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February 2013 Trends



Deteriorated Situations

Bangladesh (p.5)

Guinea (p.4)

Lebanon (p.10)

North Korea (p.5)

Syria (p.10)

Tunisia (p.12)

Zimbabwe (p.3)



Improved Situations



Unchanged Situations

Afghanistan (p.5), Algeria (p.11), Armenia (p.8), Azerbaijan (p.8), Bahrain (p.10), Bosnia (p.7), Burundi (p.2), Cameroon (p.2), Central African Republic (p.2), Chad (p.2), China/Japan (p.5), Colombia (p.9), Côte d'Ivoire (p.3), Cyprus (p.8), Democratic Republic of Congo (p.2), Ecuador (p.9), Egypt (p.11), Eritrea (p.2), Ethiopia (p.2), Georgia (p.8), Guatemala (p.9), Guinea-Bissau (p.4), Haiti (p.9), India (non-Kashmir) (p.6), Indonesia (p.6), Iran (p.10), Iraq (p.11), Israel/occupied Palestinian Territories (p.9), Jordan (p.11), Kashmir (p.6), Kazakhstan (p.4), Kenya (p.2), Kosovo (p.7), Kyrgyzstan (p.4), Libya (p.11), Macedonia (p.8), Madagascar (p.3), Mali (p.4), Mauritania (p.11), Mexico (p.9), Moldova (p.8), Morocco (p.12), Myanmar (p.6), Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan) (p.8), Nepal (p.6), Niger (p.4), Nigeria (p.4), North Caucasus (Russia) (p.8), Pakistan (p.6), Philippines (p.7), Rwanda (p.2), Saudi Arabia (p.11), Senegal (p.4), Somalia (p.3), Somaliland (p.3), South Sudan (p.3), Sri Lanka (p.6), Sudan (p.3), Tajikistan (p.5), Thailand (p.7), Timor-Leste (p.7), Turkey (p.8), Uganda (p.3), Uzbekistan (p.5), Venezuela (p.9), Western Sahara (p.12), Yemen (p.11)

March 2013 Watchlist



Conflict Risk Alerts

Yemen (p.11)



Conflict Resolution Opportunities

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 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.

To search past issues of *CrisisWatch* visit our databases and resources page at www.crisisgroup.org.

Crisis Group is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation, with some 140 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict. Crisis Group's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts are located within or close by countries at risk of outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict. Based on information and assessments from the field, Crisis Group produces regular analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international decision-takers, and backed up with high-level advocacy. Crisis Group is chaired by former U.S. Ambassador and Vice Chairman of Hills & Company Thomas R. Pickering, and its President and Chief Executive is former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour.

Africa

Central Africa

➡ **Burundi** President of opposition National Council for Defence of Democracy (CNDD) 11 Feb announced plan to return from exile; president of opposition Movement for Solidarity and Democracy (MSD) early Feb also announced intention to return. Police 19 Feb used tear gas to disperse demonstration against imprisonment of journalist Hassan Ruvakuki, jailed since Nov 2011; protests held again 26 Feb. UN office in Burundi (BINUB) mid-Feb announced elections roadmap workshop to be held with govt and opposition 11-13 March. BINUB mandate extended to Feb 2014.

- [“Land issues keep possibility of conflict alive”](#), IndepthAfrica, 4 Feb. 2013.

➡ **Cameroon** 7 French tourists abducted from Dabanga on border with Nigeria 19 Feb by suspected Nigerian militants; captors demanded liberation of Islamist militants detained in Cameroon and Nigeria, declared war against France for Mali intervention in video published 25 Feb. President Biya 27 Feb set long-delayed date for Senate polls for 14 April.

- [“French children kidnapped in Cameroon ‘shown in video’”](#), BBC, 26 Feb. 2013.

➡ **Central African Republic** New transitional govt sworn in 3 Feb following several days of negotiations: strategic foreign, justice and security ministries remain under control of President Bozizé’s party; Seleka rebel group leader Michel Djotodia named defence minister. Rebels 25 Feb threatened to resume fighting if Bozizé fails to implement Jan Libreville peace agreement. NGOs, UN mid-month reported ongoing violence, displacement in areas under Seleka control including Bambari town and Mobaye, from which some 10,000 reportedly fled 7-13 Feb. Confinement of rebels to barracks scheduled to begin 24 Feb delayed due to logistics, dissent within Seleka. Bozizé 14 Feb met with Chad President Deby on sidelines of Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) summit (see Chad), discussed security in CAR.

- [“Central African Republic rebels threaten to resume fighting”](#), Reuters, 25 Feb. 2013.

➡ **Chad** West and Central African leaders 16 Feb met in N’Djamena at Sahel-Saharan regional CEN-SAD summit, discussed regional security. Chad widely criticised for hosting ICC indictee Sudanese President Bashir at summit. President Déby 27 Feb called for urgent deployment of regional troops to Mali. 6,000-strong police force suspended 4 Feb, police chief dismissed 6 Feb following investigation that revealed irregularities including graft; Déby 14 Feb dismissed Interior and Public Security Minister and Minister of Territorial Administration, accused of favouritism.

- [“Chad ministers fired after entire police force suspended”](#), Reuters, 15 Feb. 2013.

➡ **Democratic Republic of Congo** Regional leaders 23 Feb signed Peace Framework Agreement under auspices of UN, AU, SADC and Great Lakes region; states agreed to abstain from interfering in internal affairs of neighbours, DRC agreed to structural reform. Govt 6 Feb signed agreement with M23

rebels on implementation of March 2009 peace agreement. Clash between rival M23 factions 24 Feb reportedly left 10 dead in Rutshuru region; M23 rebels 27 Feb accused leader Jean-Marie Runiga of treason and embezzlement, replaced him with General Sultani Makenga. Several Mayi Mayi groups 9-17 Feb attacked villages close to Lubumbashi and Pweto, Katanga Province. Head of UN mission Meece 21 Feb told UNSC of concern at re-emergence of armed groups, reported “worrisome security developments” in N Katanga.

- [“African leaders sign DR Congo peace deal”](#), Al Jazeera, 25 Feb. 2013.

➡ **Rwanda** President Kagame 17 Feb tasked 3 senior Rwandan Patriotic Front members with developing “transition formula” for end of his mandate in 2017, quelling rumours he will seek further term. Kagame 23 Feb signed DRC peace framework.

- [“Kagame welcomes the signing of DRC peace agreement”](#), Rwanda Focus, 24 Feb. 2013.

Horn of Africa

➡ **Eritrea** President Afwerki 1 Feb declined to give customary annual speech in coastal city Massawa for first time in 21 years; 8 Feb broke silence over 21 Jan “mutiny”, said no reason to worry. Arrests over incident continued early Feb. Information ministry 5 Feb banned Eritreans from providing information on mutiny and protests to Al Jazeera, subsequently blocked channel. Eritrean football team that defected in Dec 2012 given asylum in Uganda.

- [“The coup fiasco in Eritrea and its scanty support”](#), IndepthAfrica, 26 Feb. 2013.

➡ **Ethiopia** Govt 5 Feb aired “Holy War Movement” documentary on Islamic extremism, included confessions by Muslim leaders arrested Aug 2012 and currently on trial for leading peaceful protests; defence lawyer said confessions compelled by force. Some 90,000 Muslims protested 15 Feb outside Grand Anwar mosque against documentary amid fear film will prejudice trial, delegitimise peaceful Muslim demonstrations, stoke religious discord. Rebel Ogaden National Liberation Front 18 Feb warned Canada’s Africa Oil Corporation against exploration in east, said area unsafe, operations should be halted until peace agreement with govt reached.

- [“Rebels threaten Canadian oil company”](#), Sudan Tribune, 18 Feb. 2013.

➡ **Kenya** Ahead of presidential polls scheduled for 4 March, High Court 15 Feb ruled that only Supreme Court has jurisdiction to decide eligibility of ICC indictees Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto to run, leaving both free to contest elections; petition filed to bring issue before Supreme Court. Chief Justice Willy Mutunga 20 Feb said he, along with other judges and ambassadors, had received death threats signed “Mungiki Veteran Group. Kenya Sovereignty Defence Squad” ahead of ruling. All 8 presidential candidates 11 Feb and 25 Feb took part in televised debates following initial exclusion of Safina candidate Paul Muite and Alliance for Real Change candidate Mohammed Abduba Dida. AU envoy and former UNSG Kofi Annan 23 Feb warned of election-related violence. Somali militant group Al-Shabaab 27 Feb warned of “long, gruesome war” ahead of elections. 7 killed 21 Feb in attack on mosque in NE near Dadaab refugee camp.

- [“Kenya’s presidential debates plagued by half-answers and veiled attacks”](#), Guardian, 26 Feb. 2013.

