



CRISISWATCH

Tracking Conflict Worldwide

CrisisWatch is a monthly early warning bulletin designed to provide a regular update on the state of the most significant situations of conflict around the world.

Learn more about CrisisWatch →

October 2016

Global Overview

OCTOBER 2016

October saw Venezuela's tense political standoff at new heights amid economic stress and popular unrest, and Haiti's weak political and security equilibrium struck by a major natural disaster and humanitarian crisis. In Africa, violence worsened in the Central African Republic (CAR), north-eastern Kenya, Mozambique and western Niger, while in Ethiopia the government hardened its response to continued protests. In Myanmar, unprecedented attacks on police in the north triggered deadly clashes and displacement threatening to exacerbate intercommunal tensions across the country, while Russia's North Caucasus saw an increase in conflict-related casualties, detentions and counter-terrorism operations. In the Middle East, the election of Michel Aoun as president of Lebanon signals a long-awaited breakthrough ending two years of political deadlock.

Trends for Last Month

October 2016

Deteriorated Situations

Central African Republic, Ethiopia,
Kenya, Mozambique, Niger,
Myanmar,
Russia/North Caucasus,
Venezuela, Haiti

Improved Situations

Lebanon

Outlook for This Month

November 2016

Conflict Risk Alerts

None

Resolution Opportunities

None

Trends and Outlook

In **Venezuela**, political tensions between President Maduro's government and the opposition Democratic Unity (MUD) alliance took another dangerous turn after the National Electoral Council on 20 October indefinitely suspended the signature-gathering process needed to pave the way for a recall referendum challenging Maduro's rule. The closure of the last formal channel for the opposition to challenge the government's political hegemony was followed by nationwide protests and threats from the opposition. A Vatican-sponsored dialogue between government and opposition has begun in an effort to avert violent unrest. Its success will depend on rapid confidence-building between the two sides, alleviation of the dire humanitarian crisis, progress toward terms for a peaceful political transition, and containment of hardliners in both government and opposition.

Hurricane Matthew struck **Haiti** on 4 October killing hundreds, and creating the worst humanitarian crisis since the country's 2010 earthquake. According to the UN, 1.4 million people are in need of humanitarian aid, and more than 800,000 require urgent help. The natural disaster forced the cancellation of the planned October presidential and parliamentary elections and further complicates efforts to stabilise the country's political and security situation.

As feared, violence in **CAR** continued to surge in the north, centre and in Bangui, the capital, as militias clashed with each other and attacked civilians, police and UN peacekeepers. In one raid in the northern town of Kaga Bandoro ex-Seleka former rebels killed over 30 civilians. The worsening violence, including an attack by anti-balaka militiamen on UN peacekeepers, underscores that the president's election has not ended the crisis and the international community needs to provide constant and long-term support.

In **Ethiopia**, at least 100 people were killed in a stampede reportedly triggered by security forces firing tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse anti-government protests. In response to more protests and vandalism in the restive Oromia region and Addis Ababa in the following days, the government took a more hard-line stance. It declared a six-month state of emergency that puts restrictions on gatherings, social media and communicating with foreign governments and gives security forces greater search and arrest powers.

Deadly attacks by Al-Shabaab jihadists in Mandera town in **Kenya**'s north east near the border with Somalia prompted the government to put in place a 60-day curfew in the town, as clashes between ethnic groups flared in the Rift Valley. In **Mozambique**, the killing of several Renamo armed opposition leaders – including one of its negotiators – and clashes between the army and Renamo fighters endangered already faltering peace talks. In western **Niger**, suspected jihadists based in northern Mali launched deadly attacks, including one on an army post on 6 October, which killed 22 security personnel.

In **Myanmar**, several hundred assailants carried out three separate, coordinated attacks on police bases in northern Rakhine state on 9 October, killing nine police and seizing guns and ammunition. Over the following days at least 22 more died in clashes as security forces attempted to capture the attackers, reported by the government to be Muslims. Reports indicate that approximately 10-15,000 Rohingya Muslims and 3,000 Buddhist Rakhine have been displaced by the violence. As we explained in a Q&A on 12 October, the attacks mark a major escalation of violence in Rakhine, with a potential spillover effect to other parts of the country with a large Muslim presence.

October saw an increase in conflict-related casualties, detentions and counter-terrorism operations in Russia's **North Caucasus**, with around 50 people, mostly suspected militants, reported injured or killed during the month.

In the Middle East, Michel Aoun's election as president of **Lebanon** on 31 October ended the country's presidential vacuum after 45 failed attempts to nominate a president since May 2014. Although the deal may help re-energise Lebanon's political institutions, it is unrealistic to expect drastic changes. The new government will need to address the country's deep-rooted problems, including how to manage the presence of over a million Syrian refugees and entrenched divisions within the political class.

