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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.

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January 2010 Trends



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February 2010 Watchlist



Conflict Risk Alerts

Nigeria



Conflict Resolution Opportunities

Guinea

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CENTRAL AFRICA

- ➡ **Burundi** 16 soldiers arrested for allegedly plotting coup, after highly-publicised raid 29-30 Jan; opposition Frodebu party accused govt of seeking to foment chaos as pretext for repressing opposition. Electoral commission postponed start of 2-week voter registration to 21 Jan. Opposition members continued to allege serious irregularities including selective dissemination of ID cards, required to register, to ruling party members. Local representative of opposition UDP, Sylvere Niyonzima, killed in Mpanda commune 10 Jan by unknown gunmen. Citing routine govt harassment, UDP blamed ruling CNDD-FDD for the killing, denied by CNDD-FDD. Rise in violent altercations between youth wings of CNDD-FDD and other opposition parties, mainly FNL. Govt recognised dissident wing of the FNL, "FNL iragi rya Remi Gahutu", as new political party.
- "Burundi arrests 16 soldiers 'plotting destabilisation'", AFP, 31 Jan. 2010.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°63, *To Integrate the FNL Successfully*, 30 July 2009.

- ➡ **Central African Republic** Massi family and CPJP rebels 16 Jan alleged rebel leader Charles Massi, arrested 19 Dec, tortured and killed in custody; govt denied but Massi's whereabouts unknown. Electoral preparations again faltered as opposition parties and rebel groups 15 Jan suspended participation in electoral commission and demanded resignation of CEI head Joseph Binguimalé, citing alleged bias towards President Bozizé and plans for "massive fraud". UFDV opposition coalition suspended membership of 5 CEI representatives who refused to quit. Operations by Ugandan forces against LRA rebels in south east continued, with troops 2 Jan claiming to have killed LRA second-in-command Bok Abudema.
- "Central African opposition quits electoral process", AFP, 15 Jan. 2010.

Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°69, *Central African Republic: Keeping the Dialogue Alive*, 12 January 2010. If the government of the Central African Republic (CAR) fails to re-engage with the opposition on upcoming elections and negotiate with remaining rebels, its fragile peace process will be at serious risk.



- ➡ **Chad** Electoral commission 8 Jan announced legislative and local elections would be held 28 Nov and 12 Dec respectively, with 2-week voter registration starting 21 March and calling for donor support. Authorities 8 Jan claimed to have captured MPRD rebels leader and 20 fighters in south; group denied but leader Djibrine Dasset paraded before media 14 Jan. Govt 19 Jan announced it would not support renewal of MINURCAT mandate at 15 March expiry over incomplete deployment and alleged ineffectiveness; aid groups concerned over impact on security in east. Following Oct agreement to normalise relations, Chad and Sudan 15 Jan established timetable for joint border patrols to commence 15 Feb. But relations remain tense, with President Déby early month reiterating accusations against Sudan over incursions by Chadian rebels from Darfur.
- "U.N. to hold talks on force in Chad", Reuters, 25 Jan. 2010.

- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°65, *Chad: Escaping from the Oil Trap*, 26 Aug. 2009

- ➡ **Democratic Republic of Congo** Amani Leo military operation launched by FARDC (national army) 1 Jan following end of controversial Kimia II operation 31 Dec, with aim to combat FDLR rebels, protect civilians and hold territory in defensive operations. MONUC announced support for Amani Leo for 3 months with possible renewal. UN reported death of 157 insurgents, 1 soldier in further clashes around Dongo, Equateur province, over 31 Dec-1 Jan; information minister Lambert Mende 3 Jan announced army had secured area and high death toll resulted from insurgents' resistance to disarm. Parliament 15 Jan started 30-day extraordinary session to clear legislative backlog. Members of former rebel CNDP reportedly arrived in Kinshasa 13 Jan to claim 5 ministerial posts provided for in March peace deal with govt, also suggesting creation of reconciliation ministry. President Kabila early month fired 3,000 civil servants: 100 for corruption and several hundred others for working beyond pensionable age. Defense case of Thomas Lubanga, accused of enlisting child soldiers during 1998-2003 war, opened in The Hague 7 Jan.
- "Nouvelle offensive de l'armée contre les rebelles hutu dans l'est du Congo", *Monde*, 9 Jan. 2010.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°151, *A Comprehensive Strategy to Disarm the FDLR*, 9 July 2009.

- ➡ **Rwanda** National investigation commission into assassination of President Juvénal Habyarimana that sparked 1994 genocide issued report early Jan following 2 years of research: "Mutsinzi report" accused Hutu extremists of the killing, contradicting long-held allegations of RPF (now RDF) responsibility, also detailing RPF crimes and French role. Kigali confirmed French President Sarkozy would pay first presidential visit to Kigali since 1994 in Feb. Commonwealth announced it would deploy observers to Aug presidential polls.
- "The Mutsinzi Report on the Rwandan genocide", *New Yorker*, 8 Jan. 2010

- ➡ **Uganda** Govt 4 Jan blocked planned demonstration by 4 major opposition parties part of newly formed alliance, Inter-Party Cooperation (IPC), protesting Sept ban of CBS radio station and calling for replacement of election commission; govt cited lack of required notification. IPC promised further "surprise" rallies. 33 IPC women arrested 18 Jan following another attempt to demonstrate. President Museveni endorsed by ruling NRM as party candidate for 2011 presidential polls.
- "Uganda police blocks opposition demo", AFP, 4 Jan. 2010.

HORN OF AFRICA

- ➡ **Eritrea** RSADO and ESF rebel groups 1 Jan alleged had killed 25 govt soldiers in twin attacks on military camps in Kokobay and Kermet areas; no comment from govt. AU Peace and Security Council 28 Jan reiterated condemnation of Eritrea's role in destabilising Somalia, voiced support for UN sanctions.
- "Rebels kill '25 Eritrean soldiers'", Press TV, 3 Jan. 2010.

- ➡ **Eritrea/Ethiopia** Eritrean govt 3 Jan claimed Ethiopian troops launched successive assaults along disputed shared border, claimed to have repelled attacks and killed 10 Ethiopian troops; Addis Ababa denied. Following 28 Jan announcement by AU's PSC (see Eritrea), Asmara accused Ethiopia of obstructing participation in AU, called on AU not to discuss

Eritrea at its 31 Jan summit.

- [“Eritrea says attacked by Ethiopia”](#), AFP, 3 Jan. 2010.

➤ **Ethiopia** Senior separatist OLF leader and 100 others surrendered to authorities in north Kenya base late month; reported that movement crippled by internal splits. OLF spokesperson denied reports of let-up in rebel activity.

- [“Ethiopian Oromo rebellion ‘on last legs’”](#), AFP, 22 Jan. 2010.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°153, [Ethiopia: Ethnic Federalism and Its Discontents](#), 4 Sept. 2009.

➤ **Kenya** Parliamentary panel on the constitution ended 9-day deliberations 28 Jan with agreement on draft constitution terminating PM post and increasing checks and balances on presidential power. Authorities 10 Jan arrested and 22 Jan reportedly deported to Jamaica of radical Muslim cleric Abdullah el-Faisal for his “terrorist history”. Sparked large protests in Nairobi 15 Jan; at least 2 killed. Govt blamed Somalis for orchestrating unrest, briefly arrested some 300 including 12 Somali MPs. 7 subsequently charged. Prompted heightened tensions with Somali govt, with latter condemning MP arrests and Nairobi accusing Somali MPs of using Kenya as safe haven. Reports several witnesses to Waki Commission on 2008 election violence received death threats, and in one case beatings, over recent weeks.

- [“Kenya ‘expels Jamaican hate-cleric Faisal again’”](#), BBC, 22 Jan. 2009.

➤ **Somalia** Fighting between Al-Shabaab, rival Hizbul Islam and pro-govt militia Ahlu Sunna Waljamaca surged in central Somalia early month, with at least 138 killed and 63,000 newly displaced in 2 weeks of clashes for strategic control over Dusamareb, Baladwayne, and Dhobley. At least 20 killed, including civilians, in heavy militants attacks on govt and AMISOM bases in Mogadishu 29-31 Jan. Al-Shabaab early month claimed it was exchanging fighters with Yemeni rebels, 29 Jan announced it had united with smaller Kamboni rebel group and joined international al-Qaeda jihad. Govt 2 Jan announced discovery of 2 Yemen arms shipments destined for militia. UN’s WFP 5 Jan withdrew staff and suspended aid in South indefinitely due to insecurity and al-Shabaab demands for payment; cuts to affect some 1m people. Insecurity continued in semi-autonomous Puntland; 2 MPs shot dead over month. Large UK cargo ship seized 2 Jan in one of several bold piracy attacks. EU 25 Jan agreed to deploy new “EUTRA” mission to train 2,000 Somali troops in Uganda; training to commence spring 2010. Tensions with Nairobi increased following arrest of 12 Somali MPs by Kenyan authorities during unrest that followed arrest of radical cleric Abdullah el-Faisal (see Kenya).

