

A monthly bulletin by **Crisis Group** on current and potential conflicts around the world

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CrisisWatch:

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

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

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

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September 2009 Watchlist



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Crisis Group is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation, with some 130 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 co-chaired by former European Commissioner for External Relations Lord (Christopher) Patten and 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.



CENTRAL AFRICA

- **Burundi** Alex Sinduhije, Leader of opposition MSD party registered in July, briefly put under house arrest before appearing in court 4 times over month on libel charges. Controversy continued over draft electoral law, with opposition claiming it favours ruling CNDD-FDD. Rwandan and Burundian officials reported FDLR militia fleeing Kimia II operation in DRC crossed into Burundi 19 Aug; numbers unclear.
 - [“Seek justice for war crimes victims”](#), Human Rights Watch, 13 Aug. 2009.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°63, [To Integrate the FNL Successfully](#), 30 July 2009.

- **Central African Republic** Govt 13 Aug launched 3-year DDR program in northwestern town of Paoua for estimated 6,000-10,000 rebels. Followed 3 Aug protests in Bangui by ex-combatants protesting DDR delays. Challenges to program include uncertainty over rebel numbers, lack of security due to presence of other armed groups and bandits. Launch came as media reports accuse govt of withholding DDR-earmarked funds donated by regional economic body CEMAC. President Bozizé 3 Aug promulgated controversial electoral law seen to favour incumbent, 20 Aug officially launched his KNK party. Reports of increased attacks by LRA rebels active in southeast (see Uganda).
 - [“‘Three years to disarm’ in Central African Republic”](#), AFP, 17 Aug. 2009.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°55, [Central African Republic: Untangling the Political Dialogue](#), 9 Dec. 2008.

- **Chad** Additional peace accord signed with eastern rebel actors, amid speculation President Déby planning to co-opt rebel leaders in future cabinet reshuffle. Déby 8 Aug met with Libyan President Gaddafi for 3rd time in 2 months in reported drive to secure Gaddafi's role as mediator for eastern rebellion. Reports of rise in crime and attacks on humanitarian workers in east, following recent reduction in army patrols.
 - [“Two aid agency staff missing in Chad”](#), AFP, 6 Aug. 2009.

Africa Briefing N°65, [Chad: Escaping from the Oil Trap](#), 26 August 2009. If Chad wants to avoid further impoverishment and destabilisation the government must reform management of oil revenues. Since 2003 revenues have undermined governance and fuelled rebellions and political crises, and are used by the regime to strengthen the military, reward cronies and co-opt officials. This has limited space for the opposition and civil society and kept Chad in a state of political paralysis.

- **Democratic Republic of Congo** National army (FARDC) forces operating under Kimia II operation 9 Aug arrested Gregoire Ndahimana, indicted by ICTR for planning massacre of 2,000 Tutsis during 1994 Rwandan genocide. Sporadic clashes continued in N and S Kivu; 16 civilians killed in attack by unconfirmed militia group in Mpama village, N Kivu, 12 Aug; 24 killed in fighting in S Kivu Mwenga area, including 21 militia.

ICC 14 Aug ordered conditional release of ex-MLC opposition leader Jean-Pierre Bemba pending trial on charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity in CAR; Chief Prosecutor Ocampo appealed decision. Further bilateral talks between President Kabila and Rwandan President Kagame held 6 Aug in Goma on security cooperation (see Rwanda). U.S. Sec State Clinton visited Kinshasa, Goma 10-12 Aug as part of 11-day Africa tour; pledged \$17m new aid for victims of sexual violence. U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) announced upcoming assessment mission on U.S. military support to combat sexual violence. UN reported thousands displaced after continued attacks by LRA rebels in northeast.

- [Comment by François Grignon \(Crisis Group\), “Time for a New Approach to Disarm the FDLR”](#), *Africa Report*, 7 Aug. 2009.
- [“UN force in DR Congo to be reinforced by 3,000”](#), AFP, 19 Aug. 2009.

- **Gabon** Presidential poll to elect successor to longstanding leader Omar Bongo held 30 Aug. Vote peaceful, but outcome uncertain end month as 3 candidates – Omar's son Ali Ben Bongo (PDG party), opposition UPG leader Pierre Mamboundou and ex-minister Andre Mba Obame (independent) – all claimed victory; official results expected 2-3 Sept. Tensions over Bongo's candidacy high prior to poll: up to 6,000 rallied in capital 7 Aug in calls for Bongo to stand aside and quit post as defence minister to level electoral playing field; interim president Rogombe 14 Aug forced his resignation. Opposition candidates accused Bongo of seeking to impose family dynasty and called for election to be postponed, citing shortness of campaign period and irregularities in voters rolls. 5 candidates late month pulled out of race to back leading rival to Bongo, Andre Mba Obame. Bongo late month lashed out at opposition “traitors”.
 - [“Autocrat's shadow looms over Gabon vote”](#), *New York Times*, 29 Aug. 2009.

- **Rwanda** President Kagame in state visit met with DRC President Kabila in Goma 6 Aug, discussed continued security cooperation. Alleged génocidaire and ICTR indictee Grégoire Ndahimana arrested by Congolese troops in N Kivu early month (see DRC). U.S. Sec State Clinton, in Nairobi 5 Aug, praised Rwanda's economic progress.
 - [“‘New era’ for DR Congo and Rwanda”](#), BBC, 6 Aug. 2009.

- **Uganda** Violent riots in capital 18 Aug protesting President Museveni's re-appointment of Badru Kiggund, accused of orchestrating fraud in 2006 elections, as electoral commission chair. Leading opposition UPC party official Godfrey Ayoo 6 Aug criticised govt failure to resolve LRA violence, alleged govt policies had prevented progress and failed to address LRA demands. Reports of several LRA attacks and abductions in South Sudan, CAR and northeast DRC; Ugandan troops in CAR launched retaliatory attacks late July, 5 Aug reportedly arrested 5 LRA officers. LRA negotiator David Matsanga announced resignation from group mid-month to contest 2011 presidential poll.
 - [“Uganda's re-appointed Electoral Commission Chair responds to critics”](#), VOA, 19 Aug. 2009.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°146, [Northern Uganda: The Road to Peace, with or without Kony](#), 10 Dec. 2008.

HORN OF AFRICA

➡ **Eritrea** U.S. Sec State Clinton 6 Aug threatened U.S. would “take action” if Asmara continues to support Somali Islamist rebels. 2 Eritrean rebel groups attacked military intelligence unit late July in southern town of Senafe, killing 13 soldiers and capturing 5. Reports of failed assassination attempt on President Isaias Afwerki 17 Aug, denied by govt. Hague-based International Claims Commission set up after 1998-2000 war concluded arbitration case 18 Aug, ordered Asmara to pay Addis Ababa \$11m compensation for war damages.

▪ [“Eritrea rejects Clinton criticism over Somalia”](#), Reuters, 7 Aug. 2009.

➡ **Ethiopia** Further reports of Ethiopian troop presence in Hiran region of central Somalia; Addis Ababa announced Somali pro-govt militias had permission to use Ethiopian territory to attack Somali Islamist forces inside Somalia.

▪ [“Ethiopian official says Somali militias use Ethiopia to attack rebels”](#), VOA, 20 Aug. 2009.

➡ **Kenya** Govt began first national census for decade amid sharp debate over census question on ethnicity, which critics say is open to political manipulation. President Kibaki’s son Jimmy entered political stage to launch youth initiative “Stand up Kenya” in move interpreted by some observers as prelude to succession bid. Prolonged drought continues, as UN reported 50% rise in number of Kenyans requiring urgent food aid.

▪ [“Kenya begins contentious census”](#), BBC, 24 Aug. 2009.
▪ [“Ripples of dispute surround tiny island in East Africa”](#), *New York Times*, 16 Aug. 2009.

