeera, 23 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Iran** Govt rejected U.S. President Obama’s request 12 Dec for return of captured surveillance drone. Tehran’s chief prosecutor 13 Dec said 15 people indicted for spying for U.S., Israel. Intelligence minister Moslehi 12 Dec visited Riyadh to improve strained relations following alleged Iranian plot to kill Saudi ambassador to U.S. Navy 24 Dec began 10-day exercise in Strait of Hormuz; 27 Dec threatened to close Strait if West imposed further oil sanctions. U.S. 31 Dec issued new sanctions against Central Bank and financial sector. Rial fell to lowest ever value against dollar due to inflation, sanctions.

- [“As further sanctions loom, plunge in currency’s value unsettles Iran”](#), *New York Times*, 20 Dec. 2011.

**Iraq** Political situation deteriorated sharply following 18 Dec official withdrawal of last U.S. combat troops, though few hundred military trainers remain under private contracts. Authorities 19 Dec issued arrest warrant for VP Tariq Al-Hashimi, accusing him of involvement in acts of terrorism, specifically assassinations; Hashimi and other senior Sunni leaders fled to Kurdistan region. In response Iraqiya Alliance began boycott of parliament and govt. Maliki 21 Dec threatened to abandon power-sharing agreement, warned Kurds there would be “problems” if they protected Hashimi. Diyala’s Provincial Council 15 Dec voted in favour of forming federal region (4th province to do so); armed protesters occupied much of provincial capital Baquba. Wave of bombings 22 Dec killed at least 72, injured over 200 in Baghdad; al-Qaeda affiliate Islamic State of Iraq 27 Dec claimed responsibility. UN, govt 26 Dec agreed to relocate several thousand Iranian exiles from northeast Camp Ashraf; rocket struck camp 25 Dec, no casualties.

- Comment by Joost Hiltermann, “Ethnic Interests Could Trump Economic Sense”, *Financial Times*, 7 Dec. 2011.
- Comment by Joost Hiltermann, “US Troop Withdrawal from Iraq”, *Conservative Middle East Council*, 5 Dec. 2011.
- “Blasts rock Baghdad as political crisis in Iraq deepens”, *New York Times*, 22 Dec. 2011.

**Jordan** Police used tear gas to break up clashes 23 Dec between govt loyalists and Muslim Brotherhood’s political wing Islamic Action Front (IAF) in northern city Mafraq. IAF accused police of failing to protect them; govt promised investigation.

- “Hundreds protest near Jordan PM’s office”, *Al Jazeera*, 24 Dec. 2011.

**Yemen** Vice-President Hadi 7 Dec issued decree paving way for unity govt in preparation for 21 Feb presidential election; opposition-led govt formed 10 Dec with ministries divided equally between President Saleh’s General People’s Congress Party and opposition. Intense fighting in Taiz early month; truce agreed 4 Dec. Both General Ali Mohsen’s troops and pro-Saleh forces 17 Dec began to withdraw from Sanaa as part of GCC-brokered peace deal. 9 protesters killed 24 Dec by Saleh loyalists as tens of thousands marched from Taiz to Sanaa demanding Saleh stand trial for killing of demonstrators during uprising; U.S. Ambassador Feierstein defended govt, said march intended to “provoke violent response”. Nationwide govt worker strikes began 28 Dec over alleged corruption linked to outgoing regime. Nearly 200 reported killed in fighting between Shiite Huthi rebels and Salafists in northern Saada governorate. Dozens killed as serious fighting continued in southern Abyan governorate between suspected al-Qaeda affiliates and security forces.

- “Yemen’s Saleh vows to leave, troops kill 9 protesters”, *Reuters*, 24 Dec. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°114, *Breaking Point? Yemen’s Southern Question*, 20 Oct. 2011.

## North Africa

**Algeria** President Bouteflika 18 Dec promised international observers will supervise legislative elections expected May; new political parties will be allowed to form for first time since 1999. Law passed 16 Dec banned non-govt groups from receiving foreign financial assistance. Parliament 6 Dec adopted law aimed

at stopping former members of banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) from setting up party or participating in politics. Security forces 4 Dec reportedly killed an al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) leader during counter-terror sweep in El-Oued. AQIM 9 Dec denied involvement in Oct kidnapping of 3 foreign aid workers in south. Trial began 7 Dec of 17 accused of planning to assassinate PM Ouyahia during Nov visit to M’Sila.

- “Bouteflika défend ses réformes critiquées par l’opposition”, *AFP*, 16 Dec. 2011.