Latest Updates

Africa

➔ Burundi OCTOBER 2016

Govt began process to withdraw from ICC's jurisdiction and continued crackdown on human rights organisations. Parliament 12 Oct voted to withdraw from ICC, President Nkurunziza 18 Oct endorsed decision, govt notified UN 27 Oct; withdrawal will take effect one year later. Several thousand people 8 Oct heeded call of Bujumbura mayor to protest against 20 Sept UN report documenting govt's human rights violations. Govt 10 Oct banned three UN human rights investigators from country, 11 Oct said it would suspend cooperation with OHCHR. Interior ministry 24 Oct withdrew authorisations of ten human rights and other civil society organisations. Ruling CNDD-FDD party 3 Oct said govt had asked inter-Burundian dialogue mediator, former Tanzanian President Mkapa, to help repatriate exiled politicians, and that those who had committed crimes could face charges. Council of ministers 6 Oct studied draft law to create national volunteer corps, raising fears govt would use it to legalise actions of ruling party's Imbonerakure youth wing turned militia. Tensions with Rwanda rose when

Rwandan soldiers 4 Oct reportedly crossed border into Mwumba commune, Ngozi province in north, destroyed house and assaulted one civilian.

- [COMMENTARY: Réfugiés burundais : l'avenir insaisissable](#)

➔ Cameroon OCTOBER 2016

Boko Haram (BH) continued attacks against civilians and military in Far North. In Logone and Chari district, fighters killed two soldiers and five civilians in attacks on Dambo-Ardébe 1 Oct, Sagme 6 Oct and Tagawa village, Waza area 16 Oct. BH attacked Djibrili, Mayo Tsanaga district 20 Oct killing one soldier; attacked Kangarwa, Mora area 30 Oct, killing four civilians.

➔ Central African Republic OCTOBER 2016

Deadly violence surged in north, centre and in capital, Bangui. In north and centre, especially in Ouaka prefecture, attacks by militias and other armed groups on civilians, police and MINUSCA peacekeepers and clashes between ex-Seleka and anti-balaka militias reportedly killed over 70 people; among worst violence, ex-Seleka 12 Oct attacked Kaga Bandoro (N) targeting displaced persons' camp and killing over 30 civilians and 15 Oct killed at least eleven civilians at camp at Ngakobo, near Bambari (centre). In Bangui: army officer's killing 4 Oct sparked reprisal attacks that killed eleven in following days; during 24 Oct civil society-led general strike to demand MINUSCA's departure, protestors clashed with peacekeepers, four protestors killed; clash in Bangui between armed groups 30 Oct killed two group leaders and eight civilians. Several NGOs suspended activities until security situation improves. Absence of hard-line armed groups at first disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration evaluation meeting 12 Oct, including Popular Front for the Central African Renaissance (FPRC), Mokom anti-balaka faction and "3R" group, undermined progress. France 26 Oct said it would maintain rapid reaction force of 350 soldiers and surveillance drones to assist MINUSCA after end of Sangaris mission 31 Oct.

➔ Chad OCTOBER 2016

Civil society groups and students continued to protest against austerity measures announced 27 Sept: govt 19 Oct reduced cuts to civil servants' bonuses and allowances for eighteen months from 80% to 50%. Opposition party leader Dinamou Daram arrested 7 Oct for inciting civil disobedience after calling on citizens not to pay taxes. President Déby and German Chancellor Merkel meeting in Berlin 12 Oct committed to strengthen security and economic relations. Judges 28 Oct went on strike for two weeks protesting cuts in allowances. Opposition MP 19 Oct submitted vote of no confidence in govt but national assembly president refused to transmit it to govt.

➔ Democratic Republic Of Congo OCTOBER 2016

Govt and opposition involved in political dialogue 18 Oct agreed presidential elections would be held 29 April 2018, Kabila would remain president until new one sworn in 10 May 2018, and opposition representative would be PM during transition. Main opposition coalition Rassemblement and opposition youth movements rejected agreement; Rassemblement called for general strike, somewhat respected 19 Oct in Kinshasa, Goma and other cities. Rassemblement 4 Oct called for "special regime" to govern after Kabila's term ends 19 Dec, ruling majority and all opposition to hold new political dialogue, and govt to free political prisoners. Electoral commission 10 Oct said voter registration, which started 31 July, would begin in seven more provinces. Govt 8 Oct banned protests and imposed travel ban on organisers of 19-20 Sept strike, resulting in 9 Oct arrest of opposition Union of Democracy and Social Progress deputy sec gen at Kinshasa airport. Southern African Development Community (SADC) troika, Angola, Tanzania and Mozambique, 10-13 Oct met opposition, ruling majority and Catholic Church, expressed support for political dialogue. EU FMs 17 Oct called for elections in 2017, said ready to impose sanctions. SADC, UN, AU and International Conference on the Great Lakes Region 26 Oct held summit on DRC in Angola, expressing support for 18 Oct deal. Police 24-26 Oct arrested seventeen members of youth movement Lutte pour le Changement in Goma, N Kivu; trial of six began 27 Oct on charges of incitement to civil disobedience. In east, Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) rebels 9 Oct attacked Rwenzori municipality, N Kivu killing nine people; suspected ADF 31 Oct attacked Kitevya, N Kivu, six people died in clash with army (FARDC); clash between FARDC and Body of Christ religious cult 15 Oct in Butembo killed five; police dispersing protests by motorbike taxi drivers against insecurity 16-17 Oct killed seven in Baraka, S Kivu. Leader of secessionist Bakata Katanga militia known as Gédéon and 110 militiamen surrendered to authorities in Malambwe, Haut-Katanga 11 Oct. FARDC 2 Oct recaptured Dibengele territory, near Kananga, Kasai-Central, from Kamwena Nsepu militia. Senior commander in Rwandan Hutu rebel group Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda arrested 23 Oct in Kiwanja, N Kivu.