➡ **Somalia** Continued fighting in and around capital, as Dahir Aweys, leader of Islamist militia Hizbul Islam, 23 Aug rejected govt call for Ramadan truce and pledged to continue battle with al-Shabaab “brothers” against govt/AU forces. At least 60 killed in mid-month clashes across central Somalia as govt troops sought to advance on al-Shabaab-controlled territory, prompting fresh Islamist attacks on strategic Beledweyn town; al-Shabaab forces reportedly retook central towns of Balad Wayne and Bula Burte mid-month. Over 30 killed from 21 Aug in Islamist attacks on govt positions in Mogadishu and in fighting around key route to Afgoye town. Ethiopian troops late month reportedly captured strategic town Belet Wayne near Ethiopian border. President Sheikh Sharif announced imposition of emergency rule 19 Aug. TFG and Puntland officials 23 Aug signed deal on cooperation, stipulating that the region operate as counter-piracy base and increasing its diplomatic and economic independence. UN announced over half of Somalis require emergency assistance, as humanitarian situation continued to worsen.

▪ [“Somali Islamist rebels unite for battle”](#), *Daily Nation*, 23 Aug. 2009.

Africa Briefing N°64, [Somalia](#):

[The Trouble with Puntland](#), 12 August



2009. If its government does not enact meaningful reforms and reach out to all clans, Puntland may break up violently, adding to Somalia’s chaos. If grievances are not urgently and comprehensively tackled, the consequences could be severe for the whole country and even the Horn of Africa. Donors need to refocus on long-term measures without which no sustainable end to piracy or true stability is possible.

➡ **Somaliland (Somalia)** Tensions between President Riyale and opposition continued to rise ahead of 27 Sept

elections. Govt late July announced recently completed voter registration lists would be discarded due to technical problems jeopardizing reliability, rejected order from parliament to reinstate lists. Thousands demonstrated against move in capital Hargeisa 19 Aug; at least 37 arrested, including 2 opposition party officials. U.S. early month urged Riyale to reconsider discarded lists.

▪ [“Media rights group says Somaliland cracking down on dissent”](#), VOA, 19 Aug. 2009.

➡ **Sudan** Delegations from south’s SPLM and north’s NCP, meeting under mediation of U.S. envoy Gration, 19 Aug signed new “action plan” for implementing 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), but parties failed to make progress on key issues of disputed census and 2011 referendum. SPLM officials continued to accuse Khartoum of destabilising south by arming civilians. Further deadly attacks between communities in south’s Jongeli State left 185 dead early month. UN reported at least 180 killed in south amid recent spike in attacks and abductions by suspected LRA rebels, causing temporary suspensions of aid operations. Gration 21 Aug announced separate progress in Darfur peace talks in Addis Ababa, with agreement from 4 rebel groups to work as united front and commit to peace “roadmap”; key player JEM remains outside of talks. Officials from Sudan, Egypt, Libya and Gration convened in Cairo 23 Aug to coordinate peace efforts including on Darfur; Qatari representatives notably absent. UNAMID General Martin Agwai late month said that despite persistence of localized disputes, war in Darfur effectively over; activists condemned statements and wider U.S. policy of engaging Khartoum.

▪ [“Darfur rebels reach unification-deal in Addis Ababa”](#), *Sudan Tribune*, 24 Aug. 2009.

▪ For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°152, [Justice, Peace and the ICC](#), 17 July 2009.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

➡ **Madagascar** Talks to break political crisis held in Mozambique over month under auspices of SADC-appointed mediator Joaquim Chissano. Transitional authority leader Rajoelina, ousted president Ravalomanana and ex-presidents Didier Ratsiraka and Albert Zafy 9 Aug signed agreement to form power-sharing transitional govt by 8 Sept deadline, and hold national elections within 15 months. Progress quickly faltered over issue of govt leadership after Rajoelina 14 Aug announced his right to lead govt, rejected by Ravalomanana. Second round of talks – dubbed Maputo II – ended 28 Aug without agreement.

▪ [“Madagascar power-sharing talks to resume, doubts linger”](#), Reuters, 19 Aug. 2009.

➡ **Zimbabwe** Relations between power-sharing partners ZANU-PF and MDC parties continued to strain. ZANU-PF 14 Aug announced it would make no further concessions to MDC on unity govt, alleging MDC had reneged on pledge to secure removal of targeted sanctions. Cabinet retreat in Nyanga dissolved 24 Aug after Deputy PM Mutambara (MDC-M faction) called 2008 elections fraudulent, prompting ZANU-PF walk-out. 10 more MDC lawmakers briefly arrested late month. VP John Msika died early month of natural causes, fuelling already fierce battle between the 2 ZANU-PF factions over President Mugabe’s succession. U.S. Sec State Clinton during 8 Aug

visit to South Africa stressed “negative effects” of Mugabe’s rule on SA and called for more action to ensure reform. South African President and SADC Chairman Zuma 27 Aug travelled to Harare, called on governing parties to implement Sept 2008 Global Political Agreement to “create confidence”. Mugabe 27 Aug lashed out at western interference. Army and air-force chiefs Phillip Sibanda and Perence Shiri publicly saluted PM Tsvangirai for first time; reports gesture part of possible bargain with MDC regarding their outstanding power-sharing demands. UN and Medecins Sans Frontieres warned of potential new cholera outbreak as rainy season approaches.

- [“Zimbabwe unity government tense ahead of Zuma mediation visit”](#), VOA, 24 Aug. 2009.

- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°59, [Zimbabwe: Engaging the Inclusive Government](#), 20 April 2009.

WEST AFRICA

➡ **Cameroon** 5 foreign workers abducted July by suspected Bakassi Freedom Fighters (BFF) freed 13 Aug. Govt forces 3 Aug shot dead 4 armed men thought linked to Niger Delta militants off Cameroonian coast. BFF Commander Ebi Dari resigned 11 Aug, reportedly over infighting, and apologised for terrorising region. Nigeria’s High Commissioner to Cameroon 7 Aug announced commitment to joint operations to combat insecurity in Gulf of Guinea. Govt human rights commission 12 Aug issued report condemning arbitrary arrests by security forces and “draconian” prison conditions.

- [“L’armée abat quatre pirates des mers dans les eaux territoriales camerounaises”](#), APA, 8 Aug. 2009.

➡ **Côte d’Ivoire** President Gbagbo 8 Aug appointed Paul Yao-N’dré, senior member of his party FPI, as head of Constitutional Council, responsible for announcing election results; opposition protested Yao-N’dré’s lack of neutrality. Defence Minister 18 Aug said that disarmament of ex-rebels would not be achieved by deadline (2 months before 29 Nov elections) but stressed delay would not impact on elections.

- Comment by Richard Moncrieff (Crisis Group), [“Côte d’Ivoire : le spectre d’une élection manipulée”](#), AllAfrica, 21 Aug. 2009.

- [“Delay in ICoast disarmament no threat to polls: minister”](#), AFP, 20 Aug. 2009.

- Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°62, [Côte d’Ivoire: What’s Needed to End the Crisis](#), 2 July 2009.

➡ **Guinea** Junta leader Dadis Camara 17 Aug announced presidential elections would be held 31 Jan 2010 (pushing back initial Nov date) and parliamentary elections March 2010; later stated his candidacy depends on “will of the people”. U.S. embassy expressed disappointment over postponement, called on junta members not to contest poll; ruling CNDD denounced statement as external interference. Several hundred rallied in Conakry 22 Aug in support of Dadis. New group - Dadis Must Stay – formed early month.

- [“Guinea rejects U.S. call for junta-free election”](#), Reuters, 23 Aug. 2009.

- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°58, [Guinea: The Transition Has Only Just Begun](#), 5 March 2009.

➡ **Guinea-Bissau** Attorney General, investigating deaths of army chief and president Dec 2008 and military’s allegation of attempted coup in July, disclosed he is receiving regular death threats. Army Chief of Staff 6 Aug announced G-B

would go forward with security sector reform drive next year, following last month’s presidential elections; reform will see army decrease from approximately 10,000 to 3,400.

- Comment by Richard Moncrieff (Crisis Group), [“Guinea-Bissau: The Post-Election Test”](#), openDemocracy, 10 Aug. 2009.

- [“GBissau justice official says receiving death threats: report”](#), AFP, 19 Aug. 2009.

- For background, see Africa Briefing N°61, [Guinea-Bissau: Beyond Rule of the Gun](#), 25 June 2009.

➡ **Liberia** President Johnson-Sirleaf 28 July gave official apology for support to former president Charles Taylor; followed truth commission’s call for her to be banned from public office. U.S. Sec State Clinton, during Liberia stop of her 11-day Africa tour, stressed strong support for Johnson-Sirleaf and Liberia’s role as U.S.’s “partner and friend”.