- [“Violence, fear and confusion”](#), *Guardian*, 10 Jan. 2010.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°64, [Somalia: The Trouble with Puntland](#), 12 Aug. 2009.

➤ **Somaliland** Parliament’s upper house closed 11 Jan following scuffles between MPs over committee positions; police 11 Jan reported they had foiled attack on Hargeisa mosque; 4 policemen killed and several wounded in 13 and 24 Jan attacks by unidentified gunmen in Las Anod near Puntland border.

- [“Bomb kills 4 policemen in breakaway Somaliland”](#), Reuters, 25 Jan. 2010.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing, N°67, [Somaliland: A Way out of the Electoral Crisis](#), 7 Dec. 2009.

➤ **Sudan** 10-day candidate nomination period started 12 Jan ahead of 11 April combined polls. For presidential polls: President Bashir 11 Jan resigned position of military commander-in-chief and 12 Jan confirmed candidacy for NCP party; SPLM nominated party deputy Yassir Arman, leaving SPLM leader Salva Kiir open to contest Southern presidency. Former PM Sadiq al-Mahdi (overthrown by Bashir’s coup), opposition Umma National Party, announced candidacy 26 Jan. Senior NCP aide early month said gaps in 29 Dec referendum law raised risks of North-South conflict. Bashir during 19 Jan speech said NCP favoured unity but would support succession if approved. Darfur peace talks resumed in Doha 24 Jan but with no direct negotiations between govt/ rebel parties by end month. Darfur rebel group SLA mid-month said govt had launched series of assaults on rebel positions in and around Jebel Marra region early month; SLA had struck back. Violence surged again in the South: 17 reportedly killed early month when armed civilians resisted official disarmament drive; at least 154 killed in separate inter-tribal clashes in remote Tonj region and Jonglei State. AU Chair Jean Ping 28 Jan warned southern independence vote posed “catastrophic” risks for Sudan’s stability and threatened to spark further independence claims. Ashraf Qazi 18 Jan stepped down from post of UN Special Envoy to Sudan/UNMIS head; replaced by Eritrean diplomat Haile Menkerios 31 Jan.

- [“Sudan’s Bashir says he will be the first to recognize independent South”](#), *Sudan Tribune*, 20 Jan. 2010.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°68, [Sudan: Preventing Implosion](#), 17 Dec. 2009 and Africa Report N°154, [Jonglei’s Tribal Conflicts: Countering Insecurity in South Sudan](#), Africa Report N°154, 23 Dec. 2009.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

➤ **Angola** Gunmen 8 Jan opened fire on Togo football squad in Cabinda exclave, killing 2 Togolese officials, 1 Angolan. 2 factions of 30-year insurgency Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (Flec), despite little reported activity for 2 years, claimed responsibility. Secretary-General of Flec splinter faction later announced attack was a mistake and aimed to target Angolan security guards. Authorities 11 Jan said 2 Flec members arrested for attack. Several civil rights activists also held incommunicado since attack.

- [“Angola arrests a third rights activist in Cabinda”](#), Reuters, 17 Jan. 2010.

➤ **Madagascar** AU Commission chair Jean Ping visited country 21-22 Jan to present compromise solution to Rajoelina, opposition leaders: plan includes return to Maputo framework and elections Oct 2010 at latest. Late month reports de facto leader Rajoelina had postponed 20 March elections; Rajoelina to meet with several political parties to discuss setting new date before Nov. Followed Rajoelina’s 22 Jan rejection of calls to reinstate power-sharing govt, calling power-sharing “the source” of current political crisis. Rajoelina govt held national workshop 6-7 Jan in preparation for elections. Opposition politician Fetison Andrianirina said warrant for his arrest in connection to 2009 foiled bomb attacks politically motivated. Security forces used tear gas to break up 6 Jan opposition protest calling Rajoelina’s Dec installation of new PM illegal.

- [“AU chief worried about Madagascar deadlock”](#), AFP, 29 Jan. 2010

- **Zimbabwe** ZANU-PF failed to attend power-sharing negotiations scheduled to resume 16 Jan; talks called off 20 Jan. South African mediators 5 Jan said parties had reached consensus on some outstanding issues. ZANU-PF 27 Jan said party to make no further concessions until sanctions lifted; PM Tsvangirai 29 Jan urged foreign govts to send “very positive signal” by easing sanctions. South African President Zuma urged parties to put most contentious issues aside to allow country to proceed with 2011 election. SADC leaders 7 Jan expressed frustration with slow pace of reforms. Trial of MDC-T Treasurer and Deputy Agriculture Minister-designate Roy Bennett resumed 12 Jan; state’s key witness backtracked on statement implicating Bennett in alleged terror plot, allegedly made under torture; judge 25 Jan ruled witness’s statements inadmissible. Public consultations on new constitution to resume after parties 28 Jan reportedly reached compromise on administration of outreach teams. Commercial Farmers’ Union 22 Jan criticised govt for failing to halt surge in farm invasions; High Court 27 Jan rejected 2008 SADC court ruling against land seizures. Finance Minister Biti 19 Jan said foreign debt burden hampering efforts to mend economy.
- Comment by Donald Steinberg (Crisis Group), [“The International Role in Promoting Democratic Governance and Economic Recovery in Zimbabwe”](#), testimony to International Development Committee, UK parliament, 27 Jan. 2010.
 - [“Main witness in Zimbabwe treason trial ‘tortured’”](#), AFP, 25 Jan. 2010.

WEST AFRICA

- **Cameroon** Leader of opposition NODYNA party Mboua Massock and colleague arrested 27 Jan during protest march to highlight 12 electoral demands ahead of 2011 presidential polls, including respect for presidential term limits. Govt anti-corruption campaign ‘Operation Epervier’ resumed, as police 6 and 8 Jan arrested several senior current and former govt officials, including ruling CPDM former ministers Haman Adama Halimatou and Roger Ntongo Onguene, on embezzlement charges.
- [“Opposition Leader Mboua Massock arrested”](#), Afrique en ligne, 28 Jan. 2010.
- **Côte d’Ivoire** Tensions over preparations for repeatedly delayed presidential polls continued to rise. Electoral commission (CEI) review of some 1m disputed names on voters list ended 9 Jan with 512,755 voters confirmed. But controversy continued as President Gbagbo on state TV 7 Jan accused CEI of fraud and opposition bias. PM Soro, overseeing electoral process, in effort to diffuse crisis called for annulment of 429,000 disputed names. CEI Chair Robert Beugre 14 Jan called for international investigation into the row. Wider tensions simmered: opposition demonstrations held in Abidjan 13 Jan to protest limited opposition coverage in state media; forcefully dispersed by police. Burkinabe and Ivorian heads of state requested UNSC approve deployment of 500 Burkinabe troops within UNOCI to help secure future elections. UNSC 28 Jan again urged elections, renewed UN mandate for 4 months only, and deferred final decision on Burkinabe deployment.
- [“New Ivory Coast row sparks vote delay fears”](#), Reuters, 11 Jan. 2010.
 - Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°62, [Côte d’Ivoire: What’s Needed to End the Crisis](#), 2 July 2009.

- **Guinea** Talks between interim junta leader Konaté, junta leader Dadis Camara and regional mediator Burkina Faso President Compaoré held in Ouagadougou mid-month, before breakthrough “Ouagadougou Agreement” deal announced 15 Jan, creating unity govt led by PM from civilian opposition coalition Forces Vives, and elections within 6 months in which no junta members eligible to stand. Dadis earlier arrived in Ouagadougou still visibly injured, with several tense days in Conakry including pro-Dadis demonstrations. He agreed to support transition and remain in Burkina Faso. AU 16 Jan hailed deal, though AU Peace and Security Council stressed Guinea’s suspension from body would remain until constitutional order fully restored. Opposition figure Jean-Marie Doré appointed PM 18 Jan (sworn in 26 Jan) and Rabiadou Serah Diallo (union leader) and Mamadouba Toto Camara (junta VP) appointed Vice-PMs. Talks between new interim govt, UN, ECOWAS started 21 Jan in Conakry to discuss, inter alia, ECOWAS military and civilian deployment. Prior to deal, U.S. 1 Jan suspended Guinea from trade preferences and U.S./French delegates 4 Jan held talks with Konaté.
- [“Guinea junta picks opponent as premier on path to civilian control”](#), *New York Times*, 19 Jan. 2010.
 - For background, see Africa Briefing N°66, [Guinea: Military Rule Must End](#), 16 Oct. 2009.