- **COMMENTARY: African Powers Must Support Democracy in DR Congo**

→ Republic Of Congo OCTOBER 2016

Govt 4 Oct said over 4,000 people displaced by violence in Pool region in south, 5 Oct said Ninjas former militia killed twelve security force members and eleven civilians in last week of Sept in Pool.

→ Ethiopia OCTOBER 2016

Govt responded to continued anti-govt protests and vandalism with crackdown on opposition and state of emergency. After anti-govt protests erupted at festival in Oromia region 2 Oct, security forces fired tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse crowd, reportedly triggering stampede in which at least 100 people were killed. In following week protestors in Oromia and Addis Ababa burnt vehicles and police stations, damaged mostly foreign-owned factories and flower farms. Security forces arrested about 1,000 people including those accused of rioting and damaging factories, prominent opposition members and bloggers. PM Desalegn 9 Oct declared six-month state of emergency introducing restrictions including on gatherings, social media use, communicating with foreign govts, curfew and giving security forces greater search and arrest powers. President Mulatu 10 Oct and PM 11 Oct promised electoral reform. Govt 10 Oct said Eritrea had hand in unrest and blamed non-state Egyptian support for armed groups. UN, Western govts and German Chancellor Merkel on visit 11 Oct expressed concern at violence, called for opening of political space. Govt troops 16 Oct entered Kenya and clashed with Oromo Liberation Front rebels, dozens reportedly killed (see Kenya).

→ Kenya OCTOBER 2016

Attacks by Al-Shabaab jihadists in Mandera town in NE near Somalia border prompted govt curfew, while ethnic violence flared in Rift Valley. Al-Shabaab claimed 6 Oct attack on residential compound in Mandera that killed six non-Somalis and injured three others; suspected Al-Shabaab 17 Oct shot at car of Mandera county governor, injuring one security officer and one passer-by; 25 Oct killed twelve non-Somalis. Govt 27 Oct imposed 60-day curfew in Mandera town. Police in Nairobi 27 Oct shot dead suspected terrorist who assaulted police officer by U.S. embassy. Marakwet and Pokot communities reportedly clashed several times along border of Baringo and Elgeyo-Marakwet counties, at least two killed: Marakwet 12 Oct attacked Pokot herders near Kerio River, killing one and stealing over 170

cattle. Kipsigis (Kalenjin sub-group) and Kisii communities clashed on border of Narok and Kisii counties at Ikorongo area 21 Oct, eight injured. Ethiopian soldiers 16 Oct crossed into Kenya and clashed with Ethiopian Oromo Liberation Front rebels near Sololo, Marsabit county, dozens reportedly killed; same day killed one man and interrogated villagers in Golole. Ethiopian police 21 Oct arrested Kenyan police reservist in Ethiopia, 23-27 Oct detained six Kenyan police after they crossed border to try to secure his release.

→ Somalia OCTOBER 2016

Al-Shabaab sustained assaults against security forces and civilians in run-up to 30 Nov parliamentary elections. In Mogadishu, suicide car bomb 1 Oct near National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) prison killed five; mortar attack next to airport 8 Oct injured eleven civilians; car bomb outside market 10 Oct reportedly targeting senior official killed one, one suspect arrested; suicide car bomb reportedly targeting army convoy in Bondeere district 22 Oct killed four. In Lower Shabelle region, Somali National Army (SNA) and AMISOM 5 Oct launched assaults against Al-Shabaab near K-50 area killing eleven fighters and in Janaale killing six people; Al-Shabaab fired mortars at AMISOM in Qoryoley night of 14-15 Oct killing two civilians and 17 Oct; Al-Shabaab 18 Oct attacked SNA base in Afgoye district, killing 35 people, most SNA officers. Al-Shabaab also attacked civilians, SNA and AMISOM in Hiraan, Gedo, Middle Shabelle, Bay and Baidoa regions killing at least fourteen. U.S. ambassador 6-8 Oct met Galmudug Interim Administration (GIA) president and clan elders to address GIA's claim that U.S. helicopter strike 28 Sept intended to target Al-Shabaab killed 22 GIA troops. GIA and Puntland forces 7 Oct clashed in GIA-controlled South Galkayo over construction of road that GIA says encroaches on its territory, eight killed. Islamic State-aligned militants 26 Oct seized Qandala, Bari region. Election process advanced slowly: Election Dispute Resolution Mechanism 7 Oct started working on rules and implementation of electoral process; Federal Indirect Electoral Implementation Team 5-18 Oct rejected lists of candidates for Upper House of all but one regional administration for failing to respect 30% women quota. Delegates from Hiraan and Middle Shabelle regions 4 Oct agreed that Jowhar in Middle Shabelle would be capital of merged Hir-Shabelle state, Hir-Shabelle state parliament 17 Oct elected Ali Abdullahi Osoble as state president, but some Hiraan politicians opposed to merger 10 Oct claimed to be establishing Hiraan state with capital at Bullo Burde.