- [“Clinton supports President of Liberia”](#), *New York Times*, 13 Aug. 2009.

- For background, see Africa Report N°148, [Uneven Progress in Security Sector Reform](#), 13 Jan. 2009.

➡ **Mali** Govt early Aug signed new deal with ADC Tuareg rebel group, long resistant to 2006 peace agreement, under mediation of Algerian ambassador: govt pledged to accelerate development in Kidal region, ADC to support counter-terrorism efforts. Leaders from northern communities met for first time in a decade in Timbuktu 1 Aug, agreed to cooperate in govt fight against Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Followed 12 Aug by meeting between Mali, Algeria, Mauritania and Niger military chiefs on common strategy against AQIM. Large protests held in Bamako 23 Aug against new law strengthening women’s rights, rejected by High Islamic Council; President Touré 27 Aug announced law to undergo review.

- [“Les communautés s’approprient la paix”](#), *Le Pays*, 3 Aug. 2009.

➡ **Niger** Referendum on adoption of new constitution removing presidential term limits held 4 Aug, as opposition and international actors continued to protest President Tandja’s bid to stay in power. Electoral Commission 7 Aug announced 92.5% voted yes, with 68% turnout; opposition PNDS rejected new constitution, alleged turnout 5%. Leading opposition activist Marou Amadou arrested 11 Aug for “breaching state security”, reportedly beaten. Protests held in Niamey 22 Aug, forcefully dispersed by police; at least 10 protesters still detained. Tandja 18 Aug announced parliamentary elections to be held 20 Oct. Govt 18 Aug stepped down to open door for cabinet reshuffle. EU, France, U.S. continue to object to Tandja’s actions.

- [“Niger ‘must return to democracy’”](#), BBC, 10 Aug. 2009.

➡ **Nigeria** Govt ordered investigation into late July’s violent clashes in north, as death toll revised upwards to 700. Acting leader of Islamist group Boko Haram 6 Aug pledged to continue fight for total Islamisation of country, threatening attacks on southern cities; Yoruba leaders in southwest promised strong resistance. At least 600 arrested in mid-month police raid on Darul Islam mosque in western Niger State. In Niger Delta, govt amnesty program began 6 Aug, valid through 4 Oct. Govt said some 5,000 militants, including key commander Ebikobowei Victor Ben, accepted program, and 500 weapons surrendered over month. Dominant militant group MEND dismissed figures as “deceit”, alleged govt had purchased weapons. MEND maintained 2-month ceasefire, to end 15 Sept. Other armed groups continued to target energy facilities; 2 major gas sites in Delta state bombed 11 and 13 Aug. Banking industry engulfed

in large-scale corruption scandal involving billions in unpaid loans. Anti-graft police said \$170m recovered; 15 bank chief execs under investigation.

- "Nigeria begins amnesty for Niger Delta militants", *Guardian*, 6 Aug. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°60, *Nigeria: Seizing the Moment in the Niger Delta*, 30 April 2009.

➡ **Senegal** Upsurge in attacks by suspected Casamance separatist group MFDC in and around regional capital Ziguinchor. Gunfire between rebels and govt troops reported over weekend of 21 Aug on city outskirts. University shelled 25 Aug, 2 killed next day in one of 2 attacks on vehicles travelling into city.

- "Heaviest fighting in years' hits Casamance", IRIN, 26 Aug. 2009.



Asia/Pacific

CENTRAL ASIA

➡ **Kazakhstan** Owner and editor of independent weekly newspaper jailed for 3 years for publication of state secrets; case condemned by rights activists, OSCE. Two independent papers reported they face closure due to court orders to pay heavy damages, claim cases politically motivated.

- "Shifting tides of influence in Central Asia", RFE/RL, 1 Aug. 2009.

➡ **Kyrgyzstan** At informal Collective Security Treaty Organization summit Kyrgyz, Russian presidents 1 Aug signed tentative deal on second Russian military base in Kyrgyzstan; details vague, location still to be decided. President Bakiev inaugurated for second term 2 Aug as opposition continued to dispute his July election victory. 6 members of banned Hizb ut-Tahrir group detained by police 7 Aug for distributing propaganda.

- "Fergana Valley: stringent border measures fuelling tension in enclaves", EurasiaNet, 13 Aug. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°79, *Kyrgyzstan: A Deceptive Calm*, 14 Aug. 2008.

➡ **Tajikistan** Govt 4 Aug reported several insurgents arrested in eastern Tavil-Dara district, including 2 brothers of suspected local insurgent leader Nemat Azizoz, reportedly killed by security forces 29 July. 5 checkpoints subsequently removed and most security forces reportedly withdrawing, with govt claiming improved security situation following recent unrest. Govt 9 Aug reported member of banned Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) killed during operation outside Dushanbe. 5 members of banned Islamic group Jamoai Tabligh jailed 11 Aug; govt 31 Aug reported 4 Tajik Al-Qaeda members jailed for terrorism.

- "Ten years after IMU raids, Central Asia still battling militants", RFE/RL, 6 Aug. 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°162, *Tajikistan: On the Road to Failure*, 12 Feb. 2009.

➡ **Turkmenistan** Reports emerged Turkmenistan to increase gas exports to Iran from 8b to 14b cubic metres per year; exports also reportedly planned to China and EU-backed Nabucco gas pipeline. President Berdymuhamedov late Aug visited Bulgaria, Turkey to discuss energy cooperation,

including Nabucco; 31 Aug announced plans to build Caspian Sea naval base. Head of U.S. Central Command Gen Petraeus visited Ashgabat 14 Aug to discuss military cooperation.

- "Nabucco a focus of talks", SEE Times, 27 Aug. 2009.

➡ **Uzbekistan** Govt continued to criticise plans for second Russian military base in Kyrgyzstan near Uzbek border (see Kyrgyzstan). Head of U.S. Central Command Gen Petraeus visit 18 Aug reinforced speculation U.S. drawing closer to President Karimov regime. Uzbekistan 25 Aug refused to participate in training exercises for Moscow-organised rapid regional deployment force under auspices of Collective Security Treaty Organization in spite of being signatory to treaty. Media late-month reported claims Uzbekistan preparing to build new military facility near Kyrgyz border. At least 2 killed in reported series of shootings in Tashkent 29 Aug.

- "CSTO rapid reaction exercises get off to discouraging start", RFE/RL, 27 Aug. 2009.

NORTH EAST ASIA

➡ **China (internal)** Govt announced further 219 arrested early Aug in connection with July's Xinjiang riots; authorities stated new arrests bring number detained to 718. State media late month reported opening of trials for 200 accused of fomenting the unrest, implied majority of accused are minority Uighur Chinese. Concerns actual number detained considerably higher.

- "China to begin ethnic riot trials in Xinjiang", *Financial Times*, 24 Aug. 2009.

➡ **North Korea** Pyongyang increased diplomatic outreach to U.S. and South Korea, but continued to resist return to 6-party talks. Ex-U.S. President Clinton arrived in Pyongyang early month, securing release of 2 U.S. journalists jailed in June. NK late month invited U.S. envoy Stephen Bosworth for talks in further effort to strike up bilateral dialogue with U.S.. Chairwoman of S Korea's Hyundai Group, North's biggest investor, travelled to NK 10 Aug to negotiate release of detained employee and re-opening of joint business enterprises. NK 18 Aug announced re-opening of inter-Korean economic and reconciliation projects, including resumption of family reunions, 21 Aug sent high-ranking delegation to S Korea to commemorate death of ex-president Kim Dae-jung, first formal delegation in 2 years; NK coast guard late month released 2 S Korean fishermen captured 30 July. Seoul called for further talks on reducing military build-up along border. NK 1 Sept announced foreign ministry delegation dispatched to Beijing. Tone shifted late month following start of annual S Korea-U.S. joint military exercises, prompting threat from Pyongyang to strike against "any provocation". Seoul 25 Aug launched unsuccessful satellite rocket; NK announced it was "closely watching" international response. Moscow 26 Aug announced it had deployed an anti-missile defence system close to NK border.

- "S Korea's Lee seeks arms deal with North", *Financial Times*, 15 Aug. 2009.
- "North Korea agrees to lift border restrictions with South", *Guardian*, 17 Aug. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°169, *North Korea: Getting Back to Talks*, 18 June 2009.