- **Liberia** Debate over politically sensitive recommendations of Truth Commission continued, with divides between regional representatives calling for full implementation and those stressing risks for stability. President Johnson-Sirleaf 25 Jan confirmed intention to seek second term in 2011. Information minister Lawrence Bropleh, accused of misappropriating \$260,000 govt funds, resigned 15 Jan, denying guilt.
- [“Liberia’s President Sirleaf Announces she will seek a second term in 2011”](#), VOA, 26 Jan. 2010.
- **Mali** Main ADC Tuareg rebel group met early month in Algiers and reiterated commitment to 2006 Algiers Accords, pledged to contribute to politics and northern security. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) 11 Jan threatened to execute French hostage unless Mali release 4 AQIM prisoners within 20 days; ultimatum extended 30 Jan to unspecified date. Low-level insecurity continued, with 1 killed and several injured in 13 Jan attack by unidentified gunmen near Gao. President Touré 1 Jan announced planned referendum for 2010 to revise national “institutional architecture” and strengthen democracy.
- [“Qaeda threatens to execute French hostage in Mali”](#), AFP, 11 Jan. 2010.

- **Niger** Tentative progress towards negotiated solution to govt and opposition standoff. Talks resumed 11 Jan under auspices of ECOWAS mediator Abdulsalami Abubakar, who 15 Jan issued plan for creation of power-sharing govt with President Tandja retaining presidency and opposition appointing PM. Opposition 25 Jan agreed to ECOWAS proposal, but calling additionally for mandate to be limited to 9 months and holding of fresh presidential, legislative and local polls. Govt yet to issue response. Parties to reconvene 3 Feb; Abubakar expressed hopes for deal by 8 Feb. President Tandja 13 Jan denounced as interference foreign diplomatic pressure to restore constitutional order.
- [“Regional mediator proposes power-sharing deal for Niger”](#), VOA, 20 Jan. 2010.

- **Nigeria** Muslim-Christian tensions again erupted in bloody clashes 17-20 Jan in Jos city, Plateau State, before military restored order. Police announced at least 320 killed, but aid workers and local leaders place death toll at over 550; 18,000 displaced, some 300 arrested. Also risks for sharp deterioration in Niger Delta, as militant group MEND 30 Jan announced end of 3-month ceasefire and promised “all out onslaught” on oil industry. Followed continuing delays in reintegration of ex-militants, rejection of reintegration arrangements by ex-militant coalition 26 Jan and fresh attacks on oil sites (MEND denied responsibility). Political scene still dominated by President Yar’Adua’s 2 month hospitalisation in Saudi Arabia, amid rising condemnation of governance deficit. Opposition and rights groups filed legal actions challenging Yar’Adua’s fitness to remain in office. Following 22 Jan court order demanding medically-informed decision, cabinet 27 Jan unilaterally declared president fit to govern; over 200 MPs 25 Jan petitioned for his impeachment. Senate 27 Jan called for procedures triggering appointment of VP, but federal court 29 Jan announced president not bound to hand over power. Amid confusion, defence chiefs warned officers against military coup. Nigeria added to U.S. terrorist watch list 5 Jan.
- “Nigeria orders army to ensure peace in troubled city”, Bloomberg, 21 Jan. 2010.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°60, *Nigeria: Seizing the Moment in the Niger Delta*, 30 April 2009.



Asia/Pacific

CENTRAL ASIA

- **Kazakhstan** Govt 14 Jan assumed chairmanship of OSCE, stressing security over human rights dimension of organization, announcing new security architecture in Europe, resolution of post-Soviet frozen conflicts, fight against terrorism, reconstruction of Afghanistan as priorities of term. Govt 27 Jan finalised agreement with NATO on transit of supplies to ISAF forces in Afghanistan.
- “Kazakhstan promotes security through the OSCE”, EDM, 12 Jan. 2010.
 - For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°97, *Islamists in Prison*, 15 Dec. 2009.
- **Kyrgyzstan** Parliamentary committee 26 Jan approved constitutional amendments proposed by President Bakiev, suggested authorizing still-to-be-created State Council to appoint interim presidential successor; opposition denounced measures as promoting consolidation of Bakiev’s hold on state, preparing handover of power to chosen successor. Tensions between govt, opposition after court 11 Jan sentenced former defence minister and opposition member Ismail Isakov to 8 years in prison on corruption charges. Triggered hunger strikes by nearly 40 opposition activists and small-scale rallies in capital and Isakov’s native Alai region 11-14 Jan for his release and against alleged govt rights abuses.
- “Kyrgyzstan relegated to the back of the freedom class”, RFE/RL, 12 Jan. 2010.
 - For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°176, *Women and Radicalisation in Kyrgyzstan*, 3 Sept. 2009.

- **Tajikistan** Tajik court 6 Jan sentenced Uzbek man to 20 years in prison for spying on country’s hydropower projects, in further sign of straining Tajik-Uzbek relations over construction of state Roghun hydropower plant, opposed by Uzbekistan over concerns of water shortages. Govt denied reports of public discontent over govt pressure to buy shares in Roghun power plant. 10 Hizb-ut-Tahrir members sentenced to 8-15 years in prison in Khujand 27 Jan. In perceived effort to silence media ahead of 28 Feb parliamentary elections, defamation lawsuits filed late Jan against 4 newspapers; libel verdict against another newspaper upheld.

- “Forced Rogun payments sowing discontent among impoverished Tajiks”, EurasiaNet, 5 Jan. 2010.

- **Turkmenistan** Moving to further diversify natural gas exports, President Berdymukhamedov and visiting Iranian President Ahmadinejad 6 Jan inaugurated second pipeline between countries with capacity to export 20 billion cubic meters annually, potentially doubling exports. Govt 23 Jan lifted Aug 2009 travel ban for study-abroad students funded under Turkmen American Scholarship Program.

- “Turkmen gas exports to Iran a boon for both countries”, RFE/RL, 6 Jan. 2010.

- **Uzbekistan** Closed trials began of nearly 70 defendants 18 Jan in connection with July-Aug murders of Tashkent chief imam and anti-terrorism law enforcement officer. Series of incidents along disputed Uzbek-Kyrgyz border: 2 Kyrgyz border guards temporarily detained 2 Jan; 1 injured and detained after shootout between Kyrgyz-Uzbek guards 17 Jan. Public outcry, criticism from rights groups after govt 21 Jan charged popular journalist and commentator Khairulla Khamidov with illegally founding a religious organization; 23 Jan accused artist Umida Akhmedova of libel against Uzbek nation.

- “Bad fences make Kyrgyz, Uzbeks nervous neighbours”, IWPR, 21 Jan. 2010.

Crisis Group Asia Report N°183, *Central Asia: Migrants and the Economic Crisis*, 5 January 2010. If Central Asian countries want to survive as viable independent states and avoid political and social instability in the region, they need to make urgent reforms in the labour sector.



NORTH EAST ASIA

- **Kuril Islands/Northern Territories (Russia/Japan)** Russian border guards 29 Jan fired on 2 Japanese fishing boats close to disputed islands, prompting formal protest from Japan.
- “Japan anger over Russia clash”, Al Jazeera, 1 Feb. 2010.

- **North Korea** N Korean National Defence Commission 15 Jan threatened “holy war” in response to S Korean contingency plan for NK emergency or collapse. NK fired artillery into sea near disputed Northern Limit Line 27-29 Jan after 26 Jan announcing 2-month shipping ban in area, said action part of routine artillery drill; SK returned fire 27 Jan; no reported casualties, damage. S Korea defence minister 20 Jan said S Korea would launch pre-emptive strike against N Korea if it saw clear indications of impending nuclear attack; N Korea 24 Jan called statement an “open declaration of war”. Heightened rhetoric came despite apparently conciliatory moves by NK during month: New Year’s Day message calling for end of hostility with U.S.; 11 Jan NK Foreign Ministry statement of willingness to build confidence

with U.S., conduct new peace treaty talks to replace Korean War Armistice; 19 Jan meeting with S Korean officials to discuss revitalising jointly-operated industrial estate in Kaesong, north of DMZ. UN human rights investigator 15 Jan said NK using increasingly harsh punishment against citizens attempting to leave. NK 28 Jan said it had arrested 2nd U.S. citizen in 2 months for illegally entering country. Several reports from inside NK suggested Dec currency reform causing runaway inflation, worsening food shortages.