→ South Sudan OCTOBER 2016

Sudan People's Liberation Army-In Opposition (SPLA-IO) rebels affiliated to former First VP Riek Machar carried out ambushes on Juba-Yei and Juba-Nimule main roads and around Yei and Morobo in former Equatoria states, including 10 Oct ambush on four buses between Juba and Nimule, killing over 30 and targeting ethnic Dinka. Hundreds of Equatorian civilians living in Dinka areas elsewhere

fled fearing revenge killings. Ethnic Shilluk forces aligned with Machar's SPLA-IO 14-15 Oct clashed with govt soldiers near Lelo, Greater Upper Nile region but did not capture territory. UN mission in S Sudan, SPLA and SPLA-IO continued negotiations over joint security plan for Juba and deployment of UNSC-authorized Regional Protection Force (RPF). As UNSC continues to threaten arms embargo, President Kiir and UN 16 Oct formed committee to ease aid delivery including removal of illegal roadblocks.

→ Sudan OCTOBER 2016

National Dialogue (ND) Coordination Committee 26 Sept-5 Oct agreed that National Consensus Govt would be formed 90 days after approval of national document resulting from ND. ND Conference 9 Oct approved and General Conference 10 Oct endorsed national document paving way for drafting of new constitution. President Bashir 11 Oct said opposition Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), Darfuri rebels and National Umma Party and Sudan Call coalition could still sign document and ruling party official 12 Oct said they could still add input. Informal negotiations between govt and SPLM-N rebels 2 Oct in Addis Ababa organised by Uganda made no progress toward agreement on humanitarian access to Two Areas (S Kordofan and Blue Nile). Govt 10 Oct said it would extend unilateral ceasefire in conflict zones until end 2016. Govt 1 Oct denied Amnesty International's 29 Sept allegation that it used chemical weapons against civilians in Darfur; UN 4 Oct called on govt to cooperate with investigations by Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. S Sudan rebel leader Riek Machar 11 Oct left Sudan for South Africa citing medical reasons.

→ Uganda OCTOBER 2016

Opposition Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) leader Kizza Besigye detained 3 Oct on his return from month in U.S. and UK, taken to his house which remains under surveillance. Besigye and FDC activist Lord Mayor of Kampala Erias Lukwago temporarily detained 9 Oct after trying to attend FDC-organised unofficial Independence Day events in Kampala. Besigye temporarily detained 15 Oct and left for U.S. 17 Oct after police prevented him attending court for bail extension. President Museveni 10 Oct attended closing session of Sudanese National Dialogue conference in Khartoum.

📌 Mozambique OCTOBER 2016

Killing of Renamo armed opposition officials and continued fighting between Renamo and govt forces undermined mediation. Unidentified gunmen shot dead Renamo negotiator Jeremias Pondaca in Maputo 9 Oct, two senior Renamo members in Ribaué district, Nampula province 18 Oct and Renamo official in Gurue, Zambezia province 27 Oct. Govt forces reportedly captured Renamo bases at Murrotone, Zambezia province 11 Oct and at Murrupula, Nampula province 14 Oct. International mediators 18 Oct resumed separate talks with govt and Renamo delegations. Mediators 22 Oct tried to meet Renamo leader Afonso Dhlakama at camp in Gorongosa, but Dhlakama called off meeting. Mediators 25 Oct resumed talks with delegations separately but suspended them 28 Oct following reported clashes between Renamo and army, lead mediator said talks will resume 10 Nov.

➡ South Africa OCTOBER 2016

Govt 19 Oct notified UN it will withdraw from ICC citing court's alleged bias against Africa and claiming ICC obligations frustrate conflict prevention.

➡ Zimbabwe OCTOBER 2016

Independent candidate Temba Mliswa, expelled from ruling ZANU-PF party in 2015, won 22 Oct by-election in Norton, previously ZANU-PF seat of former War Veterans Minister Christopher Mutsvangwa; beat ZANU-PF candidate by 2,735 votes. ZANU-PF campaign characterised by violence, intimidation and vote-buying. As factionalism within ZANU-PF intensifies, anti-corruption commission 5 Oct unsuccessfully tried to arrest Higher Education Minister Jonathan Moyo for fraud, while Local Govt Minister Saviour Kasukuwere accused late Oct of allotting land only to ZANU-PF supporters.