➡ **Taiwan Strait** Tensions with Beijing increased over Dalai Lama visit to Taiwan 30 Aug, at invitation of opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), to comfort early-Aug

typhoon victims. China condemned visit, stressed “negative influence” on relations, and cancelled or scaled down several exchange activities; aimed criticism at DPP rather than President Ma, in apparent effort to avoid sabotaging improved relations.

- [“China fine-tunes Taiwan protest in Dalai Lama row”](#), Reuters, 1 Sept. 2009.

SOUTH ASIA

➡ **Afghanistan** Govt, U.S. called 20 Aug presidential and provincial elections “successful” despite high levels of violence and intimidation by Taliban leading up to poll, including at least 30 killed on election day; turnout estimated well below 70% in 2004 elections, especially in south. Late month preliminary results showed narrow lead for President Karzai, but indicated run-off with leading opponent and ex-FM Abdullah Abdullah likely; final results expected mid-Sept. Abdullah and other candidates claimed widespread fraud favouring Karzai during vote; independent Electoral Complaints Commission 30 Aug said investigating 560 “serious fraud reports” that could affect outcome of elections. At least 40 killed, 56 wounded in 25 Aug Kandahar blast; Taliban suspected. NATO 25 Aug announced 2009 death toll for foreign troops already highest since 2001 invasion.

- Comment by Samina Ahmed (Crisis Group), [“Looking Beyond the Afghan Vote”](#), *Boston Globe*, 18 Aug. 2009.
- [“Increasing accounts of fraud cloud Afghan vote”](#), *New York Times*, 30 Aug. 2009.

Asia Report N°175, [Afghanistan: What Now for Refugees?](#), 31 August 2009.



If the Afghan government wants to prevent further internal violence and regional instability, it must urgently address the needs of returning refugees and those in neighbouring countries. Approximately three million refugees remain in Iran and Pakistan alone, while five million Afghans have returned home. Displacement, secondary migration and a decrease in returns are causes and consequences of the state’s shortcomings.

➡ **Bangladesh** Anti-Corruption Commission 5 Aug filed corruption charges against ex-PM and opposition leader Khaleda Zia. Govt committee investigating deaths of at least 36 BDR members in custody had deadline extended late-month after failing to reach any findings.

- [“Corruption charges filed against former Bangladesh PM”](#), AFP, 5 Aug. 2009.

➡ **India (non-Kashmir)** Maoist attacks in Lalgarh, West Bengal continued: 2 killed in separate 5 Aug attacks; Maoist leader Bikas 8 Aug warned of further violence. 7 suspected rebels killed by govt paramilitary force in Manipur 14 Aug.

- [“Exchange of fire continues in Lalgarh”](#), *Hindu*, 29 Aug. 2009.

➡ **Kashmir** Dozens killed, mostly militants, in string of attacks leading up to India Independence Day 15 Aug as infiltration attempts by militants across LoC rose significantly during month. Pakistan govt 6 Aug said evidence handed over by India govt against Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, founder of Lashkar-e-Tayyba militant group accused of Nov 2008 Mumbai terror attack, not strong enough to build case against him. India PM Singh 17 Aug said India govt had “credible information” that Pakistani terrorist groups are planning new attacks on India.

- [“Kashmir violence raises new security worries for India”](#), Reuters, 13 Aug. 2009.

➡ **Nepal** Govt 9 Aug appointed Gen. Gurung as acting Army Chief after Gen. Katwal formally retired; Maoists previously disrupted parliament 7 Aug, threatened street protests over govt failure to resolve row over Katwal’s position. PM Madhav Nepal in first visit to India late month, 22 Aug announced new bilateral trade agreements. Police 24 Aug arrested 19 armed ex-Maoist soldiers outside of cantonments in Kapilvastu district; UN expressed “serious concern” over soldiers leaving cantonments with weapons. Supreme Court 24 Aug ruled VP Jha faces sack “within a week” if he does not retake oath of office in Nepali, ruled his earlier oath in Hindi invalid; Jha 30 Aug refused to attend new swearing in ceremony.

- [“Nepal appoints new army chief: official”](#), AFP, 9 Aug. 2009.

Asia Report N°173, [Nepal’s Future: In Whose Hands?](#), 13 August 2009.



Nepal’s major political players must rebuild their common purpose, bringing the Maoists back into government to prevent a possible return to conflict. All parties, civil society and the international community urgently need to revive the spirit of consensus and compromise that the peace process requires.

➡ **Pakistan** Pakistan Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud killed in 5 Aug U.S. drone strike in S Waziristan; Hakimullah Mehsud named as successor 23 Aug, contradicting reports he had been killed in internal Taliban power struggle early month. Hundreds of thousands displaced by military offensive against Taliban returned to Swat valley region during month, but 14, 30 Aug Mingora suicide blasts killing at least 17 raised fears of renewed violence. Army 18 Aug said planned S Waziristan offensive “months” away, cited lack of equipment. 7 Christians killed 1 Aug in religious violence in Gojra, Punjab. President Zardari 14 Aug instituted changes in the Frontier Crimes Regulations in Federally Administered Tribal Areas, including allowing political party activity and curbs on arbitrary arrests. Opposition made repeated calls for treason trial against ex-President Musharraf; PM Gilani 20 Aug said consensus among all parliamentary parties needed first, as ruling PPP still undecided. 22 border guards killed in 27 Aug Khyber agency suicide blast, Taliban suspected.


- [“Falling out”](#), *Economist*, 27 Aug. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°93, [Pakistan’s IDP Crisis: Challenges and Opportunities](#), 3 June 2009.


➡ **Sri Lanka** Impending monsoon season compounded fears over health situation for some 280,000 IDPs held indefinitely in overcrowded govt-run internment camps; at least 5 killed as many camps already flooded during month, destroying shelters, overflowing sewage systems, contaminating water supply. Govt rejected repeated aid organisations’ calls for release or quick resettlement of IDPs, said demining process in northeast and security screenings not complete. Pro-LTTE TNA party won majority in 8 Aug Vavuniya local council elections, came 2nd in Jaffna; govt criticised for banning media coverage of elections. Govt 7 Aug announced overseas arrest and rendition of new LTTE leader Selvarasa Pathmanathan.

- [“Downpours flood the camps of Sri Lankan refugees”](#), *New York Times*, 15 Aug. 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°172, [Sri Lanka’s Judiciary: Politicised Courts, Compromised Rights](#), 30 June 2009.

SOUTH EAST ASIA

- **Indonesia** Investigations into 17 July Jakarta hotel bombings continued; authorities 12 Aug confirmed principal suspect Noordin Top still at large despite initial claims he was among 4 suspects killed in police raids 8 Aug. Raids also uncovered assassination plot against President Yudhoyono. 3 arrested 19, 25 Aug, charged with helping finance July bombings. Constitutional Court 12 Aug rejected challenges by the 2 losing candidates questioning fairness of 8 July presidential election, finding no evidence of systematic electoral fraud; President Yudhoyono claimed victory 20 Aug. 2 further shooting incidents took place near Freeport mine in Papua with gunmen firing on employee buses; no injuries reported.
- Comment by Sidney Jones (Crisis Group), “Noordin’s Dangerous Liaisons”, *Tempo*, 10 Aug. 2009.
 - “Hunt resumes for Indonesian terror suspect”, *New York Times*, 13 Aug. 2009.

Asia Briefing N°95, *Indonesia: Noordin Top’s Support Base*, 27 August  2009. The July Jakarta bombings produced calls for a strengthened security apparatus and harsher laws, but the more urgent priority is to understand the terrorists’ local support base and target government programs accordingly. This briefing examines the backgrounds of those connected to the attacks, and looks at how individuals close to Noordin Top draw on friends, family, co-workers and schoolmates.

Asia Report N°174, *Myanmar: Towards the Elections*, 20 August 2009.  Controversial elections present an opportunity for change that should not be squandered. Criticism of the constitution has focused on military control, ethnic autonomy, qualifications for office and amendment procedures. But the first national vote in twenty years will give life to a document that involves complete reconfiguration of the political structure. The government, opposition, neighbours and the wider international community must all prepare for the possibility of change they may not be able to control.