- [“North Korea accuses South of declaring war”](#), Reuters, 23 Jan. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°179, [Shades of Red: China’s Debate over North Korea](#), 2 Nov. 2009.

- ➡ **Taiwan Strait** China 11 Jan said it successfully conducted a missile defence system test. Test occurred amid anger at U.S. arms sale to Taiwan; China said test “not targeted at any country”. China 30 Jan suspended military exchanges with U.S., threatened sanctions against U.S. defence companies after U.S. announced \$6.4b in planned arms sales to Taiwan. Taiwanese delegation travelled to Beijing for talks on proposed Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) 27 Jan.
 - [“China says US arms sales to Taiwan could threaten wider relations”](#), *Times*, 1 Feb. 2010.

SOUTH ASIA

- ➡ **Afghanistan** At least 10 killed in string of coordinated attacks in Kabul by suspected Taliban militants 18 Jan. At 28 Jan UN-led London conference on Afghanistan, govt said will invite Taliban to upcoming peace talks, create comprehensive reintegration program for defected Taliban fighters. UN 26 Jan removed 5 senior ex-Taliban govt officials from sanctions list. Parliament 16 Jan again rejected 10 of 17 of President Karzai’s cabinet nominees, but approved FM and justice minister posts. Govt 24 Jan delayed parliamentary elections 4 months to 18 Sept, cited insufficient resources to organise vote. At least 20 killed in 14 Jan Uruzgan province suicide blast. 13 Jan UN report said more than 2,400 civilians killed during 2009, highest toll since 2001 U.S.-led invasion, but killings by ISAF and govt troops fell. UNSG Ban 27 Jan announced Swedish diplomat Staffan de Mistura to replace Kai Eide as UNAMA head 1 March.

- Comment by Nick Grono and Candace Rondeaux (Crisis Group), [“Dealing with Brutal Afghan Warlords Is a Mistake”](#), *Boston Globe*, 18 Jan. 2010.
- [“War plan for Karzai: reach out to Taliban”](#), *New York Times*, 28 Jan. 2010.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°96, [Afghanistan: Elections and the Crisis of Governance](#), 25 Nov. 2009.


- ➡ **Bangladesh** PM Hasina in official visit to India early month, signed agreements to jointly fight cross-border crime, terrorism; opposition BNP criticised deal for “compromising national interest”. 5 ex-army officers executed 28 Jan for 1975 killing of Bangladesh’s first president Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.
 - [“India and Bangladesh sign five agreements”](#), BBC, 12 Jan. 2010.

- ➡ **India (non-Kashmir)** Govt late month launched offensive targeting top Maoist rebel leadership in 5 eastern, southern states; thousands of police, paramilitary troops deployed. Maoist violence continued: 7 killed, including 6 police, in 15 Jan Jharkhand attack; several killed in Lalgarh, West Bengal attacks.
 - [“India launches Maoist offensive in five states”](#), BBC, 22 Jan. 2010.

- ➡ **Kashmir** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah 6 Jan pledged further cuts in Indian security forces after police reported militant violence in Kashmir down 25% during 2009. Traditional spike in violence ahead of 26 Jan Republic Day: 4 killed, including 1 police and 2 Lashkar-e-Taiba militants, in 7 Jan 20-hour gun battle in Srinagar; Indian troops 23 Jan killed top Hizbul Mujahedin militant group leader. At least 3 Pakistani soldiers killed in 6 Jan Rawalakot District blast, police said unclear if suicide attack. India 12 Jan said Indian paramilitary soldier killed by Pakistani troops firing across LoC.
 - [“Kashmir chief pledges troop cut”](#), AFP, 6 Jan. 2010.

- ➡ **Nepal** Maoists called off threatened nation-wide strikes after govt 8 Jan set up high-level political mechanism to “speed up” peace process and drafting of new constitution; panel made up of NC party president Girija Prasad Koirala, Maoist leader “Prachanda”, CPN-UML party chairman Jhalanath Khanal. Month-long UN-monitored process of releasing 4,000 disqualified Maoist combatants, including 3,000 child soldiers, from cantonments started 7 Jan. Supreme Court 22 Jan approved promotion of officer accused of overseeing rights abuses during civil war to army second-in-command. UNSC 21 Jan extended UNMIS mandate by 4 months to 15 May.
 - [“Child soldiers leave Maoist camps in Nepal”](#), AFP, 6 Jan. 2010.

- ➡ **Pakistan** Dozens of militants killed in U.S. drone strikes during month, including at least 15 in 17 Jan N Waziristan attack; Pakistani Taliban denied reports leader Hakimullah Mehsud killed in 14 Jan drone strike in S Waziristan. PM Gilani 9 Jan called for end to U.S. drone strikes. Army 21 Jan said no new major offensives planned against militants during 2010 despite U.S. pressure to carry out further operations. Supreme Court 19 Jan issued further justification for Dec dismissal of corruption amnesty bill for elected officials, further weakening President Zardari’s position. MQM party 10 Jan threatened to leave govt coalition as at least 45 killed in Karachi clashes between rival political factions during month. 11 Jan report by Pakistani NGO stated militant attacks up 45% in 2009, more than 3,000 killed.
 - [“Pakistan’s rebuff over new offensives rankles U.S.”](#), *New York Times*, 21 Jan. 2010.

Crisis Group Asia Report N° 184, [Nepal: Peace and Justice](#), 14 January 2010. 

Nepal’s peace process is undermined by the failure to address the systematic crimes committed during the country’s conflict. Tackling justice now is not only feasible but would also improve the chances of re-establishing productive political negotiations and salvaging the credibility of the parties and the state.

- ➡ **Sri Lanka** President Rajapaksa re-elected 26 Jan with 57.8% of vote and overwhelming support from Sinhalese voters. Main challenger Sarath Fonseka, winner in Tamil and Muslim districts, accused govt of vote rigging, said will legally challenge result. International observers said voting largely free and fair, but rights groups said campaign period marked by misuse of state resources and media coverage favouring govt and physical intimidation of opposition. At least 4 killed, hundreds injured in pre-election violence across country; UNSG Ban 21 Jan expressed concern over “growing violence”. Rajapaksa 28 Jan said will dissolve parliament, call general election “soon”. Some 100,000 IDPs still in govt-run camps in north; tens of thousands recently released continue to face difficult conditions due to wide destruction of home districts

in final months of war. Govt rejected 6 Jan UN investigation confirming authenticity of video made public July 2009 of SLA soldiers executing LTTE prisoners.

- Comment by Chris Patten (Crisis Group), “[Sri Lanka’s Choice, and the World’s Responsibility](#)”, *International Herald Tribune*, 13 Jan. 2010.
- “[President Mahinda Rajapaksa wins Sri Lanka election](#)”, *Guardian*, 27 Jan. 2010.

Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°99, [Sri Lanka: A Bitter Peace](#), 11 January 2010.



The international community must take steps to ensure Sri Lanka’s president addresses the marginalisation of Tamils and other minorities in the interest of peace and stability.

SOUTH EAST ASIA

➡ **Indonesia** Instability continued in Papua province: 3 police, 6 Freeport employees injured 24 Jan in ambush by unidentified gunmen; 3 killed as tribal groups clashed mid-month near Timika. Jeck Kemong named regional Free Papua Movement (OPM) commander 19 Jan, replacing Kelly Kwalik, killed Dec. OPM founder Nicholas Jouwe returned to Indonesia from Netherlands 12 Jan. In Aceh, Langsa city mayor 20 Jan dismissed local Sharia Police chief over rape allegations directed at 3 of his officers. Police 30 Jan announced capture of Eko Budi Wardovo, accused of May 2005 terror attack killing 22 in Poso.

- “[Indonesian military’s ‘empire’ poses threat: HRW](#)”, AFP, 11 Jan. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°95, [Indonesia: Noordin Top’s Support Base](#), 27 Aug. 2009.