- [OP-ED: The Politics of Reform — Much Ado About Nothing](#)

➔ Burkina Faso OCTOBER 2016

Gendarmes clashed with four former members of defunct presidential guard around Nazinon bridge (centre south) 8 Oct, killing two. Fourteen former presidential guards subsequently arrested, suspected to be planning attack against military prison and presidential palace, one suspect at large; govt 21 Oct denounced plot as “attempted coup”. Unidentified gunmen attacked Kerboulé village (north) 18 Oct; Koglweogo civilian self-defence group intervened, clashes left four dead, assailants fled to Mali. Gunmen attacked military post in Intangom (north, near borders with Mali and Niger) 12 Oct killing four soldiers, military accidentally killed at least two civilians, attackers fled to Mali; Islamic State in the Greater Sahara reportedly claimed attack. Police chief 23 Oct said jihadist shot dead in Ouagadougou. Former ruling party Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP) and other parties allied to regime of former President Compaoré 16 Oct formed new opposition Coalition for Democracy and National Reconciliation (CODER).

➔ Côte D'Ivoire OCTOBER 2016

National Assembly 11 Oct adopted draft new constitution by 239 votes to eight; referendum 30 Oct on whether to accept new constitution took place largely peacefully. Opposition continued to reject process and content of text, called for boycott: protest planned for 5 Oct cancelled, leader of opposition party Freedom and Democracy for the Republic (LIDER) Mamadou Koulibaly briefly arrested same day. Opposition held protest 8 Oct; authorities banned and repressed opposition protest 20 Oct, Koulibaly and hard-line opposition leader Abudramane Sangaré briefly arrested. Opposition also held protests 28 Oct.

➔ Guinea OCTOBER 2016

Political dialogue between ruling majority and opposition, which was relaunched 22 Sept, suspended 30 Sept-4 Oct due to disagreement on sequencing of mayoral and community elections. Dialogue concluded 4-10 Oct: participants agreed to hold both mayoral and community elections Feb 2017, as demanded by some opposition groups, and not update voter roll. Govt pledged to compensate victims of 2013 electoral violence and free some political prisoners. Exiled former President Camara 10 Oct

resigned as leader of opposition Patriotic Front for Democracy and Development (FPDD), said he would not contest upcoming polls.

➔ Guinea-Bissau OCTOBER 2016

Ruling majority and opposition in political dialogue 11-14 Oct discussed how to implement six-point roadmap to end crisis brokered by ECOWAS regional bloc, 14 Oct agreed to choose new consensus PM to serve until 2018 legislative elections; also agreed fifteen dissident MPs of African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) would rejoin parliament.

➔ Mali OCTOBER 2016

Main separatist rebel alliance, Coalition of Azawad Movements (CMA), weakened by killing of one of its military leaders and further splintering, as Platform coalition of armed groups pro national unity pushed for local deals with CMA members in Ménaka and Timbuktu regions. Military chief of staff of CMA member High Council for Unity of Azawad (HCUA) killed 8 Oct in car bomb in Kidal. Tuareg leaders Hamma Ag Mahmoud and Colonel Abass Ag Mohamed Ahmad 10 Oct broke from CMA and created new group, Congress for Justice in Azawad, said they wanted to join peace process. Two children of leader of CMA member Coalition of the People for Azawad kidnapped for ransom in Bamako 1 Oct. French Barkhane soldiers 5-6 Oct accompanied first joint road patrol, as planned in June 2015 peace deal, comprising armed forces (FAMA), MINUSMA and Platform along Ménaka-Ansongo axis in east; only CMA did not join. Govt 14 Oct appointed interim authorities in five northern regions; several CMA and Platform factions challenged lists, said they excluded key actors or were made mostly by factions from Kidal region. Targeted killings of civilians and attacks on national and international forces still high in north and centre. Several CMA fighters reportedly opened fire in Alata village, Ménaka region 8 Oct, wounding at least three civilians, abducting several others. Unidentified gunmen raided Sehine and Tinazibine villages, Ménaka region same day, reportedly killing three people. FAMA convoy ambushed in Timbuktu region 4 Oct, one killed; another convoy triggered IED in Mopti region 13 Oct, four soldiers killed, jihadist group Ansar Eddine 15 Oct claimed attack. MINUSMA peacekeepers attacked several times in Kidal region, three killed; MINUSMA forces killed suicide bomber attempting to attack convoy near Timbuktu 10 Oct. Barkhane vehicle detonated IED near Abeïbara, Kidal region 9 Oct; French officials said six soldiers wounded, Ansar Eddine 11 Oct claimed responsibility and said two soldiers killed.

Suspected jihadists based in N Mali launched deadly attacks in west Niger. Gunmen 6 Oct attacked army position in Tazalit, Tahoua region in west, killing 22 security personnel and seizing three military vehicles, ambulance and weapons before crossing into Mali; gunmen killed security guard and National Guard and abducted American NGO worker in Abalak, Tahoua region 14 Oct; gunmen allegedly part of Islamic State battalion in Sahel unsuccessfully tried to storm Koutoukalé prison near Niamey 17 Oct. Germany 5 Oct said it would deploy soldiers in Niger to support UN mission in Mali (MINUSMA). German Chancellor Merkel 10 Oct met President Issoufou in Niamey, promised €27mn to support military efforts against violent extremism in region. Conflict resolution framework, National Council for Political Dialogue (CNDP), 4 Oct postponed local elections planned for Jan 2017 to “harmonise electoral law”. Opposition members boycotted CNDP meeting, said postponement unlawful and evidence of authoritarian drift.