- **Myanmar/Burma** Trial of NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi, charged with breaching terms of house arrest in May, ended 11 Aug with Suu Kyi sentenced to further 18 months in detention. Verdict widely denounced as tactic by military junta to prevent Suu Kyi participating in 2010 elections; greeted with EU announcement it would toughen sanctions; France and UK call for global arms and economic embargoes; and widespread calls, including from UNSG Ban and Philippines president Arroyo, for Suu Kyi’s release. Thai FM Kasit Piromya 14 Aug said Bangkok calling for ASEAN request for Suu Kyi’s release, while Jakarta 21 Aug reported Southeast Asian officials to pressure FMs for ASEAN call for her release. 13 Aug UNSC statement expressed serious concern over conviction and its political impact, but did not overtly call for release. U.S. Senator Jim Webb mid-Aug met with Gen Than Shwe and Suu Kyi, fuelling speculation over imminent change in U.S. Burma policy. Human Rights Watch 14 Aug reported more than 10,000 displaced in previous 3 weeks by army attacks on ethnic Shan in northeast. Over 30,000 reportedly crossed border to China fleeing late-month fighting between govt and Kokang rebels; 26 soldiers, at least 8 rebels killed in fighting,

and 2 Chinese killed, 15 injured by Burmese cannon fire and shooting into China. Myanmar apologised; China urged Myanmar to end military operations, safeguard stability.

- “Myanmar army routs ethnic Chinese rebels in the North”, *New York Times*, 30 Aug. 2009.
- “We can’t afford to ignore Myanmar”, *New York Times*, 25 Aug. 2009.

- **Philippines** 23 soldiers and at least 21 rebels killed in 12 Aug govt assault on Abu Sayyaf base on Basilian island. Despite involvement of rogue MILF elements in attack, govt 15 Aug announced peace talks with MILF to continue. 7 MNLF members killed by govt forces in 19 Aug gunfight over Matangguli island, occupied by rebels since 15 Aug. Police 21 Aug arrested suspected leader of Rajah Solaiman Movement, radical Islamist group linked to Abu Sayyaf and suspected of 2004 Manila Bay ferry bombing. Amnesty International report 25 Aug described rights abuses by military and MILF, said over 200,000 still displaced by conflict. Former president Corazon Aquino, hailed for unseating dictator Marcos in 1986, died 1 Aug.
- “Displaced civilians at risk despite Mindanao ceasefire”, Amnesty International, 25 Aug. 2009.
 - “A year on, prospects for Mindanao peace talks brighten again”, Asia Foundation, 19 Aug. 2009.
 - For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°88, *The Philippines: Running in Place in Mindanao*, 16 Feb. 2009.

- **Thailand** “Red shirt” supporters of former PM Thaksin 17 Aug submitted petition to King Bhumibol signed by some 3.5m Thais seeking royal pardon for Thaksin; King 23 Aug made call for national unity. Govt 25 Aug passed temporary security law allowing for use of military to control planned 30 Aug “red shirt” rally calling for resignation of PM Abhisit; rally subsequently postponed. In south, military 10 Aug lifted 2-year curfew in 2 districts in Yala citing improved situation. Govt 18 Aug submitted bill to parliament that, if passed, would allow civilian-led Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre to operate independently from military-controlled Internal Security Operations Command. Ongoing violence in south included 42 people wounded by bomb blast outside restaurant in Narathiwat province 25 Aug; 3 village defence corps killed by roadside bomb in Yala province 22 Aug; several soldiers, civilians killed over month.
- “Will Thailand’s political crisis deepen?”, Reuters, 13 Aug. 2009.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°170, *Recruiting Militants in Southern Thailand*, 22 June 2009.

- **Timor-Leste** Timor police early Aug arrested Maternus Bere, former Suai commander of Indonesia-era Laksaur militia indicted by UN Serious Crimes Unit for crimes against humanity, after he entered country from Indonesia; late Aug reportedly handed him over to Indonesian officials. In speech marking 10th anniversary of independence referendum, President Ramos-Horta called on Timorese to forgive Indonesian crimes committed at time of vote, including over 1,000 killed; said no international tribunal will be established, UN should disband its Serious Crimes Unit. Activists calling for prosecution of crimes later dispersed by police.
- “Forgive Indonesian crimes, Ramos-Horta urges East Timorese”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 Aug. 2009.
 - For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°87, *Timor-Leste: No Time for Complacency*, 9 Feb. 2009.

PACIFIC

- **Fiji** Fiji suspended from Commonwealth 1 Sept after failing to meet demands to restore democracy, including committing to elections by Oct 2010. Military regime 24 Aug appointed army colonels to manage Fiji's 4 administrative divisions, fuelling concerns over increase in military power.
 - ["Fiji suspended from Commonwealth"](#), BBC, 1 Sept. 2009.



BALKANS

- **Bosnia** Meeting with Swedish FM Bildt, High Representative Inzko 7 Aug reported "little progress" in meeting conditions required for closure of OHR, further calling into question its planned closure by end-2009. Govt 24 Aug appointed Lidija Topić new head of Directorate of European Integration, filling post empty since Jan. Bosnian Croat ministers 28 Aug walked out of Federation govt after losing vote; Bosniak SDA same day threatened boycott of State govt. NATO exercise planned for Sept in Bosnia drew criticism from Bosnian Serb officials, media.
 - Comment by Marko Prelec (Crisis Group) ["Divide and Misrule"](#), Transitions Online, 20 Aug. 2009.
 - ["Little progress on OHR closure"](#), BalkanInsight, 7 Aug. 2009.
 - For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°54, [Bosnia: A Test of Political Maturity in Mostar](#), 27 July 2009.
- **Kosovo** Serbia's minister for Kosovo 6 Aug criticised NATO's planned drawdown of KFOR troops; during first visit to Kosovo, new NATO SG Anders Fogh Rasmussen 13 Aug confirmed that planned KFOR drawdown conditional on security situation. Serbian Interior Minister 17 Aug announced completion of draft protocol for cooperation between Serbian police and EU rule of law mission EULEX. Agreement drew criticism from Kosovo govt, insisting EULEX has no mandate to sign international agreements; Pristina 23 Aug said wants to be a signatory to agreement. 21 protesters from Kosovo Albanian independence movement arrested after damaging EULEX vehicles 25 Aug in demonstration against protocol. Several injured during Kosovo Serb protest against reconstruction of ethnic Albanian homes in north Mitrovica 25 Aug. Electricity supply to Strpce municipality, cut off since late June, restored after local Serbs and electricity supplier reached agreement on payments.
 - ["EULEX, Belgrade talks trouble Kosovo"](#), SEE Times, 4 Aug. 2009.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°200, [Serb Integration in Kosovo: Taking the Plunge](#), 12 May 2009.
- **Macedonia** In ongoing name dispute with Greece, both countries provided official responses to UN mediator Nimetz's July name proposals. Nimetz 19 Aug noted Greek response "not positive"; Greece response confirmed will not accept separate names for international use and in bilateral Greek-Macedonian relations. Macedonia's negotiator in dispute, confirming country's commitment to talks, 21 Aug handed official response to Nimetz, reportedly favouring "Northern Republic of Macedonia". President Ivanov subsequently praised progress while acknowledging final solution still a long way off; Greece said talks entering crucial stage. Nimetz said talks to continue. Parliament 17 Aug passed Law on Parliament, one

of benchmarks required for progress on EU accession, amid boycott from opposition Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA), holding 3 seats, citing govt neglect of Albanian rights.

- ["Macedonia's opposition takes aim"](#), BalkanInsight, 26 Aug. 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°52, [Macedonia's Name: Breaking the Deadlock](#), 12 Jan. 2009.

- **Serbia** Ethnic Albanian officials in south 2 Aug announced proposal to form separate region in Albanian-majority Presevo Valley. Serbian police 19 Aug found large weapons cache in predominantly ethnic-Albanian southern village. Moscow 5 Aug announced planned Oct visit by President Medvedev to Belgrade to discuss bilateral relations, energy.
 - ["Tadic on Serbia's 'four pillars of diplomacy'"](#), B92, 30 Aug. 2009.