➡ **Myanmar/Burma** Junta leader Than Shwe, in 4 Jan Independence Day remarks, urged Burmese to make “correct choices” at scheduled election later this year, did not specify a date; insisted gov’t 7-stage roadmap only way to achieve democracy. Supreme Court 17 Jan began hearing NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi’s final appeal against her extended house arrest; Home Affairs Minister Maung Oo 21 Jan reportedly said Suu Kyi would be freed in Nov; NLD dismissed comment as “nothing new”. U.S. Asst Sec State Campbell 19 Jan said deepened U.S. diplomatic engagement with junta had so far produced “mixed bag” of results, said further talks planned for near future. 2 state officials reportedly sentenced to death for leaking details to Burmese exile media of secret gov’t trips to N Korea, Russia. Karen National Union rejected gov’t claims its members responsible for 26 Jan bomb blasts in Kyaukkyi. Reports late month gov’t attacks forced more than 2,000 ethnic Karen to flee in east.

- “[Over 2,000 Karens flee Myanmar army raids](#)”, Reuters, 23 Jan. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°177, [China’s Myanmar Dilemma](#), 14 Sept. 2009.

➡ **Philippines** MILF and gov’t peace panels exchanged “comprehensive compact” drafts 27-28 Jan in Kuala Lumpur, as agreed under resumed peace talks. Draft accords include details on future autonomous Moro territory; talks scheduled to resume 18-19 Feb. In Mindanao, 5 MILF rebels killed, 5 injured during 8 Jan clash with gunmen allegedly linked to Ampatuan clan. Trial of Andal Ampatuan Jr for his role in Nov Maguindanao massacre began in Manila 5 Jan. Official “election period” began 10 Jan, prompting nation-wide gun ban to last until June; military requested state of emergency

proclamation to continue in parts of Mindanao until after polls. 2 village leaders killed in separate attacks 19, 21 Jan in Masbate province, central Philippines; 2 local officials shot dead 31 Jan in Mindanao; motives believed related to polls. 4 rebels, 1 militiaman killed 30 Jan during clash between gov’t troops and communist NPA insurgents. Philippine officials expressed skepticism over reports that Abdul Basit Usman, Abu Sayyaf bomb expert with close ties to Jemaah Islamiyah, killed 14 Jan by U.S. drone strike in Pakistan.

- “[Philippines peace talks regain traction after lengthy hiatus](#)”, *Christian Science Monitor*, 26 Jan. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°98, [The Philippines: After the Maguindanao Massacre](#), 21 Dec. 2009.

➡ **Thailand** As violence continued in restive South, PM Abhisit visited region 7 Jan, pledged to reduce troop numbers in coming years. Govt 19 Jan approved 3 month renewal of emergency decree in South. 3 Muslims from South sentenced to 10 months prison by Malaysian court early month for illegally entering country; to be tried on explosive possession charges late Feb. Former paramilitary ranger linked to deadly June mosque attack surrendered to police 14 Jan; some reports allege highly-publicised surrender “staged”. King Bhumibol 15 Jan approved cabinet reshuffle prompted by resignation of public health minister and deputy in corruption scandal. Pro-Thaksin “red shirt” protesters planning rally ahead of Supreme Court’s Feb verdict on gov’t seizure of Thaksin’s assets. Thai, Cambodian soldiers exchanged fire near disputed Preah Vihear temple 24 Jan; no reported casualties.

- “[Second Thai minister quits over graft scandal](#)”, Reuters, 10 Jan. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°181, [Southern Thailand: Moving towards Political Solutions?](#), 8 Dec. 2009.

➡ **Timor-Leste** Complaints about police misconduct in wake of late-Dec fatal shooting by police of popular musician at Dili party; results of investigation into shooting not yet announced, preliminary proceedings launched against 1 officer; PM Gusmao ordered police commander to limit operations. President Ramos-Horta late Dec announced pardons or commuted sentences for 50 prisoners, including individuals involved in violence during 2006 political crisis. New UNSR for Timor-Leste Ameerah Haq of Bangladesh arrived in Dili 5 Jan.

- “[East Timor urged to curb police after shooting](#)”, *Age*, 7 Jan. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°180, [Handing Back Responsibility to Timor-Leste’s Police](#), 3 Dec. 2009



Europe

BALKANS

➡ **Bosnia** Escalation in confrontation between Republika Srpska (RS) and High Representative Inzko as latter 6 Jan warned planned RS referendum on OHR’s Dec ruling extending mandate of international judges and prosecutors would be violation of Dayton peace accord. RS PM Dodik 23 Jan said expects law on referendums to be passed in Feb, allowing RS vote on OHR-imposed decisions and support for Dayton. In 24 Jan mayoral election in RS town Bileca, Dodik’s ruling

SNSD party candidate defeated by candidate representing 3 opposition parties. EU FMs 25 Jan extended EUFOR mandate for 2010, said force may remain beyond 2010 if needed. Following failure of federal parliament to pass 2011 census law over disagreements over questions on ethnicity, RS gov't 25 Jan announced intention to hold census in 2011.

- Comment by Srecko Latal (Crisis Group), "[Bosnia Faces Critical Challenges in 2010](#)", Balkan Insight, 21 Jan. 2010.
- "[Bosnia back on international agendas](#)", ISN, 22 Jan. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°57, [Bosnia's Dual Crisis](#), 12 Nov. 2009.

➡ **Kosovo** President Sejdiu 6 Jan requested assistance from International Civilian Office (ICO) and EULEX mission to dissolve Serbian parallel structures in Kosovo following Belgrade's renewed funding for structures since May 2008 and its late-Dec appointment of judges and prosecutors for northern Mitrovica court, condemned by international community. ICO and Pristina gov't jointly announced strategy to integrate northern Kosovo under Pristina gov't, marginalise parallel structures. Addressing UNSC Kosovo hearing 22 Jan, Serbian President Tadic defended legitimacy of parallel institutions, attacked ICO plan. ICO head Peter Feith 24 Jan said Belgrade will be consulted in implementing strategy. Central Election Commission (CEC) 11 Jan failed to approve results of 13 Dec 2nd round mayoral elections in Gjilan municipality, amid ongoing allegations of irregularities. Elections rerun in Prizren and Lipjan municipalities 31 Jan. Kosovo police prevented Serbia Minister for Kosovo Bogdanovic from visiting southern Serb enclave Strpce 13 Jan; Deputy Minister for Kosovo Ristic expelled from Kosovo 26 Jan due to alleged unauthorised political activities in Klina municipality.

- "[Plan to change status quo in North Kosovo](#)", Balkan Insight, 18 Jan. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°56, [Kosovo: Štrpce, a Model Serb Enclave?](#), 15 Oct. 2009.

➡ **Macedonia** Macedonian, Greek FMs met in London 28 Jan to discuss name dispute, amid reports Skopje may be willing to give up "double name" formula if Greek stops disputing Macedonian identity; agreed to intensified talks. European Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee 27 Jan called for EU to set start date for accession talks with Macedonia in March.

- "[EU urged to set date for Macedonia accession talks](#)", SEE Times, 28 Jan. 2010.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°52, [Macedonia's Name: Breaking the Deadlock](#), 12 Jan. 2009.

➡ **Serbia** Following meeting with FM Jeremic, Spanish FM Moratinos 26 Jan said will push for quick decision on Serbia's bid for EU membership. Bishop Irinej, advocate of ecumenical dialogue and widely seen as moderate and apolitical, elected Patriarch of Serbian Orthodox Church 22 Jan. Serbia recalled ambassador from Podgorica after Montenegro 15 Jan established diplomatic relations with Kosovo.

- "[Madrid wants quick decision on Serbian EU bid](#)", SEE Times, 27 Jan. 2010.

CAUCASUS

➡ **Armenia/Turkey** Prospects for rapprochement weakened as countries exchanged accusations, entrenched positions over month. Armenian Constitutional Court 12 Jan decided Oct protocols with Turkey in compliance with national constitution,

but text of decision also noted protocols cannot be interpreted in ways that contradict 1991 Declaration of Independence and preamble to Constitution, which proclaim Armenian genocide recognition gov't priority and use term "Western Armenia" for eastern parts of Turkey. Turkish FM 18 Jan rejected court ruling, claiming it will "impair" protocols; prompted Armenian retort that Turkish obstructionism could derail reconciliation efforts. In 12-13 Jan Moscow visit, Turkish PM Erdogan discussed rapprochement with Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh settlement. Turkey unable to secure international support on linkage between issues: U.S. Asst Sec State Gordon 22 Jan praised Armenian court decision as positive step forward; Russian PM Putin 13 Jan rejected attempts at linkage as counterproductive.