Boko Haram (BH) continued attacks in Borno state in NE, while mobs attacked Shia Muslims in four states. Army chief 18 Oct said BH insurgents “completely” chased out of country, but attacks continued. IED killed at least eight civilians, wounded fifteen in Maiduguri 12 Oct. BH overran military camp in Gashigar 17 Oct, claimed to have killed twenty soldiers, contradicted by army which said thirteen soldiers wounded and unknown number missing. BH attacked Kallali and Goptari villages near Chibok 16 and 18 Oct; two suicide bombers 29 Oct killed nine, wounded 24 in Maiduguri. Abubakar Shekau-led BH faction 14 Oct freed 21 of over 200 schoolgirls kidnapped in Chibok April 2014; govt said it made no concessions in exchange, but media sources said it freed five BH commanders. Kaduna state (centre) 7 Oct banned Shiite Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN). Mobs 12 Oct attacked IMN members during Islamic New Year celebrations in Kaduna, Katsina (N) and Sokoto (NW) states and burnt down IMN worship centre in Plateau state (centre); police said ten IMN members killed, IMN reported twenty casualties. Niger Delta saw reduced violence in Oct and signs of progress toward talks, though armed groups claimed destruction of oil facilities and pipelines in Delta and Edo states. Suspected Fulani herdsmen attacked Godogodo town, southern Kaduna state 15-16 Oct, killing at least twenty. Mob 17 Oct killed fourteen herdsmen near Kaduna city.

Asia

Japanese FM 12 Oct released aerial photos indicating new activities at two of sixteen Chinese oil and gas exploration platforms in disputed East China Sea (ECS). Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga condemned China's "unilateral development", urged resumption of negotiations over joint development pursuant to 2008 "Principled Consensus" agreement to cooperatively develop undersea oil and gas fields surrounding Senkaku/Diaoyu islands. Chinese FM 13 Oct said all exploration activities were "in waters under indisputable jurisdiction of China" and "completely within China's sovereign rights". Japanese media 10 Oct said Tokyo plans to quadruple manpower and equipment and deploy enhanced patrol vessels to deter Chinese fishing boats near disputed islands in ECS.

U.S. Deputy Sec State Antony Blinken 29 Oct said China's imports of North Korean coal violate global sanctions by using UNSC Resolution 2270 exemption for "livelihood purposes" as loophole. Chinese Vice FM Liu Zhenmin arrived in DPRK 24 Oct to discuss border issues, first high-ranking Chinese visit since Feb 2016. ROK and U.S. 19 Oct vowed to leverage "full breadth of national power" against DPRK's nuclear threat, but failed to agree on permanent deployment of U.S. strategic assets in ROK. DPRK tested two intermediate-range Musudan missiles on 15 and 20 Oct; ROK and U.S. officials said both missiles exploded on launch. U.S. 10 Oct said ROK's Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system would soon be redeployed at more isolated location, following protests from local residents near original site. China and Russia 11 Oct announced second round of joint anti-missile drills to be held in 2017; first exercises took place May 2016 as U.S. and ROK were negotiating THAAD. Tensions between ROK and China rose after Chinese fishing vessel 7 Oct rammed and sank South Korean coast guard speedboat off ROK's west coast. Incident followed killing of three Chinese fisherman by ROK coast guard 30 Sept in action against illegal fishing.

President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah 4-5 Oct met with donors from over 70 countries at Brussels Conference on Afghanistan; donors pledged over \$15.2bn in aid to support Afghanistan's development through 2020. Prior to conference, EU and Afghanistan 2 Oct signed controversial migration agreement allowing EU member states to deport unlimited number of unsuccessful Afghan asylum seekers and obliging Afghanistan to accept them. In apparent show of force ahead of

conference, Taliban 3 Oct launched twin attacks in Kunduz city and southern Helmand province, briefly gaining control of Kunduz before security forces retook city by next day. Over 100 Afghan soldiers reported killed in 11 Oct battle with Taliban in Helmand, where fighting continued throughout month. Taliban 11 Oct captured Ghormach district, Faryab province, retaken by security forces 20 Oct. In south, Uruzgan provincial officials reported several army posts had surrendered to Taliban during month, including three during past week; surrenders also reported in Kunduz and Helmand provinces. Officials 26 Oct said Islamic State (IS) had claimed responsibility for kidnap and killing of 30 civilians, including children, in Ghor province, reportedly shooting hostages in retaliation after security officials killed one IS operative in failed rescue attempt. Earlier in month, IS claimed responsibility for two attacks on Hazara community during commemoration of Shia holy day Ashura: gunmen 11 Oct killed eighteen in attack at Shia shrine in Kabul; IED blast outside mosque in northern Balkh province 12 Oct killed at least fifteen. UN 20 Oct expressed “grave concern over escalating conflict and IDP figures”. According to UN, over 411,000 Afghans displaced during first ten months of 2016. Amid rising internal displacement, influx of refugee returnees from Pakistan also continued, with over 39,000 reportedly returning 2-8 Oct. Pentagon 26 Oct said U.S. military killed senior al-Qaeda leaders Faruq al-Qatani and Bilal al-Utabi in drone strikes 23 Oct in Kunar province.