➡ **Somalia** Senior Salafi cleric killed 15 Feb in Garowe, Puntland; traditional elder killed in Dhusamareb 18 Feb; thousands peacefully protested against Al-Shabaab 24 Feb. Suicide car bomb attack targeting Puntland's Deputy Police Chief killed 10 in Galkayo 11 Feb, Deputy Police Chief unharmed. Reported rape victim and journalist who reported on case both condemned to 1 year jail for "offending the honour of the State" 5 Feb sparking international criticism. President Sheikh 4 Feb reiterated govt ready for talks with Al-Shabaab if group renounces objectives. Security forces 3 Feb arrested 25 suspected Al-Shabaab in Beledweyne, 12 Feb arrested 217 in Mogadishu. Al-Shabaab clashes with AMISOM and govt forces continued including in Beledweyne, Janaale, Bairdoa, Gedo region and Jowhar. AMISOM investigation reported 7 civilians killed by AMISOM troops in Jan operation against Al-Shabaab in Leego village, Lower Shabelle region. Clash 23 Feb between pro-govt clan militias in Kismayo killed 11.

- "Report: AU troops in Somalia killed 7 civilians", AP, 11 Feb. 2013.

➡ **Somaliland** Security forces 5 Feb arrested Somalian parliamentarian originally from Somaliland, charged with treason for being elected to office in Somalia. Clan leader Rabi Yusuf Abdullahi who participated in Aug 2012 talks with Somalian govt arrested 12 Feb. President Silanyo 14 Feb declared ready for talks with Somalia, conditioned on independence for Somaliland. 3 Somaliland nationals working for UNFPA abducted 3 Feb by Khatumoo militiamen. Son of Faisal Ali Warabe, chairman of opposition party Justice and Welfare Party, arrested 16 Feb for connections with Al-Shabaab. 2 suspected of involvement in murder of Mufti in Garowe (see Somalia) arrested 18 Feb in Las Anod, Sool.

- "Government on the ropes, turmoil ahead", Somalilandpress, 13 Feb. 2013.

➡ **South Sudan** UN SRSG Johnson 19 Feb visited Jonglei state, urged communities to break cycle of violence following 8 Feb killing of over 100, abduction of unknown number in attack by rebels loyal to David Yau Yau. Lou Nuer and Great Akobo Youth Association protested attack, called for greater protection, decisive action in disarming Murle. Govt accused Sudan of bombing disputed area Jaw, at border of Unity state, 14 Feb; UN SRSG confirmed incident. SPLA early Feb accused Sudan of building up forces along disputed border, reinforced Upper Nile state border garrisons. Amnesty International accused govt of rights violations, unlawful detentions.

- "Fear stalks South Sudan, the world's newest country", BBC, 22 Feb. 2013.

➡ **Sudan** Some 60 killed, 83 wounded in renewed tribal clashes over control of gold mines in north Darfur. SLM-Juba Unity rebels 25 Feb claimed 17 soldiers killed in clashes in North Darfur. Thousands mid-month fled clashes between Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and Sudan Revolutionary Front rebels in S Darfur. SPLM-N clashes with armed forces in Blue Nile continued: SAF 18 Feb claimed Mufu area seized, 66 rebels killed; SPLM-N disputed claims, said rebels still held area and 86 SAF killed; fighting in Kurmuk city ongoing. SAF 3 and 10 Feb bombed SPLA positions in Bebnis, unofficially contested area. Oil Minister Awad al-Jaz 24 Feb visited Tehran to discuss Iranian investment. Armed forces denied SRF rebel claims army harbouring Malian militants. Govt 10 Feb signed another ceasefire agreement with JEM splinter faction.

- "Lawmaker raises alarm over fighting in Darfur", New York Times, 25 Feb. 2013.

New Crisis Group Africa Report N°198, *Sudan's Spreading Conflict (I): War in South Kordofan*, 14 Feb. 2013. Only a comprehensive solution can end Sudan's vicious civil wars that are exacting a horrendous toll on the country and its peoples.

➡ **Uganda** Chief magistrate 4 Feb dismissed treason case against General Aronda Nyakairima, accused of threatening coup. 15 MPs 21 Feb declared campaign to secede from Uganda, create new "Nile State", following allegations of corruption, misuse of Peace Recovery and Development Plan by PM's office.

- "Uganda plans \$180m port as new trade route", Africa Review, 11 Feb. 2013.

Southern Africa

➡ **Madagascar** National electoral commission (CENIT) 5 Feb announced legislative and presidential elections postponed from May to July; over 30 candidates expected to contest presidential polls. South Africa's highest court 5 Feb rejected final appeal by former president Ravalomanana to have passport returned, effectively precluding him from attending regional meetings or returning to Madagascar. AU Peace and Security Council 16 Feb rejected request from govt to reintegrate country into organisation. Tensions in south continued: at least 10 killed, 1,200 cattle stolen, 153 houses burned in clashes between Dahalo cattle-raiders and villagers in Amboasary-sud district.

- "L'élection présidentielle reportée au mois de juillet", RFI, 6 Feb. 2013.

➡ **Zimbabwe** Increased raids on NGOs, confiscation of documents and equipment, and allegations by police that "99% of NGOs engaged in regime change", following President Mugabe's 15 Feb announcement constitutional referendum to be held 16 March; month also saw reports of politically-motivated violence, intimidation. Police 19 Feb issued edict allowing them to seize radios, same day raided offices of independent election support group Crisis Coalition for alleged subversive materials. PM Tsvangirai 13 Feb said presidential polls expected July; VP Mujuru 24 Feb said only SADC observers will be allowed to monitor polls. EU 18 Feb lifted targeted sanctions for 21 regime members; U.S. said prepared to end targeted sanctions, re-engage in bilateral collaboration if govt honours commitments for reform and implements election roadmap. 3 UN special rapporteurs called for respect for fundamental human rights in run-up to polls.


- "Tsvangirai says Zimbabwe elections expected in July", Reuters, 13 Feb. 2013.

West Africa

➡ **Côte d'Ivoire** Govt 14 Feb announced local elections set for 21 April; opposition Ivorian Popular Front 15 Feb said party will boycott polls; UN SRSG Koenders 20 Feb advised authorities to revise electoral register. Govt 17 Feb ratified ICC Rome Statute; ICC Prosecutor Bensouda 19 Feb confirmed charges pending against former president Gbagbo, said prosecution will show Gbagbo is responsible for killings of at least 166, rape of at least 34. Police in Abidjan 15 Feb tear-gassed demonstration demanding liberation of Gbagbo. Clashes between FRCI and villagers in Affery, north of Abidjan, over extortion rackets


17-18 Feb left 2 dead, 3 injured. Deputy Defence Minister Koffi Koffi said govt dismantlement of roadblocks manned by "Dozo" traditional hunters began mid-month, 20,000 ex-combatants to be reintegrated in 2013. President Ouattara 20 Feb ordered Guinean military forces reportedly "occupying" Kpeaba village near border since late Jan to leave.

- "Un pays en reconstruction", *Jeune Afrique*, 23 Feb. 2013.


 **Guinea** Security situation deteriorated as govt-controlled electoral commission (CENI) sped up preparations ahead of 12 May polls, controversially validating choice of 2 companies to undertake revision of electoral lists, and leading to opposition protests in Conakry and other cities and 23 Feb opposition decision to pull out of electoral preparations. Govt 24 Feb invited political leaders to meet with President Condé 4 March; further opposition protests 27 Feb left at least 130 injured, including 68 security forces. General Namory Traoré 25 Feb replaced Kelefa Diallo, who died in plane crash 11 Feb, as armed forces Chief of Staff.

- "Guinea opposition pulls out of May vote", AFP, 24 Feb. 2013.

New Crisis Group Africa Report N°199, *Guinea: A Way Out of the Election Quagmire*, 18 Feb. 2013. Overdue legislative elections in Guinea could rapidly degenerate into violence in the absence of consensus on electoral procedures.


 **Guinea-Bissau** Tense debate on revision of transition pact, including over creation of multi-party commission, which PAIGC-controlled Assembly considers violation of sovereignty. New UN SRSR Ramos-Horta 21 Feb said transition cannot go on indefinitely, elections should be held before Dec 2013; also expressed concern over living conditions for armed forces. UNSC 23 Feb extended UNIOGBIS mandate for 3 months until 30 April. Former finance minister José Mário Vaz, associate of ousted PM Gomes Junior, arrested 4 Feb and placed under investigation for misappropriation of funds.

- "Insecurity and impunity remain serious problems in Guinea-Bissau, warns UN official", UN News Centre, 5 Feb. 2013.