- "[Armenia-Turkey: who will blink first?](#)", RFE/RL, 18 Jan 2010.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N° 199, [Turkey and Armenia: Opening Minds, Opening Borders](#), 14 Apr. 2009.

➡ **Armenia** In defeat viewed as demoralizing for opposition, jailed Armenian National Congress (HAK) candidate Nikol Pashinian lost 10 Jan parliamentary bi-election; polls condemned by opposition, U.S. observer mission and media as fraudulent, marred by violence. Pashinian given 7-year jail sentence 19 Jan for role in March 2008 post-election violence. Gov't engaged in high-level meetings with Russia on issues including rapprochement with Turkey and Nagorno-Karabakh 12, 19 Jan.

- "[Prison term for opposition activist revives democratization debate](#)", EurasiaNet, 20 Jan. 2010.

➡ **Azerbaijan** In Nakhchivan exclave, continuously criticised for repressive gov't policies, more than 100 people beaten and detained after police 5 Jan attacked protesters in Bananyar village. Protesters were rallying against late Dec arrests during Ashura religious day gathering. U.S., Norwegian diplomats 13 Jan prevented from entering village.

- "[Azerbaijani villagers held by police in exclave](#)", RFE/RL, 7 Jan. 2010.

➡ **Chechnya (Russia)** President Kadyrov 19 Jan announced launch of special operation to eliminate head of self-declared North Caucasus "emirate" Doku Umarov, to be led by State Duma deputy for Chechnya and Kadyrov's expected successor Adam Delimkhanov. Authorities reported 4 suspected militants killed 19 Jan, including Gingiskhan Gishaev, identified as close associate of Umarov. Kadyrov 20 Jan expressed willingness to work with Moscow's new envoy to region, Aleksandr Khloponin.

- "[Chechnya leader: foes made fake election claim site](#)", Reuters, 24 Jan. 2010.

➡ **North Caucasus (non-Chechnya)** Russian President Medvedev 19 Jan created new North Caucasus Federal District comprising all republics except Adygeya, plus Stavropol Krai, part of new approach aimed at stabilising region through socio-economic development; appointed Aleksandr Khloponin, former governor of economically successful Siberian Krasnoyarsk region, as Kremlin envoy to region, superseding republic heads. Ongoing violence in region: in Dagestan, 12 Jan explosion at gas pipeline left several districts without supply; suicide car-bomber 6 Jan killed 7 policemen, wounded 20 at traffic police depot. Dagestan branch of Federal Security Service (FSB) reported 8 militants killed over month. In Ingushetia, unidentified gunmen 15 Jan killed 2, injured 1 policemen on Kavkaz federal highway. Deputy Interior Minister Arkady Yedelev 16, 14 Jan repeated

accusations that terrorists being trained in military bases in Georgia to carry out attacks in North Caucasus.

- [“Medvedev appoints Krasnoyarsk governor to head new North Caucasus Federal District”](#), EDM, 20 Jan. 2010.

➡ **Georgia** Govt 27 Jan endorsed “State Strategy on Occupied Territories: Engagement Through Cooperation” proposing intensification of economic, cultural, educational links, extending healthcare and social security benefits to break-away territories; Abkhaz de facto FM rejected engagement without conferral of equal status; South Ossetian (SO) authorities refrained from comment. European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) 8 Jan called for meeting between SO, Georgian authorities within framework of conflict prevention and reaction mechanism after another detention case 4 Jan, this time of SO man by Georgian forces; SO continued boycotting EUMM meetings demanding clarification of whereabouts of missing persons. Following new regulation in predominantly ethnic Georgian SO district of Akhgori, from 10 Jan residents able to cross administrative border only if holding Russian identification documents. President Saakashvili 12 Jan announced civil defence, military classes to be introduced in schools next academic year.

- [“Georgia unveils ‘Strategy on Occupied Territories’”](#), RFE/RL, 28 Jan. 2010.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°53, [Georgia-Russia: Still Insecure and Dangerous](#), 22 June 2009.

➡ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** In effort to maintain momentum, OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs visited Yerevan 20 Jan, Baku 21 Jan; new U.S. co-chair 18 Jan made first visit to N-K for meeting with de facto President Sahakian. Presidents of Russia, Azerbaijan, Armenia met 25 Jan in Russian resort Sochi to discuss amendments to 2007 reconciliation framework, so-called “Madrid Principles”; reportedly reached verbal agreement on wording of preamble.

- [“Armenian, Azerbaijani Presidents agree on preamble to ‘Madrid Principles’”](#), RFE/RL, 26 Jan 2010.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°55, [Nagorno-Karabakh: Getting to a Breakthrough](#), 7 Oct. 2009.

EASTERN EUROPE

➡ **Belarus** Disputes on energy tariffs with Russia continued. After ending brief suspension of oil supply to Belarus 3 Jan, Russia mid-month reduced flows to Belarusian refineries by a third amid failure of negotiations to agree tariff rates 5, 9 Jan. Supplies to Europe unaffected. 12, 14 Jan talks between Belarus, Russia on transit fees for electricity to Baltic states, Kaliningrad exclave failed to produce results.

- [“Russia-Belarus row affects oil flows again”](#), RFE/RL, 15 Jan. 2010.

➡ **Moldova** Delegation headed by PM Filat travelled to U.S. mid month to meet with U.S. Sec State Clinton, signing agreement on further U.S. financial aid. EU 12 Jan opened negotiations on Association Agreement with Moldova aimed at greater political, economic integration. Romanian President Basescu 27 Jan made first visit to country after election of new govt.

- [“Transnistria remains the only really ‘frozen’ conflict”](#), EDM, 25 Jan. 2010.

➡ **Ukraine** In 17 Jan first round of presidential election, opposition leader Viktor Yanukovich gained 35% of votes against 25% for PM Yulia Tymoshenko. Incumbent Viktor

Yushchenko, brought to power in 2004 Orange Revolution, received 5.5%. Final outcome to be determined by 7 Feb run-off poll; 3rd-place finisher Serhiy Tihipko’s backing of either front-runner seen as critical for result. OCSE, Council of Europe election observation missions and western observers praised election conduct. Ending 5 month diplomatic freeze in relations, Russian President Medvedev 19 Jan announced Mikhail Zurabov to take up post of ambassador to Ukraine.

- [“Yanukovich and Tymoshenko: foreign and security policies”](#), EDM, 20 Jan. 2010.

WESTERN EUROPE/MEDITERRANEAN

➡ **Basque Country (Spain)** Several suspected ETA members arrested during month: 4 arrested in France and Portugal 10 Jan, including 1 driving van loaded with explosives; 5 allegedly responsible for Sept 2008 car bomb arrested N Spain 26 Jan; 2 arrested in N Spain 28 Jan. Thousands rallied in Bilbao 2 Jan demanding improved conditions for jailed ETA members; Basque prisoner group announced mass hunger strike 25 Jan.

- [“ETA prisoners go on mass hunger strike”](#), *Telegraph*, 25 Jan. 2010.

➡ **Cyprus** Growing concerns that ongoing reunification talks between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots heading towards stalemate. Greek Cypriot leader Christofias and Turkish Cypriot leader Talat held 2 rounds of intensified talks during month focused on governance, economy, EU affairs; UNSR Downer 29 Jan said progress had been made. UNSG Ban arrived 31 Jan for talks with both leaders. Followed Greek Cypriot parties’ 10 Jan rejection of new power-sharing plan proposed by Talat 7 Jan which conditionally accepted Greek Cypriot idea of cross-voting, insisted citizens of Turkey be given same freedoms in Cyprus as Greeks despite non-EU citizen status; Greek Cypriots 13 Jan presented counter-proposal restating earlier positions. Negotiating atmosphere soured by international legal rulings related to property issue: UK appeals court 19 Jan upheld April 2009 European Court of Justice decision in favour of Greek Cypriot property owner in case bought by UK couple. Christofias and Talat briefed officials in Greece and Turkey, respectively, on progress of talks. Late Jan reports Greek PM Papandreou had rejected Turkish proposal for 4-way meeting including Greece, Turkey.

- [“Ban Ki-Moon seeks elusive unity deal in Cyprus”](#), *New York Times*, 1 Feb. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°201, [Cyprus: Reunification or Partition?](#), 30 Sept. 2009.