**Egypt** At least 17 people killed 16-22 Dec in clashes between protesters and security forces in Cairo; violence erupted after military forces attempted to disperse 3-week-old sit-in of Tahrir Square demanding swifter transfer to civilian rule. Several thousand women marched in Cairo 20 Dec over abuse of female protesters by security forces. Security forces 29 Dec raided NGO offices across country in investigation into foreign funding; U.S. urged govt to “halt” harassment. In first round of 6-week parliamentary election Muslim Brotherhood’s Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) won around 37% of votes but almost half available seats; ultra-conservative Salafi al-Nour Party won some 24% of votes; liberal Egypt Bloc and Wafd won 13% and 7%. In 2nd round unofficial results show FJP with some 36%, al-Nour 29%, Wafd 10%; 3rd round scheduled 3-4 Jan, with run-offs 10-11 Jan.

- “Mass march by Cairo women in protest over abuse by soldiers”, *New York Times*, 20 Dec. 2011.

**Libya** Increasing violent flare-ups between armed militias, amid major anti-govt protests, particularly in East, factional mistrust between regions, and deteriorating economy. Zintani militiamen controlling Tripoli airport 11 Dec attacked convoy led by senior Libyan commander; other isolated and sporadic gun battles across country. Defence minister Juwali 19 Dec said many weeks needed to resolve militia issue, months for proper army; 25 Dec announced scheme to integrate some 50,000 ex-rebels into army, police, security forces. Govt vowed to disarm Tripoli by 31 Dec; deadline for militias to leave city came and went 20 Dec. Following 26 Dec conference of “Union of Thwar in Libya”, purported to represent over 70% of ex-rebels, thwar demanded former rebels comprise 40% of NTC. Increased political turbulence, with lawyers’ protest in Tripoli 7 Dec calling for militias to leave, around 30,000 protesting in Benghazi mid Dec for greater govt transparency, representation of East in NTC, and purge of Qadhafi-era officials. ICC Chief Prosecutor Moreno-Ocampo 15 Dec said Oct killing of Muammar Qadhafi may have been war crime. NTC chair Abd-al-Jalil said Qadhafi son Saadi, granted asylum in Niger, had infiltrated agents into govt. Human Rights Watch reported Saif Al-Islam Qadhafi denied access to lawyer. UNSC lifted sanctions on Central Bank. U.S. Sec Defence Panetta visited mid Dec.

- “Libya’s rebels without a cause”, *BBC*, 15 Dec. 2011.

**New** Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°115, *Holding Libya Together: Security Challenges after Qadhafi*, 14 Dec. 2011. As a recent uptick in violence vividly illustrates, the fate of militias that ousted Qadhafi’s regime must be carefully addressed lest they jeopardise Libya’s transition.

**Mauritania** National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) approved 14 Dec, will follow up on recommendations made by Oct national dialogue between opposition and govt. Police 5 Dec arrested 2 men in connection with Oct kidnapping of 3 aid workers in southern Algeria. Policeman kidnapped 20 Dec by suspected

al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb militants during raid on police station near Malian border.

- ["Mauritania approves independent electoral body"](#), Magharebia, 14 Dec. 2011.

➔ **Morocco** Opposition Islamist Justice and Charity movement 18 Dec suspended involvement in February 20 protest movement. Several thousand demonstrated 26 Dec in Casablanca, Rabat calling for political reform. Rights groups commended 25 Nov elections as credible and fair despite sporadic violence and minor irregularities. Istiqlal party official Karim Ghellab elected parliamentary speaker 19 Dec.

- ["Moroccan Islamists quit Arab Spring opposition"](#), Reuters, 19 Dec. 2011.

➔ **Tunisia** Clashes broke out 30 Nov along Libyan border between army and armed Libyan groups, causing main Ras Jedir border post and Dehiba post to close, after Libyan militias threatened Tunisian border guards, exacerbating economic difficulties particularly in South. Protests over economy as sit-ins and street blockings increased, central bank issued dire warnings. New President Marzouki sworn in 13 Dec; new govt inaugurated 23 Dec, amid struggle in new Constituent Assembly (CA) between ruling coalition led by Islamist En-Nahda party and opposition led by Progressive Democratic Party. CA 10 Dec adopted provisional constitution, elections to be held in approx 1 year. President Marzouki mid Dec announced sale of presidential palaces to raise money for job creation, called on Tunisian Jews to return, asked public for 6-month truce to get economy in order. Salafist groups continued to agitate on social issues.

- ["Cradle of Arab Spring celebrates first anniversary"](#), Reuters, 17 Dec. 2011.

➔ **Western Sahara** Polisario Front's security agency 15 Dec reportedly detained 11 suspects in 22 Oct kidnapping of 3 aid workers in southern Algeria.

- ["Saharan activists detain group in aid abductions"](#), AP, 15 Dec. 2011.

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Crisis Group has regional offices or local field representation in Abuja, Baku, Bangkok, Beirut, Bishkek, Bogotá, Cairo, Colombo, Dakar, Damascus, Dili, Islamabad, Istanbul, Jakarta, Jerusalem, Kabul, Kathmandu, Kinshasa, Nairobi, Ouagadougou, Port-au-Prince, Pretoria, Pristina, Sarajevo, Seoul, Tbilisi and Tehran.

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