 **Mali** Military operations against Islamic militants in north continued: French air force 3 Feb bombarded arms caches and suspected Islamist training camps in Kidal area; clashes in Ifoghas mountain range near Kidal left 1 French soldier, 20 suspected militants dead 18 Feb; 23 Chadian soldiers, 93 militants killed in clashes near Tessalit 22-24 Feb. Suicide bomber killed at least 7 in Kidal 26 Feb. Senior AQIM commander Abu Zeid, 40 other militants, reportedly killed 25 Feb in Tigargara. Situation in Bamako also remained tense: green beret soldiers loyal to coup leader Captain Sanogo 8 Feb clashed with red beret soldiers loyal to ousted President Touré leaving at least 3 dead, 13 injured; PM Cissoko 15 Feb said red beret corps will be restructured. Car bomb exploded near French military camp in Kidal 21 Feb; MUJAO claimed responsibility for 8 and 10 Feb suicide attacks on Malian soldiers in Gao. Fears of inter-ethnic backlash increased following reports ethnic Tuareg and Arabs summarily executed by Malian army; Human Rights Watch urged govt to prosecute soldiers suspected of rights violations. French President Hollande 2 Feb visited country, said terrorism has been pushed back but not defeated; 6 Feb asked UNSC to deploy UN peacekeepers. French FM Fabius 6 Feb said French forces may begin pull-out in March. EU 16 Feb said it will disburse

€20 million in addition to €250 million already earmarked; approved deployment of mission to train Malian army.


- "In Mali, the peril of guerrilla war looms", *New York Times*, 16 Feb. 2013.

 **Nigeria** Gunmen 16 Feb raided construction company camp in Jama'are, Bauchi state, killing guard and kidnapping 7 foreign workers; Boko Haram (BH) offshoot Ansaru claimed responsibility. At least 1 killed, mosques, churches and homes burned 23 Feb in sectarian riots in Wukari town, Taraba state. Several bombs exploded 28 Feb in Maiduguri where All Progressives Congress holding meeting attended by several high-level politicians. At least 6 reportedly killed 23 Feb in suspected BH attack in Ngalda, Yobe state. Attackers dressed as soldiers 21 Feb killed reported Christian family of 10 in Plateau state. Military 1 Feb said 17 insurgents killed in attack on 2 BH training camps. Suspected BH 19 Feb kidnapped 7 French tourists from Cameroon, thought to be held in north (see Cameroon). Gunmen 8 Feb killed at least 10 in attack on 2 polio clinics in Kano following Wazobia FM radio broadcast linking vaccines to Western plot against Muslims; 2 Wazobia journalists and radical Islamist cleric arrested and charged with incitement to violence, station's licence revoked.

- "Britain warns against travel to northern Nigeria after Islamist raids", Reuters, 27 Feb. 2013.

 **Niger** President Issoufou 3 Feb called on France to widen operations in order to rid Sahel region of terrorists, said Malian rebel MNLA not representative of Tuareg community, should be disarmed. U.S. President Obama 22 Feb announced 100 troops sent to Niger to set up surveillance drone base.

- "Le président nigérien Issoufou favorable au désarmement du MNLA", RFI, 5 Feb. 2013.

 **Senegal** At least 5 killed in clashes following raid on bank by Casamance separatist movement MFDC in Kafountine 3 Feb. Special tribunal to judge former Chadian dictator Hissène Habré officially unveiled 8 Feb.

- "Au moins cinq morts lors d'une attaque en Casamance", RFI, 2 Feb. 2013.

Asia

Central Asia

 **Kazakhstan** Kazakhstan 30 Jan signed common regional air defence system with Russia, includes missile defence; also continued expanding cooperation with NATO member states, signing transit agreement with Italy 19 Feb. Hosted international nuclear talks with Iran late Feb.

- "Astana registers diplomatic boost with Iran nuclear talks", Eurasianet, 5 Feb. 2013.

 **Kyrgyzstan** Parliament 21 Feb edged closer to reneging on terms of 2009 agreement with Canadian Centerra Gold company on Kumtor gold mine, which govt has claimed is corrupt and unfair, seeking compensation for alleged environmental damage. Situation in and around Uzbek exclave Sokh in southern Kyrgyzstan stabilised somewhat after violent standoff in Jan.

- "Kyrgyz parliament sets three-month deadline for Kumtor talks", *Business New Europe*, 25 Feb. 2013.

➡ **Tajikistan** Visiting U.S. Asst Sec State Robert Blake met with President Rakhmon 20 Feb, reiterated that U.S. troops leaving Afghanistan will not transit through Tajikistan; UK mid-Feb continued negotiations on transit option through Tajikistan for its equipment. Blake also called for free and fair Nov elections. Opposition figures reporting receiving anonymous death threats. Former Tajik PM Abdullojonov detained in Ukraine on international arrest warrant after arriving from U.S., wanted for alleged involvement in 1996 assassination attempt on President Rakhmon, plus other offences. Border guards killed several Afghan nationals suspected of trafficking drugs.

- “After the Afghan pullout, the dangers for Central Asia”, RFE/RL, 17 Feb. 2013.

➡ **Uzbekistan** UK 19 Feb announced deal with Uzbekistan to use it as route for returning military equipment from Afghanistan. Govt early-month introduced new rules regulating foreign currency, perceived as attempt to stop outflow of hard currency; media reporting increasing prices following restrictions. Court sentenced 11 people to jail for membership in Islamic fundamentalist group in eastern Namangan region.

- “Is the economy going into a tailspin?”, Eurasianet, 7 Feb. 2013.

New Crisis Group Asia Report N°244, *China's Central Asia Problem*, 27 Feb. 2013. China's influence is growing rapidly in Central Asia at a time when the region is looking increasingly unstable.

North East Asia

➡ **China/Japan** Japan 5 Feb lodged formal protest to China claiming Chinese frigate locked radar on Japanese naval vessel 30 and 19 Jan near disputed Diaoyu/Senkaku islands; China dismissed claim, U.S. stated support for Japanese protest. Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Masahisa Sato 12 Feb suggested establishing hotline with China to prevent further incidents. Japanese Defence Minister Onodera 14 Feb claimed Japan's right to pre-emptive strikes in case of imminent threats. Japanese PM Abe and U.S. President Obama 22 Feb meeting in Washington reaffirmed security alliance. U.S., Japan and Australia 7 Feb held navy, air force drills in Western Pacific. Presence of Chinese navy and maritime surveillance vessels off islands continued. China VP Li Kegang urged maritime surveillance staff intensify law enforcement in territorial sea to protect Chinese interests. Japanese defence ministry 28 Feb reported it sent fighter jets to head off Chinese govt plane flying toward disputed islands, Chinese plane changed course. Japan 22 Feb formally complained about Chinese buoys placed near disputed waters claiming they are used for submarine tracking; China dismissed claim.

- “Old questions and few answers as Japan's Abe and Obama discuss Asia security tensions”, *Time*, 22 Feb. 2013.

➡ **North Korea** DPRK 12 Feb conducted 3rd nuclear test at Punggye-ri underground test site, in reaction to 22 Jan UNSC Resolution 2087 condemning its 12 Dec satellite launch. DPRK media described test as “high-level, safe, perfect nuclear test with no negative environmental impact”. UNSC held emergency talks, UNSG Ban condemned test as “deeply destabilising”. U.S. President Obama said test was threat and provocation, U.S. would lead world in responding. Russia, China condemned test, 22 Feb said would oppose foreign military intervention in North Korea. ROK declared

emergency mode, raised security alert level, 7 Feb said would launch pre-emptive strike if there were clear signs of imminent nuclear attack from DPRK, 14 Feb unveiled cruise missile allegedly capable of hitting office of DPRK leaders; President-elect Park declared ROK “will not tolerate a nuclear-armed North Korea”. EU imposed financial sanctions. DPRK 6 Feb threatened to close inter-Korean Kaesŏng Industrial Complex, turn into military base, 10 Feb test fired short-range ballistic missile. DPRK Ambassador to UN Conference on Disarmament 19 Feb threatened South Korea with “final destruction”. ROK, U.S. 4-6 Feb conducted combined naval exercise; ROK 14 Feb began large-scale live fire military drills, including combined aerial exercise with U.S.; ROK, U.S. 19 Feb began combined anti-submarine warfare exercise; DPRK condemned drill as “explicit act of invasion”. DPRK 23 Feb said U.S. forces would “meet a miserable destruction” if scheduled military drills with ROK used to attack DPRK. New ROK President Park urged DPRK to abandon its nuclear ambitions, stop wasting scarce resources on arms.

- “North Korea is testing China's patience”, *Financial Times*, 19 Feb. 2013.