- **STATEMENT: The Economic Disaster Behind Afghanistan’s Mounting Human Crisis**

➔ Bangladesh OCTOBER 2016

Counter-terrorism crackdown continued: police and paramilitary Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) 8 Oct killed eleven suspected militants in joint police and paramilitary raids in Gazipur and Tangail; during raid in Savar same day, RAB killed alleged top financier of “neo-Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB)”, JMB offshoot believed to be involved in July Gulshan attack. Local human rights group Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) 30 Sept reported some 150 people have been killed in police custody and crossfire during operations in 2016. Police late Sept announced plans to establish SWAT-like teams in each divisional city to conduct high-risk counter-terrorism operations. Law enforcement officials 16 Oct reportedly arrested leader of five-member team of al-Qaeda-linked Ansarul Islam militants who hacked and shot online activist Nazim Uddin Samad to death in April. JMB operative Asadul Islam executed 16 Oct for killing two judges in 2005. Dhaka police counter-terrorism chief 18 Oct said JMB is regrouping under new head and financing operations through robberies. Dhaka courts 5 Oct dismissed charges against Canadian student Tahmid Hasib Khan, accused of involvement in 1 Jul Gulshan attack, but asked that new charges be filed against him for concealing information during investigations. Hasnat Karim, former professor also accused of involvement in attack, remained in custody. International Crimes Tribunal responsible for prosecuting crimes committed during 1971 liberation war launched investigations into war crime allegations against Ameer Maqbul Ahmad after he formally assumed leadership of Jamaat-e-Islami 17 Oct. In apparent move to tighten restrictions on international NGOs, parliament 5 Oct released Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Bill 2016 (FDRB), requiring foreign NGOs to submit activities to bureau under PM’s office for approval. Law controversially gives bureau power to cancel NGOs’ registration for making “derogatory” remarks against govt.

➔ India (Non-Kashmir) OCTOBER 2016

In largest anti-Maoist operation this year, special forces 24 Oct attacked Maoist camp in Malkangiri, southern Odisha state, killing at least 24 militants. One police officer killed during operation. Indian media 10 Oct reported anti-Maoist squads on “high alert” after leaked documents allegedly revealed Maoist plans to expand activities into southern states. In Assam, Bodo nationalists 24 Oct blocked railways in protest at “betrayal” and “false promises” from govt on resolution of Bodoland issue.

➔ Kashmir OCTOBER 2016

Tensions between Pakistan and India remained high as internal friction persisted in Indian-administered Kashmir, while more than twenty civilians were reportedly killed on both sides in series of clashes across Line of Control (LoC) late month, including six Pakistanis reported killed 31 Oct, seven Indians 1 Nov. Indian troops 8 Oct clashed with thousands of demonstrators in Srinagar after protests broke out in response to death of twelve-year old boy shot with pellet guns by security forces 7 Oct. Security forces re-imposed curfew in Srinagar in attempt to contain protests. Police 23 Oct said some 7,000 people, mostly youths, arrested, over 400 charged under Public Safety Act (PSA) since first wave of protests broke out 8 July, representing largest crackdown in Kashmir in over two decades, according to Indian national press. Speaking at 16 Oct BRICS conference, Indian PM Modi referred indirectly to Pakistan as “mother-ship of terrorism”; China responded praising Pakistan’s “huge efforts and great sacrifices in fighting terrorism”. China 1 Oct extended three-month “technical hold” blocking Indian request for UN sanctions against Masood Azhar, chief of banned Jaish-e-Mohammad allegedly responsible for Jan Pathankot air base attack. Following late Sept tensions surrounding Indus Water Treaty (IWT), Islamabad 20 Oct said it is closely monitoring India’s compliance. Indian FM 27 Oct announced expulsion of Pakistani diplomat Mehmood Akhtar for suspected “espionage”; Pakistan same day expelled Indian diplomat. Small clashes between alleged militants and security forces continued, including: six gunmen 2 Oct attacked Indian army camps in Baramulla district, killing one officer; Indian officials 6 Oct said military had killed three militants attempting attack on army base in Kupwara district; one political party worker and two suspected militants killed 12 Oct in separate incidents in Kupwara.