CAUCASUS

- **Armenia/Turkey** Turkey, Armenia and mediator Switzerland 31 Aug announced breakthrough on protocols to establish diplomatic relations, normalise ties. Protocols to be submitted to national parliaments in 6 weeks' time; expected to lead to opening of the Turkey-Armenia border closed since 1993 due to Nagorno-Karabakh war, and a bilateral sub-commission to discuss Ottoman-era massacres of Armenians in 1915.
 - ["Turkey and Armenia to establish diplomatic ties"](#), *New York Times*, 31 Aug. 2009.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N° 199, [Turkey and Armenia: Opening Minds, Opening Borders](#), 14 April 2009.
- **Armenia** Armenian National Congress 21 Aug accused ad hoc committee investigating March 2008 post-election violence of stalling final report; parliament speaker 22 Aug said committee must present report by 15 Sept. Senior police officer charged with excessive force during post-election violence by Special Investigation Service. Hardline Dashnaksutyun party 25 Aug said process of Armenian-Turkish normalisation poses "serious dangers" for Armenia (see Armenia/Turkey).
 - ["Armenian parliament sets date for unveiling results of clash probe"](#), RFE/RL, 24 Aug. 2009.
- **Azerbaijan** Deputy FM Khalafov dismissed Turkmenistan's 4 Aug claim that Absheron peninsula, site of capital Baku, should not be taken into consideration when determining Caspian Sea delimitation.
 - ["Azeris baffled by Turkmen legal threat"](#), *Asia Times*, 19 Aug. 2009.
- **Chechnya (Russia)** Month saw increasing violence and another high-profile killing with 10 Aug murder of Zarema Sadulayeva, head of children's NGO, shot dead with her husband. Incident provoked further local, international condemnation following July murder of Natalia Estemirova. Kadyrov mid-month filed lawsuit against head of Estemirova's organisation Memorial following latter's accusation of his involvement in Estemirova killing. Upsurge in violence included 5 police shot dead by militants south of Grozny 2 Aug; 2 police killed by unknown assailants in Grozny 11 Aug; 4 police, 2 separatists killed during shootout near Grozny 13 Aug; 4 police killed by suicide bombings in Grozny 21 Aug; 4 police, 2 civilians reported killed by suicide bombing in Mesker-Yurt village 25 Aug. Chechen Islamist group 21 Aug claimed responsibility for 17 Aug explosion at Siberian hydroelectric plant killing 26 people and 17 Aug suicide bomb attack in Nazran (see North Caucasus). PM Putin 24 Aug visited region in show of support for Kadyrov.

- Comment by Paul Quinn-Judge (Crisis Group), “Russia’s Brutal Guerilla War”, *Foreign Policy*, 31 Aug. 2009.
- “Chechnya and its neighbors suffer a relapse”, *New York Times*, 29 Aug. 2009.

↙ **North Caucasus (non-Chechnya)** Flaring of violence in Ingushetia and Dagestan including 25 killed, 136 wounded by 17 Aug suicide bomb attack at Ingushetia’s police HQ in Nazran involving explosive-laden truck. President Medvedev denounced attack, sacked Ingushetia interior minister and sent deputy interior minister to region to coordinate security services response; 19 Aug outlined further measures to address violence. Ingushetia cabinet minister Ruslan Amirkhanov shot dead in his office 12 Aug by insurgents. Ingushetia president Yevkurov, wounded by 22 June assassination attempt, released from hospital 10 Aug, returned to Ingushetia 22 Aug. In Dagestan, group of 10-15 militants 13 Aug opened fire on checkpoint in Buinaksk killing 4 police, then proceeded to shoot dead 7 female employees at a nearby sauna. Several police officers killed in further clashes with militants, explosions in Dagestan over month; investigative journalist found shot dead in outskirts of capital Makhachkala 11 Aug. Russia reported security services killed al-Qaeda agent in Dagestan 30 Aug.

- “Moscow’s policies in Ingushetia receive a politically damaging setback”, EDM, 19 Aug. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°192, *Russia’s Dagestan: Conflict Causes*, 3 June 2008.

↙ **Georgia** Opposition parties met with interior minister 12 Aug followed by release of 10 activists arrested for role in April protests; 38 still detained. Russia 5 Aug accused Georgia of rearming with U.S. assistance, amid growing tensions ahead of 7 Aug one year anniversary of 2008 war. Ahead of 12 Aug visit to Abkhazia, Russian PM Putin announced plans to spend \$489m to reinforce Abkhazia borders and strengthen Russian military operations there. Abkhazia 27 Aug announced transfer of control of its railway to Russia, prompting protest from Tbilisi. Russian President Medvedev 26 Aug said Moscow’s recognition of breakaway republics “irreversible”. U.S. 13 Aug announced plans to resume training Georgian troops to assist with counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan. Kveshi village 2 Aug reported Russian soldiers trying to relocate de facto border between South Ossetia (SO) and Georgia to bring village into SO; shift subsequently rolled back by EU monitors. Tbilisi accused Abkhazia of shooting into its territory 28 Aug, wounding 2 police. Georgia 18 Aug completed withdrawal from post-Soviet Commonwealth of Independent States. President Saakashvili 27 Aug sacked defence minister Sikharulidze; appointment of controversial replacement Bacho Akhalaya sparked widespread criticism.

- “One year after ‘independence’, Abkhazia and South Ossetia in legal gray zone”, RFE/RL, 26 Aug. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°53, *Georgia-Russia: Still Insecure and Dangerous*, 22 June 2009.

↙ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) 7 Aug said would support member Armenia in event of an Azerbaijan attack over Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijani presidential aide 15 Aug said Azerbaijan would prefer U.S., EU peacekeepers in case of peace agreement with Armenia, hinting opposition to Russian peacekeepers. Azerbaijan’s hardline Karabakh Liberation Organization 12 Aug called for rejection of Madrid Principles

for resolution of conflict, said agreeing to them is “treason against national interests”.

- “CSTO says group ‘committed’ to Armenia defense”, RFE/RL, 8 Aug. 2009

EASTERN EUROPE

↙ **Belarus** During Minsk visit U.S. Asst Sec State for Europe Phillip Gordon 15 Aug said U.S. wants to improve bilateral relations. President Lukashenka and Russian President Medvedev met for talks in Sochi 27 Aug.

- “Does Belarus really want to disengage from Russia’s embrace?”, *Baltic Review*, 24 Aug. 2009.

↙ **Moldova** 4 parties – Liberal Democratic Party, Liberal Party, Our Moldova Alliance, Democratic Party – holding 53 out of 101 parliament seats, 8 Aug announced formation of coalition Alliance for European Integration, intent to hold talks with Communist party to secure necessary 61 votes to elect president. Communist Party 22 Aug confirmed will not join coalition, 25 Aug turned down invitation to talk with coalition parties as one grouping, preferring separate talks. At first sitting of parliament 28 Aug, coalition secured election of Parliament speaker, nominated former Communist and Democratic Party leader Marian Lupu for president; Communist party walked out of session.

- “Moldova elects pro-Western house speaker amid turmoil”, VOA, 29 Aug. 2009.

↙ **Ukraine** Russian President Medvedev 11 Aug criticized President Yushchenko’s “anti-Russian” policies, prompting criticism from Yushchenko. PM Tymoshenko 14 Aug said wants to deepen ties with Moscow; Medvedev same day said relations will not improve under current Ukrainian leadership. Moscow 24 Aug claimed Ukrainian troops and volunteers fought for Georgia during its Aug 2008 conflict with Russia, 27 Aug accused Ukraine of trying to seize property belonging to Black Sea Fleet.

- “Dear Viktor, you’re dead, love Dmitry”, *Economist*, 20 Aug. 2009.

WESTERN EUROPE/MEDITERRANEAN

↙ **Basque Country (Spain)** French police conducted series of raids starting 19 Aug, resulting in arrest of 3 suspected ETA members and discovery of several weapons caches. Suspected ETA member wanted for role in 1980s police murders arrested 6 Aug at Madrid airport after being deported from Mexico. Authorities banned planned mid-month protest marches by groups linked to ETA.

- “Basque terror group weaker but still a threat”, *Time*, 27 Aug. 2009.

↙ **Cyprus** At 40th and last meeting of first round of peace talks between Greek Cypriot leader Christofias and Turkish Cypriot leader Talat 6 Aug, UN envoy Downer said sides have made “significant progress” in negotiations, having produced a new text that includes both areas of disagreement and agreement on issues under “Governance and Power-sharing”, “EU” and “Economic Issues” chapters. Amid reports of planned visit by UNSG Ban in Oct, 2nd round of talks to start 3 Sept will focus on disagreements; shape of the executive and property issues to be first on agenda. Greek Cypriot leader Christofias 25 Aug said Greek Cypriot administration will oppose Turkey’s entry into EU unless Ankara changes stance on Cyprus issue.