South Asia

➡ **Afghanistan** National Security Council 24 Feb ordered all U.S. special forces to leave eastern Wardak and Logar provinces within 2 weeks over allegations of torture, murder in region. NATO and Afghan forces 19 Feb reportedly killed at least 25 insurgents and 3 commanders in joint strikes in south and east. Taliban suicide bombers 24 Feb killed 3 in 3 separate attacks in Logar province and Jalalabad. 20 policemen killed in 2 attacks 27 Feb in SE; 7 police killed 28 Feb by roadside bomb in Kunar province. Security forces 26 Feb said at least 48 militants killed or injured during operation in Herat province. Govt 22 Feb refused Pakistan extradition request for senior Pakistan Taliban leader Maulvi Faqir, arrested in border region mid-month. U.S. President Obama 12 Feb announced 34,000 troops to be withdrawn from Afghanistan in next year. UN report said crimes against women and girls increased by 20% in 2012.

- “Afghanistan says U.S. special forces may be behind torture, murder”, CNN, 25 Feb. 2013.

➡ **Bangladesh** Violence erupted as Islamist protests over 1971 war crimes tribunal faced off against popular movement in support of death sentences for those accused, including senior leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami party. After country's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) sentenced Jamaat leader Abdul Quader Mollah to life in prison 5 Feb, hundreds of thousands began peaceful protests in Dhaka's Shahbag Square same day calling for death sentence for Mollah and others on trial. Shahbag protests continued throughout month, supported by governing Awami League and opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). Ongoing protests by Jamaat-e-Islami and its youth wing against war crimes trials intensified: general countrywide strikes 18, 24, 28 Feb, with around a dozen killed in clashes with security forces, dozens injured and arrested. ICT 28 Feb sentenced Jamaat-e-Islami leader Delwar Hossain Sayedee to death, sparking further violence, over 20 reported killed, dozens injured. One of bloggers organising Shahbag protests Ahmed Rajib Haider hacked to death in suspected Jamaat-e-Islami attack in Dhaka 15 Feb. PM Sheikh Hasina 16 Feb voiced support for banning Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Chhatra Shibir. Parliament 18 Feb passed law to swiftly execute

war criminals, allow prosecution appeal against life sentences and allow trials of parties or organisations on war crimes charges. ICT 25 Feb charged Mobarak Hossain, member of governing Awami League, with war crimes during 1971 war.

- [“Bangladesh split as violence escalates over war crimes protests”](#), *Observer*, 23 Feb. 2013.

➡ **India (non-Kashmir)** 16 killed, over 100 injured in 21 Feb bomb in southern city Hyderabad, in suspected terrorist attack. 22 killed, over 80 injured 12, 15 Feb in clashes between police and tribal groups over municipal elections in Assam. Garo National Liberation Army militants 2 Feb attacked Williamnagar jail, Meghalaya State, killed 2 jail officials. Odisha State Police 4 Feb arrested 7 suspected Maoists. Suspected Maoist leader arrested 19 Feb in Manoor, Kerala State. 3 villagers killed by Maoists 20 Feb in clashes in Lakkavaram, Andhra Pradesh. 8 killed in Maoist bomb attack 22 Feb in Bihar. Bomb blast killed 1 in Nagaland province 20 Feb.

- [“India’s Hyderabad hit by two explosions”](#), BBC, 21 Feb. 2013.

➡ **Kashmir** Increased tensions as India 9 Feb secretly executed Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) militant Afzal Guru, convicted over 2001 attack on Indian parliament, prompting protests in Jammu and Kashmir despite imposition of 7-day curfew, media blackout. 3 dead, dozens injured, dozens arrested as protesters clashed with security forces; increasing calls for return of Guru’s body to hometown. UNSG Ban and EU foreign policy chief Ashton criticised execution. Lashkar-e-Tayyaba and JeM militant groups 13 Feb vowed to “step-up jihad” in Jammu and Kashmir to avenge execution; JeM 26 Feb reportedly threatened to blow up rail junctions near Nainital. Unidentified gunmen 24 Feb killed head of village affiliated with Indian National Conference party in Baramulla, W of Srinagar. Pakistani soldier killed in gunfight with Indian troops 14 Feb after reportedly crossing Line of Control (LoC), circumstances contested; 2 Indian soldiers injured in clash. Indian army 26 Feb reported it killed suspected infiltrator in Rajouri district. 4 minors injured 3 Feb by unexploded shell in Aragam Chattabandy, N Kashmir.

- [“Afzal Guru: Kashmir anger over hanging”](#), BBC, 11 Feb. 2013.

➡ **Nepal** Ruling Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (UCPN(M)), Madhesi Morcha, opposition Nepali Congress (NC) and Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) (UML) 16 Feb agreed proposal allowing govt led by Supreme Court Chief Justice (CJ) Khil Raj Regmi to hold elections for new Constituent Assembly 5 June; Regmi agreed 25 Feb. Supreme Court 25 Feb referred proposal to special bench; hearing scheduled for 7 March. Sections of NC, UML, Nepal Bar Association opposed proposal citing violation of separation of powers, weakening of judiciary; Madhesi and ethnic groups also objected citing lack of consultation. Breakaway Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) 19 Feb enforced nationwide strike against CJ-led govt proposal, threatened poll boycott. UCPN(M) held national congress 2-8 Feb, formalised doctrinal shift to unarmed parliamentary politics. IEDs reportedly planted by new CPN-Maoist (Revolutionary) in 4 districts defused 26 Feb.

- [“Free from problems”](#), *Kathmandu Post*, 25 Feb. 2013.

➡ **Pakistan** Bomb targeting Hazara Shiites in Quetta city 16 Feb killed over 90; banned Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) extremist

group claimed responsibility; leader Malik Ishaq arrested 22 Feb in targeted security operation against militants of LeJ and its parent party Ahle Sunnat Waljamaas (ASWJ, the renamed banned Sipah-e-Sahaba). Shiites 17-19 Feb protested attack, govt inaction in main cities. At least 4 killed 25-26 Feb in Karachi violence prompting protests demanding action. Bomb attack 21 Feb killed 1, injured 12 in Peshawar, NW. Policeman killed, 2 injured 23 Feb in militant ambush in Rashakai, east of Peshawar. Blasphemy case against Sherry Rehman, ambassador to U.S., registered by Supreme Court late Feb. Policeman escorting polio vaccination team shot dead 26 Feb.

- [“Spiral of Karachi killings widens Pakistan’s sectarian divide”](#), Reuters, 24 Feb. 2013.

➡ **Sri Lanka** UNOHCHR 11 Feb issued report criticising govt failure to implement recommendations of March 2012 Human Rights Council resolution or address war crimes allegations and calling for “independent and credible international investigation”. Human Rights Watch accused govt forces of sexual violence against Tamils in custody 2006-2012. Journalist Faraz Shauketaly, working for Sunday Leader, paper critical of govt, shot 15 Feb by unidentified gunmen at his home near Colombo; UN human rights chief Pillay said she was “deeply disturbed” by “attempted assassination”, called for investigation. Govt mid-Feb dismissed as propaganda pictures appearing to show LTTE chief Prabhakaran’s son killed in army custody; photos reignited calls in India for investigation into alleged war crimes at civil war’s end. Large rally 17 Feb by extremist “Buddhist Power Force” calling for laws to curb Muslim influence in Sri Lanka; threats and attacks against Muslim businesses reportedly on increase.

- [“Sri Lanka war investigation lags, abuses persist: UN”](#), Reuters, 13 Feb. 2013.

New Crisis Group Asia Report N°243, [Sri Lanka’s Authoritarian Turn: The Need for International Action](#), 20 Feb. 2013. As the UN Human Rights Council prepares to open its 22nd session, the Sri Lankan government has made no meaningful progress on either reconciliation or accountability and instead has accelerated the country’s authoritarian turn, with attacks on the judiciary and political dissent that threaten long-term stability and peace.

South East Asia

➡ **Indonesia** 2 attacks in Puncak, Puncak Jaya districts of Papuan highlands killed 8 soldiers, 4 civilians 21 Feb, in deadliest attack in recent years; OPM claimed responsibility. Highlander Lukas Enembe won 29 Jan Papua gubernatorial election with 52% of vote; 4 different disputes lodged at Constitutional Court amid allegations of widespread irregularities, particularly in highlands areas. President Yudhoyono 28 Jan issued new security decree widely seen as effort to enhance military’s role in internal security at expense of police. Mob 17 Feb attacked house in Dharmasraya, W Sumatra belonging to man accused of spreading Ahmadiyah teachings.

- [“Papua attack linked to election”](#), Jakarta Post, 25 Feb. 2013.