➡ **Northern Ireland** Sinn Fein, DUP 31 Jan said “considerable progress” made in talks to break deadlock over devolution of policing and justice powers, parades. Followed 25-28 Jan crisis talks in Belfast chaired by UK PM Brown, Irish PM Cowen to prevent collapse of 2007 power-sharing govt after mid month breakdown in DUP-Sinn Fein negotiations. Brown 28 Jan threatened UK, Ireland would impose own solution transferring police and justice powers in May if parties failed to resolve outstanding issues by 29 Jan; deadline passed with parties still locked in talks. 1 police officer injured in dissident republican car bomb attack 8 Jan. Ulster Defence Association (UDA) 6 Jan said it had completed decommissioning its weapons.

- [“DUP and Sinn Fein brief teams on NI justice proposals”](#), BBC, 1 Feb. 2010.

- **Turkey** 20 detained in SE for alleged links to PKK 5 Jan; 60 more arrested in SE, Istanbul 23 Jan. Police clashed with protesters at 23 Jan rallies for recently banned Kurdish party DTP in Yuksekova, Dogubeyazit. 120 al-Qaeda suspects arrested in simultaneous operations across country 22 Jan; operation followed mid-month arrest of 30 suspects in Ankara, Adana. Constitutional Court 21 Jan overturned law allowing military personnel to be tried in civilian courts. 17 more suspects charged 27 Jan in ongoing "Ergenekon" coup plot case. Army chief of staff 25 Jan rejected newspaper allegations of 2003 anti-govt coup plot. PM Erdogan criticised Israel during 11 Jan visit of Lebanese PM for threatening peace. Following diplomatic row over Israeli treatment of Turkish ambassador 11 Jan, Israel formally apologised 13 Jan; Israeli Defence Minister Barak discussed continuation of strategic partnership at high-level talks in Turkey 17 Jan.
- "Turkey detains 2 journalists, others in PKK raids", Reuters, 23 Jan. 2010.



Latin America / Caribbean

- **Bolivia** Govt 13 Jan asked U.S. to extradite opposition leader Manfred Reyes Villa or hand him over to Interpol; Peru 5 Jan confirmed Villa had flown to U.S. via Lima to avoid corruption charges he claims are politically motivated. Candidate registration deadline for Apr municipal elections ended 18 Jan; opinion polls indicate President Morales' MAS party likely to make gains in poll. Govt 14 Jan announced plans to create new intelligence agency directly under president's control.
- "Morales le pide a Obama que entregue a Reyes Villa a la Interpol", Infolatam, 13 Jan. 2010.
- **Colombia** Public prosecutor 12 Jan declared proposed law allowing referendum on possible 3rd term for President Uribe constitutional; Constitutional Court's decisive ruling expected Feb, leaving little time for arranging referendum before 30 May presidential elections. Colombian court during month released 38 soldiers accused of extrajudicial killings; UNHCHR, rights groups highly critical. FARC 5 Jan admitted Dec kidnapping, murder of Caquetá governor Luis Fernando Cuellar. Govt 4 Jan said more than 2,600 FARC, ELN insurgents deserted during 2009.
- Comment by Markus Schultze-Kraft (Crisis Group), "South America's Power Puzzle", ISN, 7 Jan. 2010.
 - "Calendario de infarto", *Semana*, 16 Jan. 2010.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Report N°31, *Uribe's Possible Third Term and Conflict Resolution in Colombia*, 18 Dec. 2009.
- **Ecuador** President Correa's position increasingly weaker: influential federation of indigenous groups CONAIE 7 Jan threatened large-scale protests after govt closed indigenous radio stations; FM Falconí resigned 12 Jan after President Correa criticised his handling of "Yasuni-ITT" oil project. Army 18 Jan killed 3 FARC rebels close to Colombian border; Colombia govt said "grateful", called on further military cooperation along border.
- "Rafael Correa se queda sin amigos", Infolatam, 20 Jan. 2010.
- **Guatemala** UN-backed commission 12 Jan cleared President Colom of involvement in May 2009 murder of

prominent lawyer Rodrigo Rosenberg; said Rosenberg had arranged his own death, unclear why.

- "Colom cleared over murder", BBC, 12 Jan. 2010.

- **Haiti** Up to 200,000 feared dead in devastating 12 Jan earthquake, several hundred thousand others displaced. Some 13,500 U.S. troops deployed amidst reports of growing violence, deteriorating security in scramble for limited aid resources, but situation stabilising end-month. Widespread damage to infrastructure and govt institutions, largely reversing progress made on institutional strengthening in recent years. UNSC 19 Jan authorised additional 3,500 troops, police to MINUSTAH peacekeeping mission; some 100 UN staff, including mission leadership, killed in earthquake. President Préval 27 Jan said 28 Feb parliamentary elections delayed, no new date set.
- Comment by Mark Schneider (Crisis Group), "Haiti's Hidden Hope", *New York Review of Books*, 21 Jan. 2010.
 - "Security issues challenge food efforts in Haiti", *Miami Herald*, 25 Jan. 2010.

- **Honduras** Porifiro Lobo inaugurated as president 27 Jan; promised truth commission to investigate June 2009 coup. Ousted President Zelaya left Honduras 27 Jan after Lobo signed congressional decree granting amnesty to all public officials involved in coup. Supreme Court 26 Jan cleared 6 top military officers from abuse of power charges during Zelaya's ouster. OAS human rights commission 20 Jan reported "serious human rights violations" since coup.
- "Lobo alone", *Economist*, 21 Jan. 2010.

- **Venezuela** Tens of thousands protested govt's 23 Jan closure of anti-govt TV-station RCTVI for failing to comply with broadcast regulations; 2 protestors killed in Mérida 25 Jan when rival groups clashed. President Chávez 8 Jan announced devaluation of bolívar, new exchange rate regime. National electoral council 20 Jan announced modifications to several electoral districts ahead of Sept parliamentary elections; opposition criticised, said changes will favour Chávez's PSUV party. Chávez 13 Jan dismissed electricity minister Angel Rodríguez as energy crisis continued; govt 1 Jan imposed 20% power rationing on public, private sectors. Govt 6 Jan said alleged May 2009 U.S. warplane incursion on Venezuelan airspace "conclusive proof" of U.S. military threats; U.S. denied.
- "The weakening of the 'strong bolívar'", *Economist*, 14 Jan. 2010.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Briefing N°22, *Venezuela: Accelerating the Bolivarian Revolution*, 5 Nov. 2009.



Middle East / North Africa

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

- **Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories** Efforts to restart Israeli-Palestinian peace talks produced no breakthrough despite U.S. envoy Mitchell's 21 Jan visit; Mitchell urged Palestinians to resume talks, presenting new plan, reportedly accepted by Israel, giving PA greater control of W Bank, facilitating entry of materials into Gaza. Fatah Central Committee, PLO Executive Committee mid-month backed PA President Abbas's refusal to restart negotiations in

absence of complete settlement freeze. Netanyahu 10 Jan told coalition members settlement construction would resume at end of current 10-month partial freeze; 24 Jan insisted several settlement blocs to remain part of Israel "for eternity". 24 Jan expiration of Palestinian parliament's term sparked renewed Fatah-Hamas tension. In 29 Jan written response to Goldstone report, Israel denied violating international law during Gaza war, ignored report's call for independent investigation. UN 22 Jan said Israel had paid \$10.5m for damage to UN property in Gaza war. 9 Palestinians killed 5-10 Jan in Israeli airstrikes on Gaza Strip amidst increased rocket fire into S Israel during month.

- "Israel denies Gaza war crimes in report to UN", *Guardian*, 31 Jan. 2010.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°91, *Palestine: Salvaging Fatah*, 12 Nov. 2009.

◀ **Jordan** Roadside bomb 14 Jan targeted Israeli diplomatic convoy on Amman-border road. Several suspects reportedly arrested; responsibility for attack unclear.

- "Jordan picks up the pieces after attack on convoy", *National*, 15 Jan. 2010.

◀ **Lebanon** Israeli ambassador to UN 7 Jan complained about explosives discovered 1km from border by UNIFIL end Dec; Israeli Defence Minister Barak 7 Jan said Israel would target govt infrastructures if attacked by Hizbollah. Increased Israeli violations of airspace in south denounced by Lebanese army 8 Jan, UNIFIL 10 Jan; army fired on Israeli aircraft 11 Jan. Israeli PM Netanyahu 23 Jan played down possibility of renewed military conflict. UNIFIL and Israeli FM representatives met 7 Jan to discuss possible Israeli pullout from northern part of Ghajar village. Armed clashes between Fatah and Jund al-Sham militias reported 2-3 Jan in Ain al-Helweh Palestinian refugee camp. Leader of Bekaa-based Palestinian faction Fatah al-Intifada rejected disarmament of militias outside camps 17 Jan.