- [“Cyprus leaders make good progress in unity talks, UN envoy reports”](#), UN News Centre, 6 Aug. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°194, [Reunifying Cyprus: The Best Chance Yet](#), 23 June 2008.

➡ **Turkey** AKP gov't worked to build consensus behind resolving Kurdish conflict through greater rights for Kurds, including meeting between PM Erdoğan, pro-Kurdish DTP party leader 5 Aug. Erdoğan made major 11 Aug speech reaching out to Kurds; talked-of measures include wider use of Kurdish language. Senior ruling AKP member 12 Aug suggested pardon for PKK militants, exile of group leaders. Jailed PKK leader Ocalan's "roadmap" to end conflict handed over to prison administration 20 Aug according to lawyers, pending delivery to relevant authorities and media. Opposition CHP, MHP refused to meet gov't to discuss initiative. 1 policeman died 15 Aug after clashes with demonstrators, Adana, on 25th anniversary of PKK uprising. 1 PKK member, 1 soldier killed in 8 Aug attack, Hatay province; 4 soldiers killed in 30 Aug clash with PKK, Hakkari province. 52 more suspects indicted 5 Aug for coup plot against ruling AKP in ongoing "Ergenekon" case. Turkey, Armenia 31 Aug announced breakthrough on protocols to normalise relations (see Armenia/Turkey). During 6 Aug visit by Russian PM Putin, Russia, Turkey signed agreement to allow South Stream underwater gas pipeline to run from Russia to Bulgaria supplying gas to EU through Turkish Black Sea waters.

- [“Peace time?”](#), *Economist*, 27 Aug. 2009.



Latin America / Caribbean

➡ **Bolivia** President Morales 3 Aug passed decree law allowing indigenous communities to vote for autonomy in 6 Dec elections; opposition parties criticised as unconstitutional. Morales accused rightwing opposition of violence after 2 letter bombs exploded in La Paz 12 Aug. Opinion polls indicate Morales likely to win Dec presidential elections; opposition heavily fractured, yet to unite under single candidate.

- [“La división de Bolivia se profundiza”](#), *El País*, 8 Aug. 2009.

➡ **Colombia** Gov't 18 Aug signed preliminary agreement with U.S. over controversial military base deal allowing U.S. to use at least 7 bases for 10 years to fight narco-trafficking; deal heavily criticised by gov'ts across Latin America, including Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, for increasing regional tension and failure to consult in advance. 15 soldiers sentenced to 30 years in prison 1 Aug for “false positives” extrajudicial killings, where civilians killed to inflate statistics on deaths of left-wing rebels and right-wing paramilitaries. Senate 20 Aug approved referendum on whether to allow Uribe to run for 2nd re-election May 2010; House of Representatives 27 Aug postponed vote on bill to 1 Sept, if approved has to pass Constitutional Court. Army killed at least 17 FARC rebels in 4 Aug airstrike on Meta department FARC camp. 12 Awa indigenous people killed 27 Aug in Nariño department, gov't said unclear if by FARC or right-wing paramilitaries, rejected reports army responsible.

- [“Colombia cierra el pacto militar con EE UU, pese a las reticencias regionales”](#), *El País*, 16 Aug. 2009.

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

➡ **Ecuador** President Correa 3 Aug said gov't to take over “many” private radio, TV-stations over broadcasting irregularities; 30 Aug said will seek “closure” of TV station Teleamazonas. Gov't 13 Aug said will create local “revolutionary defense committees”; opposition criticised as way of consolidating own power. FARC top commander “Alfonso Cano” 13 Aug rejected July reports that rebels helped finance Correa's 2006 presidential campaign. Signs of improvement in relations with Colombia after Colombia President Uribe 14 Aug apologised for March 2008 airstrike on Ecuadorean soil.

- [“Ecuador wants citizen committees to defend gov't”](#), AP, 13 Aug. 2009.

➡ **Haiti** Protestors clashed with UN peacekeepers in eastern town Lascahobas 6 Aug; UN denied local media reports that 2 protesters killed. Parliament 4 Aug voted to more than double minimum wage; preceded by days of violent Port-au-Prince demonstrations demanding tripling of minimum wage.

- [“Haiti lawmakers OK minimum wage hike after clashes”](#), AP, 4 Aug. 2009.

- For latest report, see Crisis Group Latin America/Caribbean Briefing N°20, [Haiti: Saving the Environment, Preventing Instability and Conflict](#), 28 April 2009.

➡ **Honduras** Political crisis remains as de facto gov't hardened stance refusing return of President Zelaya, ousted in June civil-military coup. Supreme Court 22 Aug ruled against reinstatement of Zelaya, said he faces criminal charges if he returns to country. OAS delegation 24 Aug failed to broker solution; de facto President Micheletti said will stay in power until 29 Nov elections. Sporadically violent pro- and anti-Zelaya demonstrations continued throughout month; rights groups raised concerns over increasingly harsh de facto gov't crackdown on pro-Zelaya protests, media outlets. 1 protestor died 1 Aug after being shot during late July demonstration, unclear by whom. 1 electoral official killed 31 Aug by unidentified gunmen.

- [“Amnesty: Honduran coup gov't persecuting opponents”](#), AP, 19 Aug. 2009.

➡ **Peru** 5 killed, including 3 police, in 2 Aug suspected Shining Path rebel attack in Ayacucho department; 3 rebels, 2 soldiers killed in 26 Aug VRAE region clash.

- [“¿El eterno retorno de Sendero Luminoso?”](#), BBC, 5 Aug. 2009.

➡ **Venezuela** Thousands protested education law passed by National Assembly 13 Aug that increases gov't control over schools, curriculums. Gov't 1 Aug revoked licenses of 34 private radio stations, further 200 under investigation. National Assembly 31 July passed law redrawing congressional districts, opposition said will favour ruling PSUV party. Tensions with Colombia still high as Chávez criticised U.S.-Colombian defence agreement throughout month (see Colombia), but gov't 8 Aug reinstated ambassador to Bogotá.

- [“Hugo Chávez seeks to catch them young”](#), *Economist*, 20 Aug. 2009.

- For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Report N°27, [Venezuela: Political Reform or Regime Demise?](#), 23 July 2008.



Middle East/ North Africa

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

- ➡ **Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories** Fatah movement 4-11 Aug held first congress since 1989; Mahmoud Abbas endorsed as leader, several prominent leaders from younger generation elected to central committee including Barghouthi, Dahlan. Some 2,000 delegates travelled to Bethlehem for congress; around 300 blocked by Hamas from leaving Gaza. Heavy clashes in Rafah, southern Gaza, between Hamas forces and members of hardline Islamist group Jund Ansar Allah 14-15 Aug after group declared "Islamic emirate"; at least 22 killed including group leader, 6 Hamas police, civilians. Egypt opened Rafah border crossing to Gazans 3-8 Aug. Israeli aircraft bombed Rafah tunnels 10, 30 Aug following mortar fire into Israel at northern Gaza crossing 9, 29 Aug. Israeli soldiers 31 Aug shot dead Palestinian youth, one of group reportedly throwing firebombs at guard post near Beit El settlement. Israeli authorities 2 Aug evicted over 50 Palestinians from East Jerusalem houses, drawing U.S., EU, UN criticism. Israeli govt 18 Aug said would not issue new West Bank settlement housing construction tenders until 2010. Palestinian Authority PM Fayyad 25 Aug revealed plan for unilateral creation of "de facto state" infrastructure within 2 years. Attorney-General 30 Aug filed indictment against former PM Olmert on 3 counts of corruption.
- Comment by Hussein Agha and Robert Malley (Crisis Group), ["The Two-state Solution Doesn't Solve Anything"](#), *New York Times*, 11 Aug. 2009.
 - ["Fresh faces, old hands"](#), *Economist*, 13 Aug. 2009.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°89, [Israel's Religious Right and the Question of Settlements](#), 20 July 2009.
- ➡ **Lebanon** Ongoing negotiations on formation of govt hampered by dispute over ministerial portfolio allocations and 3 Aug decision of key March 14 leader Walid Jumblatt to leave governing alliance and affiliate with president. Tensions with Israel rose over month; Israel deputy FM 10 Aug called for security cabinet to approve immediate military attack against Lebanon "to put an end to Hizbollah's threats"; Hizbollah said will launch rockets on Tel Aviv if attacked. Security officials recaptured Fatah al-Islam member 19 Aug after escape from high-security prison day before. Booby-trap wounded 3 in Tripoli's Allawite neighbourhood of Jabal Mohsen 13 Aug. UNIFIL mandate renewed for one year 27 July.
- ["Aoun's remarks take center stage as political rivals lash out at demands"](#), *Daily Star*, 19 Aug. 2009.
- ➡ **Syria** Iraq and Syria 25 Aug recalled ambassadors after Baghdad demanded handover of 2 senior Baathists implicated in 19 Aug Baghdad truck bombing (see Iraq); Iraq PM Maliki previously visited Damascus 18 Aug for security talks. Turkish FM in Baghdad visit 31 Aug in attempt to defuse tensions. Syria reportedly mediated in release of French researcher and embassy employee held in Iran on charges of espionage. 2nd U.S. military delegation in Damascus 12 Aug discussed Syrian efforts to curb movement of foreign fighters into Iraq. EU foreign policy chief Solana arrived in Damascus 30 Aug as part of Mideast tour. Israel deputy FM 12 Aug said continued