➡ **Myanmar** Peace process with ethnic armed groups received boost with resumption of dialogue between govt and Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO), brokered by China, and beginning of political phase of process, with opening of political dialogue with United Nationalities Federal Council umbrella group, which includes KIO. KIO 1 Feb issued

statement saying they would halt offensive military actions if army did likewise; first time KIO have offered to stop fighting. Two sides met 4 Feb for negotiations, issued joint statement agreeing to ease tensions, hold further peace talks. Aung San Suu Kyi offered to mediate talks, rejected by KIO. Govt and United Nationalities Federal Council met 20 Feb, discussed political objectives, framework for political dialogue, timeframe. No significant clashes reported during month. Govt 24 Jan indicated former telecommunication minister and several senior officials under investigation for corruption. President 5 Feb appointed member of opposition National Democratic Force to deputy minister post, first non-USDP cabinet member. President's office 7 Feb announced formation of committee to "grant liberty to remaining political prisoners". Group of Myanmar lawyers and international rights group 14 Feb issued results of investigation into injuries sustained by protesters, including monks, when security forces broke up protests at Letpadaung copper mine.

- "Govt, UNFC hold 'frank and friendly' talks in Chiang Mai", AFP, 20 Feb. 2013.

➡ **Philippines** Two Malaysian police and 1 civilian killed in Sabah, Eastern Malaysia, 1 March after weeks-long standoff with 180 followers, 20-30 bearing arms, of Sultan Jamalul Kiram III. Sultan claimed he was asserting unresolved Philippine claim to Sabah. Malaysian security forces surrounded area and demanded group leave. Philippine govt said Sultan should not pursue claim by force; urged followers to return home. MILF disputed Sultan's claim that he had not been consulted on Oct 2012 peace agreement. Latest talks on annexes to peace agreement began 25 Feb; on same day, members of MILF- and govt-appointed transition commission named. President Aquino travelled to MILF HQ 11 Feb for launch of Sajahatra Bangsamoro, new socio-economic assistance program for MILF communities. 2 cameramen kidnapped June 2012 by Abu Sayyaf Group in Sulu released 2 Feb; clash broke out next day between fighters of MNLF commander Habier Malik and ASG members, over 20 killed. Security guard shot dead during New People's Army (NPA) raid in Bukidnon, Mindanao 19 Feb. Amid reports that NPA charging candidates for May elections for "permit to campaign", military announced guerrillas raised 25 million pesos through extortion in 2012. China 19 Feb rejected Philippines' request for international arbitration of South China Sea dispute, citing "serious mistakes both in fact and law". Foreign ministry announced Philippines would receive 10 new Japanese patrol boats for coast guard within 18 months.

- "Sabah standoff revives questions on who is the legitimate sultan of Sulu", *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 24 Feb. 2013.

➡ **Thailand** Govt 28 Feb announced agreement with representatives Southern Muslim rebel group Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN), brokered by Malaysia, to start a dialogue process. Several deadly militant attacks on civilians in south early-month: 5 soldiers died in militant attack on truck in Yala province 10 Feb with 50kg bomb; several other shooting incidents in Yala and Pattani province same day, 2 killed. 50-80 militants 13 Feb launched assault on marine base in Bacho District, Narathiwat; military, with prior warning of attack, killed 16 militants, including several men detained by security forces in 2004 Tak Bai incident. Militants retaliated 16-17 Feb with some 50 explosive devices around Pattani town, including device near clock tower that killed 3; security forces

defused dozens of small devices. Govt 18 Feb announced it had decided to replace emergency decree with Internal Security Act in some districts. In Bangkok, several hundred Red Shirt protesters rallied 29 Jan demanding PTP govt grant amnesty to political prisoners jailed for lèse-majesté and terrorism charges stemming from April-May 2010 protests. Further divisions in Red Shirt movement as Kwanchai Praipana, chief of Khon Rak Udon, 13 Feb said his group would no longer respond to United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship leader Thida Thawornseth's orders. Thai-Cambodian Regional Border Committee concluded meeting in Bangkok 15 Feb, agreed on mechanisms to resolve conflicts on border.

- "Rebel group ready to talk peace", *Bangkok Post*, 28 Feb. 2013.

➡ **Timor-Leste** 2013 State Budget received unanimous approval from parliament after opposition party Fretilin set up ad hoc committee to make key cuts to budget and Petroleum Fund withdrawals. PM Gusmão lauded new political environment.

- "Fretilin com mais responsabilidade para fiscalizar execução orçamental - Mari Alkatiri", *Lusa*, 18 Feb. 2013.

Europe

Balkans

➡ **Bosnia** Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) entity lower chamber 12 Feb voted no confidence in FBiH govt; upper chamber 15 Feb blocked vote, through Bosniak caucus's invocation of vital national interest. Constitutional court unable to rule on validity of veto as lacks necessary quorum of judges, due to ongoing failure to fill posts falling vacant. Republika Srpska (RS) president Dodik asked RS govt to step down, named former head of EU integration unit Željka Cvijanović new PM. Bosnia parliament voted to delay first nationwide census since 1991 until Oct.

- "Bosnian independence day divides ethnic communities", *Balkan Insight*, 28 Feb. 2013.

New Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°70, *Bosnia's Dangerous Tango: Islam and Nationalism*, 26 Feb 2013. Occasional violence notwithstanding, Islamism poses little danger in Bosnia, whose real risk stems from clashing national ideologies, especially as Islamic religious leaders increasingly reply with Bosniak nationalism to renewed Croat and Serb challenges to the state's territorial integrity.

➡ **Kosovo** Kosovo and Serbian PMs met for 5th round of dialogue in Brussels 19-20 Feb; spoke about institutions in north Kosovo, agreed to meet again 4 March. Presidents of Kosovo and Serbia 6 Feb met for first time since Kosovo declared independence. Series of bombings in N Mitrovica, many targeting homes/property of people linked with Kosovo govt office, but also including 2 Serb children injured 4 Feb; large explosion 25 Feb demolished apartment. Local Serbs renewed roadblocks on Pristina-Belgrade highway. European Commission 12 Feb issued first report on Kosovo's progress on requirements of visa liberalisation roadmap, citing limited capacity to fight organised crime and calling for several new laws. Serbian monastery Visoki Dečani surrounded by KFOR troops 8 Feb to protect it from demonstrators. Kosovo-Serbia agreement on liaison officers to work in EU delegation

premises in Belgrade and Pristina delayed by disagreement over diplomatic immunity.

- Marko Prelec, [“Preševo’s Grievances and the Kosovo-Serbia Talks”](#), Balkan Regatta, 1 Feb. 2013.
- [“Belgrade, Pristina open talks on Northern Kosovo”](#), Euractiv, 25 Feb. 2013.

New Crisis Group Europe Report N°223, Serbia and Kosovo: The Path to Normalisation, 19 Feb. 2013. Serbia and Kosovo must build on a recent breakthrough in negotiations and extend dialogue to sensitive issues, especially northern Kosovo’s institutions, in order to keep their fragile relationship moving forward.

➡ **Macedonia** As political crisis continued, govt turned down opposition SDSM demand to postpone 24 March local elections or hold them together with early general elections. SDSM pledged to boycott local elections unless settlement is reached with govt. EU enlargement commissioner Füle wrote to SDSM and ruling VMRO party leaders 21 Feb warning Macedonia risked losing its way to EU and NATO unless they could find a way forward, travelled to Skopje 28 Feb.

- [“Macedonia leaders exchange barbs in reply to Füle”](#), Balkan Insight, 22 Feb. 2013.

Caucasus

➡ **Armenia** President Sargsyan re-elected to 2nd term in first round presidential election 18 Feb with 58.64% of vote. Main opponent, American-born former FM Raffi Hovannisian, took 2nd place with unexpectedly strong 36.75%; refused to recognise results. Several thousand rallied in Yerevan against electoral process over following days. OSCE criticised lack of real competition in election.

- [“Does post-election protest initiative have legs?”](#), Eurasianet, 27 Feb. 2013.

➡ **Azerbaijan** President Aliyev responded to Jan spontaneous unrest in Baku and Ismayili by removing region’s governor and warning local officials and their children against “obnoxious behaviour”; opposition leader Ilgar Mammadov and journalist Tofiq Yaqublu arrested and charged with organising Ismayili unrest, several others also detained. Prominent writer Akram Ailisli came under attack over novella Stone Dreams about ongoing war with Armenia, with officially-promoted burnings of his books in Baku. President Aliyev signed decree stripping Ailisli of honours, pension; wife and son fired from jobs.

- [“Opposition candidate arrested ahead of presidential elections”](#), Amnesty International, 6 Feb. 2013.