- "Lebanese Army opens fire on Israeli warplanes in south", *Daily Star*, 12 Jan. 2010.

◀ **Syria** President Assad visited Saudi Arabia 13-15 Jan for discussion of regional issues; earlier met with Iranian FM in Damascus, 11 Jan. U.S. Mideast envoy Mitchell also met Assad 20 Jan, said Syria had "significant role" for peace in region.

- "Saudi, Syrian leaders to discuss Iran, Mideast peace", *Reuters*, 13 Jan. 2010.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Reports N°92, *Reshuffling the Cards? (I): Syria's Evolving Strategy*, 14 Dec. 2009, and N°93, *Reshuffling the Cards? (II): Syria's New Hand*, 16 Dec. 2009.

GULF

◀ **Iran** Opposition leader Musavi's 1 Jan call for resolution of political crisis through reformed election law, political, media freedoms, release of detainees echoed in 11 Jan calls from key reformists Khatami, Karrubi for govt openness, dialogue; exiled reformist intellectuals published manifesto backing Musavi 3 Jan. Supreme Leader Khamenei 19 Jan called on "elites" to avoid ambiguity and support govt as tensions between conservative political factions increased. Parliamentary committee investigating post-election abuses 10 Jan said former prosecutor Mortazavi responsible for deaths of 3 detained protesters. 2 men in post-election mass trials executed 28 Jan over alleged links to exile monarchist group. 16 detained in late Dec protests put on trial 30 Jan; 5

reportedly face death penalty. Shots fired at Karrubi's car in Qazvin 7 Jan. Physics professor killed 12 Jan in Tehran bomb attack; govt blamed U.S., Israel. Kurdish group Pejak accused by authorities of killing prosecutor 18 Jan in Khoy, NW Iran. 4 group members reportedly arrested 19 Jan; several killed in 26 Jan clash. At 16 Jan meeting, P5+1 states failed to agree on further sanctions on Iran over nuclear program; China, Russia expressed reluctance to join U.S., EU sanctions push.

- "A supreme leader at bay", *Economist*, 7 Jan. 2010.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Briefing N°28, *U.S.-Iranian Engagement: The View from Tehran*, 2 June 2009.

◀ **Iraq** Political tensions over March parliamentary elections renewed after electoral commission barred over 500 candidates alleged by Accountability and Justice Commission (AJC) to have Baath party links, including numerous pro-Sunni, secularist politicians. Barred candidates reportedly include National Dialogue Front leader Saleh al-Mutlaq, Defence Minister al-Obeidi. PM Maliki backed decision; President Talabani 21 Jan said Supreme Court asked to rule on status of AJC. U.S. VP Biden in Baghdad to discuss dispute 23 Jan. Formation of Iraqiya electoral bloc, comprising Sunni, secularist groups led by former PM Allawi, VP al-Hashimi, al-Mutlaq announced 16 Jan. 37 killed by 3 car bombs near Baghdad hotels 25 Jan; al-Qaeda-linked Islamic State of Iraq claimed attack. 26 Jan bombing of Interior Ministry facility killed 18. Attacks targeting security force members in Anbar province 7, 13 Jan killed at least 14; simultaneous bombs hit Najaf 17 Jan. Govt claimed 25 arrested, explosives seized in 12 Jan security operation, Baghdad. 11 accused of Aug bombings in Baghdad sentenced to death 14 Jan. Shiite insurgent leader Qais al-Khazali released 5 Jan in apparent exchange for UK hostages. "Chemical" Ali Hassan al-Majid executed 25 Jan after receiving 4 death sentences for Saddam-era atrocities. Talks with Iranian authorities on Dec border dispute held 7, 18 Jan.

- Comment by Joost Hiltermann (Crisis Group), "Elections in Iraqi Kurdistan: Results and Implications", TUSIAD, 1 Jan. 2010.
- "Iraqi prime minister backs ban on 500 election candidates", *Los Angeles Times*, 17 Jan. 2010.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°90, *Iraq's New Battlefield: The Struggle over Ninewa*, 28 Sept. 2009.

◀ **Saudi Arabia** Deputy defence minister Prince Khaled bin Sultan 12 Jan said Jabri area on Yemen border recaptured from Yemen-based Houthi rebels, 4 soldiers, "hundreds" of rebels killed; 27 Jan said fighting over, 109 soldiers killed. In 25 Jan message Houthi leader offered truce, withdrawal in return for Saudi cessation of hostilities.

- "Saudi troops killed at Yemen border", *Al Jazeera*, 12 Jan. 2010.

◀ **Yemen** Fighting between Houthi-led rebels and govt, backed by Saudi forces, continued despite rebel leader Abd al-Malik al-Houthi's 30 Jan acceptance of govt ceasefire terms. Al-Houthi 25 Jan also offered truce with Saudis (see Saudi Arabia). Rebels claimed Saudi airstrikes killed over 30 civilians 4, 7 Jan. Saudis 12 Jan reported retaking Jabri border area, killing "hundreds" of rebels. Yemeni govt 12 Jan said 19 rebels killed in Saada old city. UNHCR 29 Jan said population displaced by conflict since 2004 now over 250,000. Authorities made several raids against al-Qaeda in Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) amid increasing international focus on group. 2 group members reportedly killed by security forces 4 Jan in Arhab, 4 more arrested 5 Jan. Govt claimed senior leaders among

6 militants killed by airstrike in Saada province; AQAP 18 Jan denied deaths. Govt blamed AQAP for killing 3 soldiers at checkpoint in Shabwa province 24 Jan. Some 150 clerics 14 Jan warned of "jihad" if U.S. military intervenes in Yemen. Separatist supporters held strikes in southern provinces 10, 24-25 Jan; several wounded in clashes, Dhali'. Separatist-linked politician killed in Zinjibar, 29 Jan. At 27 Jan London conference on Yemen, G8, Gulf states set up mechanism to follow up on promised political, economic reforms in addition to security assistance.

- "Yemen clashes continue, ceasefire offer rejected", Reuters, 31 Jan. 2010.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°86, *Yemen: Defusing the Saada Time Bomb*, 27 May 2009.

NORTH AFRICA

- **Algeria** Security forces said 10 militants killed during 9 Jan clash in M'sila, 250km SE of capital. 9 arrested in Algiers 5 Jan, charged 10 Jan with involvement in network financing terrorism. Protestant church in Tizi Ouzou apartment block burnt down 9 Jan. Thousands reportedly attended 12 Jan demonstrations in Tizi Ouzou, Bejaia calling for autonomy of Kabylie region. Authorities 21 Jan announced 29 new gendarme brigades to be deployed in Kabylie in 2010.
 - "Algerian security forces kill 10 Islamists", AFP, 9 Jan. 2010.

- **Egypt** Confrontation erupted across Gaza border 6 Jan between Palestinians protesting delay of international aid convoy and Egyptian border guards; 1 guard killed. Egyptian police 5 Jan clashed with international activists accompanying

convoy in al-Arish port. FM About Gheit 9 Jan said no further convoys would be allowed. Gunmen killed 7 outside Coptic Christian church in southern town Nagaa Hammadi 6 Jan; killing followed Nov sectarian riots over rape of Muslim girl. Copts clashed with security forces at 7 Jan funeral; inter-sectarian attacks reported in following days. Muslim Brotherhood 16 Jan named Muhammad Badie, from movement's conservative wing, as new leader. Authorities 31 Jan announced arrest of 26 suspected members of Islamic Jihad terrorist cell.

"Signs of rising sectarian tension", IRIN, 26 Jan. 2010.

- "In Egypt, religious clashes are off the record", *New York Times*, 31 Jan. 2010.

- **Mauritania** EU Foreign Affairs Council 25 Jan announced decision to normalise relations suspended after Aug 2008 coup, resume full cooperation with Mauritania following restoration of constitutional order. Govt officials, Islamic scholars 18 Jan began religious dialogue program with Islamist militants in Nouakchott central prison. Mauritania elected to AU Peace and Security Council 30 Jan.

- "Mauritania debate pits scholars against jailed Salafists", *Magharebia*, 21 Jan. 2010.

- **Western Sahara** Moroccan King Mohamed VI 3 Jan announced plan to devolve power to regions while maintaining territorial unity; stated Western Sahara would be among first regions to benefit from plan.

- "Morocco reaffirms claim over Sahara with autonomy plan", *DPA*, 4 Jan. 2010.

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