talks will not be through Turkish mediation, wants direct talks with Syria; Damascus insisted mediator necessary.

- ["Iraq recalls envoy to Syria over truck bombings"](#), AFP, 25 Aug. 2009.

IRAN/IRAQ/GULF

- ➡ **Iran** Political tensions over Ahmadinejad re-election as president persisted into third month. Over 100 people, including key reformist leaders and UK and French Embassy staff, charged with orchestrating post-election unrest in collaboration with foreign powers in 4 court hearings. Defeated reformist candidate Karrubi criticised by hardliners after publishing allegations of rape, abuse of detained protesters 9, 13 Aug. Semiofficial news service 31 Aug reported son of prominent conservative politician died from abuse in prison following post-election unrest. Fellow reformist candidate Musavi 15 Aug announced new grassroots opposition network "Green Path of Hope". Several small-scale Tehran protests, including at Ahmadinejad confirmation by Supreme Leader 3 Aug, and swearing-in in parliament 5 Aug; mass trial 8 Aug; closure of Karrubi-owned newspaper 17 Aug. Conservative rivals of President Ahmadinejad 29 Aug appointed panel to oversee investigation into post-election unrest. Ahmadinejad announced new cabinet nominees 19 Aug; parliament objections expected over inexperienced nominees, inclusion of women. Observers noted appointment of hardliners in key posts, including new defence minister Ahmad Vahidi, former Revolutionary Guards commander wanted by Interpol for bombing of Argentine Jewish cultural centre. IAEA 21 Aug said inspectors permitted to visit Arak nuclear reactor for first time in a year; IAEA 28 Aug reported Iran had increased ability to produce fuel over summer but slowed its output. Chief nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili 1 Sept said Iran has prepared updated nuclear proposal, ready to resume negotiations. 3 U.S. nationals detained by authorities 1 Aug after crossing into Iran on walking trip from northern Iraq.
- ["Iran says cooperating with IAEA, West skeptical"](#), Reuters, 24 Aug. 2009.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Briefing N°28, [U.S.-Iranian Engagement: The View from Tehran](#), 2 June 2009.
- ➡ **Iraq** In deadliest attack for months, govt ministries in Baghdad hit by 6 coordinated bombs 19 Aug, killing over 100. 11 security officials responsible for district arrested 20 Aug; authorities reported arrest of Baathist suspects in bombing 21 Aug; al-Qaeda group 25 Aug claimed responsibility for attack. More bombings throughout country killed dozens, especially in Baghdad, Mosul. Several attacks against minority areas in north: over 40 killed in Turkmen area near Mosul 7 Aug; bombing in Khazna, near Mosul, killed up to 34 members of Shabak group 10 Aug; truck bomb killed 10 in Hamad village near Mosul 29 Aug; 22 killed 13 Aug, 4 killed 29 Aug by bombs in Yazidi town Sinjar. Kurdish, Arab political leaders traded accusations of responsibility for attacks. Syria and Iraq 25 Aug recalled ambassadors after Baghdad demanded handover of 2 Baathists implicated in 19 Aug attack. U.S. commander Odierno 18 Aug announced proposal for joint U.S.-Kurdish-Iraqi army patrols along sensitive "trigger line". PM Maliki and Kurdistan region leader Barzani met 2 Aug, agreed further talks on oil, land issues. Sadrist splinter group of Shiite insurgents Asaib Ahl al-Haqq renounced violence against Iraqi targets after govt talks 3 Aug. Shiite groups 24 Aug formed alliance for

Jan elections including Islamic Supreme Council and Sadrists, but excluding Maliki's Daawa party. Supreme Council leader Abd-al-Aziz al-Hakim died in Tehran 26 Aug. In rare show of cross-sectarian agreement, Sunni, Shiite clergy announced start of Ramadan on same date, 22 Aug.

- "Iraq forces admit lapses after blasts kill 95", Reuters, 19 Aug. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°88, *Iraq and the Kurds: Trouble Along the Trigger Line*, 8 July 2009.

➡ **Saudi Arabia** Authorities 18 Aug revealed arrest of 44 al-Qaeda-linked militants planning armed attacks in July-Aug. Suicide bomber 27 Aug lightly wounded senior prince largely credited for anti-terrorism campaign; attack claimed by al-Qaeda. 17 minority Ismailis, detained in 2000 after unrest in Najran province, received royal pardon 24 Aug.

- "Saudis announce arrest of 44 militant suspects", *National*, 19 Aug. 2009.

➡ **Yemen** Ongoing conflict between government and Zaidi Shiite Houthi rebels in north escalated as govt 11 Aug launched offensive against rebels in Saada and Amran provinces, backed by airstrikes, artillery fire. Dozens reportedly killed on both sides, including Houthi leaders, civilians; govt, rebel sources gave conflicting reports of death toll. Rebels 30 Aug claimed capture of key govt outpost in Malahidh area, Saada. UNHCR 21 Aug said 35,000 displaced since start of offensive; aid agencies put total displaced by conflict in north at over 100,000. Govt 13 Aug proposed 6 conditions for ceasefire, including rebel withdrawals, release of foreigners kidnapped in June; proposal reiterated by President Saleh 21 Aug, rejected by Houthis. In south, bomb exploded near govt building in Zinjibar, Abyan province 8 Aug. 12 Aug assassination attempt on governor of Lahj blamed on separatist Southern Movement. Authorities 19 Aug arrested alleged jihadist group members

accused of \$500,000 bank robbery in Aden 17 Aug.

- "Fighting in Yemen escalates", *Los Angeles Times*, 24 Aug. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°86, *Yemen: Defusing the Saada Time Bomb*, 27 May 2009.

NORTH AFRICA

➡ **Algeria** Army, al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) traded blame for 4 civilians killed 4 Aug in Tizi Ouzou province. 3 militants killed 6 Aug by army in Bejaia, north east. Press 20 Aug reported arrest of 3 AQIM members for alleged plot to attack security forces HQ during Ramadan.

- "Three Islamist militants killed in Algeria", AFP, 8 Aug. 2009.

➡ **Egypt** Trial began 23 Aug of 22 members of cell allegedly plotting attacks for Lebanese Hizbollah, detained in May; 4 further suspects tried in absentia. President Mubarak discussed Mideast peace with U.S. President Obama in 18 Aug Washington visit.

- "Egypt 'Hezbollah cell' on trial", BBC, 23 Aug. 2009.

➡ **Mauritania** Former junta leader Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz sworn in as president 5 Aug following July election victory. 8 Aug suicide bombing outside French embassy injured 3; al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) claimed responsibility 18 Aug. 3 suspects in June killing of U.S. aid worker claimed by AQIM on trial 4 Aug.

- "Mauritania suicide bomber local 'trained by Salafists'", AFP, 12 Aug. 2009.

➡ **Western Sahara** Morocco, Polisario Front agreed on further negotiations in 10-11 Aug informal talks with UN envoy Ross in Austria, also attended by Algeria, Mauritania.

- "Morocco, Polisario plan to continue W. Sahara talks", Reuters, 11 Aug. 2009.

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