➡ **Georgia** Political tensions heightened early Feb when ruling Georgian Dream (GD)-dominated parliament 7 Feb postponed President Saakashvili’s annual address to MPs. Saakashvili next day tried to give speech at national library, however some 300 protesters, including some individuals recently released as political prisoners, appeared to block entrance, some assaulted opposition MPs. PM Ivanishvili and Saakashvili both issued conciliatory statements following clashes; parties came together to discuss constitutional amendments proposed by GD restricting president’s ability to effect change of govt without parliamentary approval, and opposition United National Movement (UNM) proposal to enshrine pro-Western

foreign policy in constitution. Negotiators 20 Feb announced parties reached agreement, but implementation not possible due to disagreement on amnesty for public servants, proposed by UNM. Tbilisi mayor Gigi Ugulava charged with money laundering and mispending public funds; denies charges. Second meeting between Georgian and Russian officials on normalising relations scheduled 1 March.

- [“Tbilisi clashes delay president’s speech”](#), Financial Times, 10 Feb. 2013.

➡ **North Caucasus (Russia)** New acting head of Dagestan Abdulatipov 22 Feb announced commission for rehabilitation of fighters to be closed, another “peacemaking” commission to be established. 4 police killed by suicide bomber at checkpoint outside Khasavyurt city, Dagestan 14 Feb; 2 security operations carried out in city 14, 17 Feb, 9 insurgents and a police officer killed, including Daniyal Zargalov, emir of Northern Sector. In Ingushetia, security forces in Nazran 13 Feb shot dead former deputy minister and opposition leader Sultangirey Khashagulgov, claimed by authorities to be sponsoring insurgent group. Head of North Caucasus Resorts Company, Akhmed Bilalov, dismissed after President Putin 7 Feb criticised activities of his private construction company in Sochi Olympics construction.

- [“Kremlin set to replace some North Caucasus governors before the Sochi Olympics”](#), EDM, 25 Feb. 2013.

➡ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** Armenia reported 2 soldiers killed, 1 soldier and a civilian wounded in sniper fire incidents Feb. Azerbaijan defence ministry reported 2 Azerbaijani soldiers killed during Feb.

- [“Armenia and Azerbaijan still skirting war in Nagorno-Karabakh”](#), Star, 20 Feb. 2013.

Eastern Europe

➡ **Moldova** Talks on Transnistria in Lviv 19 Feb, with representatives from Russia, Ukraine, U.S., EU, OSCE, plus Moldova and Transnistria; OSCE urged sides to maintain momentum in negotiations set to continue May.

- [“Moldova, Transnistria name three stumbling blocks in talks”](#), Kyiv Post, 20 Feb. 2013.

Western Europe/Mediterranean

➡ **Cyprus** Democratic Rally (DISI) leader Nicos Anastasiades won Republic of Cyprus presidential elections with 57.5% of vote in 24 Feb second round; hopes that this may give boost to reunification talks as he supports a looser federation model favoured by many Turkish Cypriots.


- [“An apple of discord ahead”](#), Economist, 23 Feb. 2013.

➡ **Turkey** Car bomb near Cilvegözü Turkish border crossing to Syria 11 Feb killed 14 civilians including 4 Turks: Syrian National Council (SNC) 12 Feb claimed target was SNC delegation. Govt-PKK peace talks continued: second delegation from pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) 24 Feb visited jailed PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan following govt approval, issued statement suggesting future release of PKK-held captives. Civilian died under riot control vehicle 11 Feb in pro-Öcalan demonstrations in Diyarbakir province. 26 Feb Turkish army airstrike near PKK HQ in N


Iraq killed 4 militants. Parliament 25 Feb began discussing AKP gov'ts "fourth judicial reform package", to remedy structural problems with judicial system, could lead to release of some Kurdish politicians and activists detained in Kurdistan Communities' Union case. Suicide bombing by member of Revolutionary People's Liberation Part-Front (DHKP-C) at U.S. embassy in Ankara 1 Feb killed 1 guard; police 18 Feb detained 167 people connected to group. France 12 Feb announced readiness to lift its veto on one of 5 EU negotiation chapters it has blocked since 2007. German Chancellor Merkel 23 Feb announced support for opening new chapter, called on Turkey to show progress in opening ports to Greek Cypriot vessels.

- "Jailed rebel leader holds power to end Turkey's Kurdish conflict", Reuters, 7 Feb. 2013.


Latin America/Caribbean

 **Colombia** Peace talks between gov't and FARC resumed in Cuba 18 Feb, with both sides reportedly optimistic about prospects for agreement; FARC 6 Feb proposed legalising cultivation of coca, marijuana and poppy for therapeutic, medical, industrial and traditional uses, 27 Feb demanded "high-level commission to clarify the truth" over gov't allegations FARC stole large expanses of land from people, also suggested former U.S. president Carter participate. President Santos 23 Feb threatened to end talks if no progress achieved but 25 Feb noted negotiations were going in right direction. FARC 15-16 Feb released 2 policemen, 1 soldier held since late Jan. In weeklong break between talks, confrontations resulted in deaths of 7 soldiers in Caquetá and 2 in Antioquia, 6 guerrilla members 13-15 Feb. 3 soldiers killed 15 Feb during patrol in rural area outside Bogotá. FARC also reportedly responsible for bomb that destroyed police station in Putumayo, explosion targeting energy tower in Antioquia, attack on restaurant in Putumayo which left 2 dead. ELN 4 Feb announced holding 2 German hostages, reportedly captured Nov 2012 in Norte de Santander; 15 Feb released 5 mining company employees kidnapped 18 Jan, but kept hostage Canadian manager. NGO Somos Defensores released annual report, found 69 rights defenders killed in 2012, growing number of threats, assassinations, attacks on rights workers.

- Christian Voelkel, "Local Governments After the Conflict: The Potential Pitfalls of a Centralised Peace Process", Latin America Crime and Politics, 7 Feb. 2013.
- "Farc proposes legal coca and marijuana crops", BBC, 7 Feb. 2013.

 **Ecuador** President Correa 17 Feb secured re-election with 56.7% of vote; runner-up Guillermo Lasso won 23%. Correa 19 Feb said his party likely won three quarters of seats in Congress, vowed to "steamroll" through reforms to entrench his "citizen's revolution".


- "President Correa handily wins re-election in Ecuador", *New York Times*, 17 Feb. 2013.

 **Guatemala** Court 14 Feb rejected charges of extrajudicial killing filed against Colonel Juan Chiro and 8 soldiers under his command for deaths of 6 indigenous demonstrators in Totonicapán city in Oct; Judge Patricia Flores ordered colonel to stand trial for dereliction of duty and 8 soldiers for "homicide in a state of violent emotion". Public Ministry announced it would challenge ruling; Totonicapán indigenous leaders said may join complaints against decision and file civil

complaints. Police 15 Feb arrested ex-army captain Byron Lima, convicted in 1998 assassination of Bishop Juan José Gerardi, as he returned from excursion outside penitentiary. Minister López Bonilla fired prison director who authorised excursion, told media there was "chaos" within prison system.


- "Envían a juicio un coronel y ocho soldados por caso Totonicapán", *Prensa Libre*, 13 Feb. 2013.

New Crisis Group Latin America Report N°47, Totonicapán: Tension in Guatemala's Indigenous Hinterland, 6 Feb. 2013. The killing of protestors last October was a tragedy foretold by those who have long warned against Guatemala's use of the armed forces to maintain domestic peace.


 **Haiti** Former dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier 21 Feb filed last-minute appeal to avoid attending court hearing over allegations of crimes against humanity; court 24 Feb ordered Duvalier to appear before 28 Feb hearing; Duvalier complied. UN 21 Feb formally rejected compensation claims by victims of cholera outbreak which left nearly 8,000 dead.

- Mark Schneider, "A State of Political Dysfunction", *Miami Herald*, 12 Feb. 2013.
- "L'ONU appelle à un accord national pour sortir de l'impasse électorale", RFI, 16 Feb. 2013.

New Crisis Group Latin America/Caribbean Report N°46, Governing Haiti: Time for National Consensus, 4 Feb. 2013. Without an inclusive national pact on critical priorities, President Michel Martelly faces the spectre of a failed presidency, and Haiti risks international abandonment.

 **Mexico** President Peña Nieto 12 Feb unveiled new crime prevention strategy based on funding of social programs in 251 of country's most violent towns; stressed that prevention is key to combating organised crime, not just "more sophisticated weapons, better equipment, more police, a higher presence of the armed forces". Peña Nieto 16 Feb visited Michoacán for official launch of new strategy with talks between Federal Police and state govts. Human Rights Watch accused gov't of hundreds of forced disappearances. Gov't and ICRC signed agreement 21 Feb to co-operate in search for disappeared; gov't 26 Feb said 26,122 people have gone missing since Dec 2006.


- "Unabated violence poses challenge to Mexico's new anticrime program", *New York Times*, 18 Feb. 2013.

 **Venezuela** Gov't 18 Feb announced return of President Chávez following 70-day absence for cancer treatment in Cuba; VP Maduro 28 Feb said Chávez "battling for his life". Opposition Democratic Unity alliance (MUD) continued to press for full medical report and restoration of constitutional normality as Chávez yet to be inaugurated.

- "Hugo Chavez 'battling for his life', says VP Maduro", BBC, 1 March 2013.


Middle East and North Africa

Eastern Mediterranean


 **Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories** Widespread demonstrations in OPT supporting hunger-striking Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails escalated significantly following 23 Feb death of prisoner in unclear circumstances; hundreds injured

in clashes with security forces, 2 teenagers critically injured by live fire. PA minister 24 Feb said autopsy revealed prisoner's death caused by torture; UN called for investigation into death. Rocket fired at southern Israel 26 Feb broke 3-month ceasefire, no injuries: Fatah-affiliated Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades claimed responsibility. Military raids, clashes, settler-related violence, demolitions in WB continued. Likud-Beiteinu faction 19 Feb made first official coalition agreement with centrist Hatnua party; Hatnua leader Tzipi Livni to be justice minister and negotiator in any future peace talks with Palestinians under PM Netanyahu's supervision. Palestinian factions 9-10 Feb held reconciliation talks in Cairo, committed to consultations on formation of interim govt; Hamas 24 Feb asked to delay next reconciliation meeting. Central Elections Commission 11 Feb began long-delayed updating of voter rolls in Gaza Strip.

- Robert Blecher, "Jerusalem in the Here and Now", *Foreign Policy*, 12 Feb. 2013.
- Ofer Zalzberg, "Israel's Islamist Dilemma", *Times of Israel*, 12 Feb. 2013.
- "Palestinians say Israel 'tortured' detainee", *Al Jazeera*, 24 Feb. 2013.

 **Lebanon** Month saw heightened political tensions as well as increased spillover from Syrian conflict. Joint parliamentary committees 19 Feb endorsed controversial "Orthodox Gathering" electoral law proposal requiring each sect to elect own representatives through proportional representation, following walk-out by opposing parties, however Interior Minister Marwan Charbel same day ruled out holding June parliamentary elections without consensus on new electoral law. Debate continued over other proposals; number of accusations of parties intending to delay elections. Official 17 Feb reported 3 Hizbollah fighters killed in clashes with Syrian rebels in al-Qusayr, Syria, near border; FSA 19 Feb threatened retaliation against Hizbollah. Heavy shelling, gunfire over border from Syria 23-24 Feb killed 4 in north of Lebanon; refugee influx from Syria continued to increase; UN expressed renewed concern that Lebanon could be drawn into Syria's civil war. 2 soldiers and detained local fugitive killed 1 Feb in Arsal in disputed incident sparking officials' commendation and number of pro- and anti-army protests; military prosecutor 11 Feb charged 34 locals in connection with incident. 3 soldiers injured 15 Feb in protests against subsequent heightened security measures in Arsal and arrest of 11 local men. Bulgaria 5 Feb implicated Hizbollah in July 2012 bombing of tourist bus in Burgas that killed 5 Israelis, 1 Bulgarian; led to renewed calls for EU to blacklist group.


- "Fake victory", *Daily Star*, 20 Feb. 2013.

 **Syria** Month saw violence on part of regime further escalating, with use of Scud missiles, as UN 27 Feb warned of severe rise in refugees and a humanitarian situation "dramatic beyond description". Rebels continue to consolidate hold on North and East, made several strategic gains. Renewed clashes reported in Aleppo end Feb; Human Rights Watch reported govt ballistic missile strikes in civilian areas killed over 100. Rebels launched new offensive on regime-stronghold Damascus. Car bomb 21 Feb killed dozens, injured over 200 in central Damascus near ruling Ba'ath party HQ. Reports emerged of worsening maltreatment and torture of prisoners in govt jails. UN/Arab League Envoy Brahimi 17 Feb, Syrian National Coalition (NC) 22 Feb announced support for NC leader Mouaz Khatib's Jan initiative for conditional talks with regime; Brahimi called for talks between opposition and "acceptable


delegation" from govt; Syrian FM Walid al-Moualeem 25 Feb said regime is prepared to talk to armed opposition. EU 19 Feb renewed arms embargo on Syria for further 3 months with amendment allowing more non-lethal and technical support for civilian protection. NC 23 Feb threatened to boycott 28 Feb "Friends of Syria" meeting with Western backers due to lack of international condemnation following govt's bombardment of Aleppo; rescinded after condemnations issued, Western states promised increased non-lethal aid. NC 22 Feb announced it would establish govt to run rebel "liberated" areas of country. Brahimi's contract extended to end-2013.

- "UN warns of dire rise in refugees from Syria", *New York Times*, 27 Feb. 2013.

Gulf


 **Bahrain** Govt, opposition participated in 5 "National Consensus Dialogue" sessions aimed at ending political deadlock; scheduled 13 Feb session suspended due to protests. Late-month reports of disagreements when opposition insisted that representatives of king should join talks; demand rejected by govt. As demonstrations intensified in run-up to 2-year anniversary of 14 February uprising, teenage protester and security official reported killed 14 Feb in clashes west of Manama, further protestor later died from injuries; protesters clashed with police following teenager's funeral 16 Feb. 8 militants with alleged links to Iran, Iraq, Lebanon reported arrested mid-Feb; govt accused Iran's Revolutionary Guard of establishing terror cell. Court sentenced policeman to 7 years' jail over fatal shootings of protesters during 2011 uprising, acquitted 4 others. Human Rights Watch said rulers had made no progress on promised reforms, official impunity continues, activists remain imprisoned.

- "Bahrainis divided as leaders start reconciliation talks", *Reuters*, 13 Feb. 2013.


 **Iran** At first Iran-P5+1 talks in 8 months 26-27 Feb, negotiators offered Iran limited sanctions relief in exchange for Tehran curbing most sensitive aspects of nuclear activities; Iran said negotiations "turning point"; further talks scheduled. New U.S. sanctions took effect 6 Feb; next day Iran rejected U.S. offer of direct talks saying it would not negotiate under pressure of sanctions. Foreign Ministry 12 Feb said country ready for "comprehensive agreement" with IAEA including visit to Parchin military complex if nuclear rights recognised; IAEA-Iran talks 13 Feb failed again to reach deal. IAEA 21 Feb confirmed Iran had started to install new generation of centrifuges at Natanz enrichment plant; U.S. called it "yet another provocative step". EU Court 5 Feb ruled sanctions on Iranian Bank Saderat should be lifted due to insufficient evidence bank involved in nuclear program. Currency reached all-time low, registering more than 21% drop in 2 weeks against US\$. President Ahmadinejad 3 Feb accused parliament speaker Ali Larijani's family of corruption; rival politicians 17 Feb apologised to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei for public feud.

- "Iran hails turning point in nuclear talks", *Guardian*, 27 Feb. 2013.


New Crisis Group Middle East Report N°138, *Spider Web: The Making and Unmaking of Iran Sanctions*, 25 Feb. 2013. For some, a tool to rein in Iran's nuclear ambitions, for Tehran an illegitimate intrusion into domestic affairs: what is clear is that sanctions have, as yet, failed in diminishing dangerous tensions on the core question of whether Iran's nuclear goals are military or merely civilian.

 **Iraq** Protests against PM al-Maliki continued: tens of thousands of Sunni protesters 1 Feb marched throughout country, thousands of Sunnis protested 22 Feb in Ramadi, Baghdad, Mosul, Fallujah. Suicide bombers 6 Feb killed Iraqi army intelligence officer Awni Ali and 2 bodyguards in Tal Afar, 11 Feb killed at least 8 at military checkpoint in Mosul, 3 Feb killed at least 33 outside police HQ in Kirkuk, 5 Feb killed at least 3 at Taji checkpoint, 4 Feb infiltrated meeting of Sahwa tribal fighters in Taji and killed at least 22. Masked gunmen wearing Iraqi army uniforms 22 Feb shot dead 7 members of govt-backed militia Sahwa near Tuz Khurmato. Car bombs 8 Feb throughout country killed at least 34. Car bombs across Baghdad 17 Feb killed 28; al-Qaeda-linked Islamic State of Iraq claimed responsibility. Car bomb 28 Feb killed several in Baghdad Shia neighbourhood. Gunman 11 Feb killed bodyguard of Kurdish member of Mosul provincial council and 3 others. Dispute between Baghdad govt and autonomous Kurdish region over oil rights delayed attempts to pass draft legislation for budget. Attack 9 Feb on Iranian dissident group Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK) residents at former U.S. base killed at least 5, wounded over 25. Oil minister Abdul Kareem Luaibi 25 Feb said Turkey rejected possibility of extending oil, gas export pipelines from Kurdistan region through Turkey without Baghdad govt's approval.



- "Anti-government protests continue in Iraq", Al Jazeera, 15 Feb. 2013.

 **Jordan** Number of Syrian refugees entering Jordan reportedly reached 400,000; violence erupted 24-25 Feb in Zaatari camp over poor conditions. In first protests since 23 Jan parliamentary election, hundreds of opposition Muslim Brotherhood supporters demonstrated in Amman 22 Feb to demand faster political reform; opposition protests also held throughout country. Royal Court Chief Fayez Tarawneh 20 Feb continued consultations with parliament to choose PM.

- "Jordanian Islamists protest against new parliament", Reuters, 22 Feb. 2013.

 **Saudi Arabia** Security forces 9 Feb arrested several women and children following demonstrations in Riyadh and Buraidah calling for release of prisoners detained without charge. U.S. media 6 March reported CIA use of Saudi Arabian airbase for Yemen drone strikes. Police reported 3 incidents 23 Feb of unknown gunmen opening fire at prison and police targets in Shiite-populated Eastern Province.


- "Saudis protest for female political prisoners", Al-Akhbar English, 12 Feb. 2013.

  **Yemen** Tensions between separatists and security forces, Islamist party Islah reached highest levels since early 2012, sparking fears of further violence. At least 6 killed, 49 wounded 21 and 23 Feb in clashes between separatist protesters and security forces in South marking 1-year anniversary of President Hadi's election. UNSC 15 Feb expressed concern former president Saleh and separatist leader Ali Salim al-Bid undermining democratic transition, warned of further measures against spoilers including sanctions. At rally in Sanaa 27 Feb former president Saleh called for national reconciliation. President Hadi 6 Feb announced 18 March date for start of drafting new constitution and national dialogue. Govt 2 Feb confirmed ship intercepted 23 Jan was Iranian ship smuggling weapons; Iran denied connection. Military 2 Feb killed 10 suspected militants in air strikes, drove group of al-Qaeda-linked insurgents from mountain hideout in South.


Security chief Abdulwahab al-Wali 23 Feb survived assassination attempt in South. Main oil pipeline in central Maarib province sabotaged 8 Feb.

- "Consolidating uncertainty in Yemen", *Foreign Policy*, 22 Feb. 2013.


North Africa

 **Algeria** Security forces 6 Feb repelled attempt to overrun Khenchela garrison by 50 suspected Islamists, killing at least 2; 8 Feb arrested 2 AQIM would-be suicide bombers in Tinzwaten; 10 Feb arrested 10 suspected members of arms and ammunition trafficking network in El Bayadh; 11 Feb killed 2 suspected terrorists in Tizi Ouzou; 16 Feb killed 4 terrorists on border with Mali; 23 Feb killed 4 in Boukaal Medjadji and 8 in Boumerdès, including AQIM emir for Bordj Menäïel town. Interior Ministry mid-month banned Salafi Free Awakening Front party from holding founding convention. Security forces increased positions on border with Mali. 16 protesters arrested in Warqla province 14 Feb.

- "L'Aficom courtise l'Algérie", El Watan, 16 Feb. 2013.

 **Egypt** President Morsi 21 Feb announced 4-stage parliamentary election starting 27 April, later moved to 22 April to avoid clash with Easter; main opposition coalition National Salvation Front (NSF) 26 Feb announced boycott over transparency concerns. Morsi called for 26 Feb live-broadcast national dialogue session to discuss election fairness guarantees; NSF, Christian representatives did not attend. Govt approved elections monitoring by several NGOs and international organisations. Latest wave of unrest which began 24 Jan continued into Feb in cities and governorates across Egypt, fuelled by anger at police brutality in response to rioting. Protesters outside presidential palace clashed with police 1 Feb; 2 killed. Campaign of civil disobedience initiated 17 Feb in Port Said as protesters demanded official accountability for over 40 protester deaths in Jan violence; over a week of protests, strikes and blockades of govt buildings followed. In attempt to quell anger Morsi 19 Feb agreed to judicial investigation, allocated new funds to area. Civil disobedience campaigns spread to other governorates including Ismailia, Kafr al-Sheikh.

- "Can the political crisis in Egypt actually be resolved?", Al-Monitor, 22 Feb. 2013.

 **Libya** Thousands took to streets 17 Feb to mark 2nd anniversary of revolution. Civil society organisations in Benghazi, supported by some armed groups, 15 Feb protested against govt over perceived failure to fulfil goals of revolution. Leaders of groups seeking autonomy for east cancelled planned 15 Feb protest rally citing feared violence. Congress 6 Feb approved direct election to constitution-drafting committee; committee 14 Feb unveiled draft "political isolation law", which proposes to bar up to 36 categories of civil servants from senior govt, administrative positions for next 10 years. 4 Christian missionaries arrested in Benghazi for proselytising. FM Abdelaziz called for Western and Arab allies to help secure borders to prevent Islamist rebels influx from Mali. PM Zeidan denied reports Qadhafi-era PM Mahmudi tortured in jail.

- "Libya two years on: revolution and devolution", Al Jazeera, 17 Feb. 2013.



Mauritania Court 11 Feb charged 2 suspected AQIM members with planning to fight in Mali. Rights groups issued communiqué expressing concern at spread of extremist teachings. Army 18 Feb began joint military exercise Flintlock-2013, led by AFRICOM and involving 19 other countries including U.S., France, Canada. Opposition Union des Forces de Progrès early-month called for formation of national unity govt as precondition for participation in next elections, and reform of electoral commission.

▪ [“Sur un fil”](#), *Jeune Afrique*, 8 Feb. 2013.



Morocco Supporters of 20 February Movement marked 2-year anniversary since birth of movement. Rapper Mouad Belghouat, jailed since May 2012, conducted hunger strike 4-13 Feb to protest detention conditions and detention of some 70 movement activists. 6 sentenced to 1-2 years prison 27 Feb for anti-govt protests in Dec 2012. Country's largest Islamist opposition movement 5 Feb warned of increasing risk of “serious popular revolt”.

▪ [“Morocco's faltering protest movement hopes for a rebound”](#), *Al Arabiya*, 20 Feb. 2013.



Tunisia 6 Feb assassination of popular opposition politician Chokri Belaïd, member of Popular Front, prompted worst political and constitutional crisis since revolution, deepening polarisation between Islamists and secularists. Belaïd killing triggered mass protests throughout country, with clashes with police, demolition of police stations and Islamist party HQs. Over 150,000 gathered for Belaïd's funeral 8 Feb; largest trade union same day called general strike in protest at murder. PM Jebali 6 Feb announced dissolution of govt in response to killing, intention to establish interim cabinet of technocrats to replace Islamist-led coalition. Popular Front same day announced withdrawal from National Constituent Assembly; Secular Congress for the Republic, led by President Marzouki, 10 Feb announced withdrawal from coalition govt to support PM Jebali's attempt to form govt of technocrats, but quickly

backed out of move. Jebali 19 Feb resigned following collapse of his plan for apolitical technocrat cabinet due largely to strong opposition from his own An-Nahda party. An-Nahda 22 Feb chose Ali Larayedh as new PM, who president tasked with forming new govt; thousands protested choice. An-Nahda party chief Ghannouchi 27 Feb said will allow independents to take over key “sovereign” ministries in next govt in concession to opposition. Govt 21 Feb announced arrest of Belaïd assassination suspects, later said killer identified. Ghannouchi said An-Nahda not behind Belaïd assassination; thousands marched 9 and 16 Feb in Tunis in support of An-Nahda and Islamist-led govt.

▪ [“Tunisian Islamists name new premier”](#), *Wall Street Journal*, 22 Feb. 2013.

New Crisis Group Middle East and North Africa Report N°137, Tunisia: Violence and the Salafi Challenge, 13 Feb. 2013. As Tunisia faces the most critical phase of its transition after Chokri Belaïd's assassination, its leaders must devise a calibrated response to the various challenges posed by the rise of Salafism.



Western Sahara UNHCHR and rights organisations 19 Feb expressed concern about fairness of trial of Sahrawis who participated in riots at Gdeim Izik camp in 2010; after 2 years of pre-trial detention, military court handed out prison terms for 24 detainees ranging from time served to life in prison. Prisoners reiterated claim they were tortured in prison; Amnesty International called for retrial, investigation of torture allegations.

▪ [“Two years too long – repression of protests must end”](#), Amnesty International, 20 Feb. 2013.

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