➔ Nepal OCTOBER 2016

Little progress on constitutional disputes despite assurances of quick resolution from Maoist-headed govt led by PM Pushpa Kamal Dahal. Dissenting Madhesi and Janajati parties threatening to withdraw support from govt; some considering street protests. Mainstream parties occupied with impeachment motion filed 19 Oct by ruling CPN (Maoist Center) and opposition UML against Lokman Singh Karki, head of constitutional anti-corruption body, despite reservations of ruling coalition member Nepali Congress. Election Commission (EC) announced local elections in March 2017; govt tabled three of five related bills recommended by EC 4 Oct. Madhesi, Tharu and some Janajati actors reject local elections before resolution of constitutional disputes. Deputy PM Bimalendra Nidhi 4 Oct said that as confidence-building measure with protesting Madhesi and Tharu groups, charges would be dropped against individuals accused of involvement in Aug 2015 clashes in Tikapur in which several police were killed. PM Dahal 2 Oct assured Nepal Army that its officers would not be “dragged into” war-era transitional justice cases.

➔ Pakistan OCTOBER 2016

Security in Balochistan capital Quetta remained fragile. Three armed militants 25 Oct stormed Quetta police college, killing 61, mostly cadets, and injuring at least 170. Security forces killed one attacker; remaining two died after detonating suicide vests. Islamic State (IS) and Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) both claimed responsibility; Pakistani officials reported evidence that sectarian militant group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) was behind attack with possible support from Afghanistan. Also in Quetta, four Hazara women killed on public bus 4 Oct in apparent sectarian attack. Banned separatist group Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) claimed responsibility for 7 Oct Quetta-Rawalpindi train bombing that left at least four dead and seventeen injured in Balochistan’s Bolan district. Alleged LeJ bomb attack 17 Oct left teenage boy dead and fifteen others wounded at Shia mosque in Karachi. Interior ministry same day formally extended special policing mandate of paramilitary Rangers in Karachi. Supreme Court 20 Oct opened hearings on petitions to disqualify PM Sharif based on allegations of undisclosed offshore business holdings leaked in Panama Papers. Opposition Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Imran Khan 17 Oct announced plans to “shut down” federal capital 2 Nov to pressure govt for accountability. Amid clashes between opposition and police in and nearby Islamabad and Punjab late month, at least 1,500 opposition supporters arrested by 31 Oct; Amnesty International 31 Oct called on govt to end “repressive crackdown”. Khan 1 Nov called off protest after Supreme Court said it would form judicial commission to investigate Panama Papers findings that could implicate PM. Parliament 6 Oct passed major bills, imposing mandatory 25-year sentence for individuals convicted of so-called “honour killings” and removing legal loophole allowing victim’s family to pardon murderer.

Series of contentious incidents throughout month amplified domestic concern over govt's commitment to human rights, transitional justice and governance reform. President Sirisena 12 Oct publicly accused Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery and Corruption (CIABOC) and police's Financial Crimes Investigation Division (FCID) of political bias; expressed "displeasure and disgust" at corruption charges brought against former defence secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa and former navy commanders, criticised remand detention of military personnel as suspects in murder cases (some released on bail later in month) and vowed never to "weaken" military; Sirisena repeated strong defence of military 27 Oct, attacking NGO and media criticism of his national security policies. Following 12 Oct speech, Senior United National Party (UNP) officials led by PM Wickremesinghe met with Sirisena, announced president and PM would head new committee to manage controversial policy issues including investigations, economy and transitional justice. CIABOC head Dilrukshi Wickremasinghe resigned 17 Oct, strongly rejecting president's allegations. Local media and human rights defenders criticised draft counter-terrorism law extending definition of "terrorism" to include "unlawfully compelling the [govt]... to reverse, vary or change a policy decision" was leaked 16 Oct. Law also prohibits any speech that may cause "harm to the unity, territorial integrity or sovereignty of Sri Lanka". Despite domestic criticism, European Council president 18 Oct welcomed PM Wickremesinghe in Brussels, commended govt's human rights efforts and pledged support for Sri Lanka to regain EU General System of Preference Plus (GSP+) trade benefits, withdrawn in 2010. European Parliament delegation arrived in Colombo 30 Oct for four day visit with GSP+ focus. Parliamentary committee 28 Oct released report into alleged fraud in Feb 2015 Treasury Bond issue; majority of committee found former Central Bank governor responsible for loss-making transaction, recommended legal action. Amid escalating ethnic tensions, nationwide protests broke out 24 Oct after police shot dead two Tamil university students in Jaffna. Large protests by students blocked roads in north and shut down university; calls for independent investigation backed by students and activists in south. 25 Oct sword attack on two police by Jaffna criminal gang further raised tensions. UN special rapporteur on minority issues 20 Oct concluded ten-day visit to Colombo; urged govt to take "urgent, important and concrete measures" including establishment of Independent Commission on Minorities to demonstrate commitment to minority rights protection. Parliament approved controversial VAT increase 26 Oct.

Police 19 Oct shot and killed suspected Islamic State (IS) militant after he attacked three police officers with machete. Attack occurred just hours before two men were convicted over role in Indonesia's first IS attack in Jan 2016, which left four dead in Jakarta. Indonesian counter-terrorism officials 25 Oct said unknown numbers of IS supporters have received training from IS affiliates in

Philippines. Jakarta tense ahead of planned 4 Nov rally by conservative Muslim groups which have been mobilising since Sept against mayorship of Basuki Thahaja Purnima (Ahok), who is Christian.

✦ Myanmar OCTOBER 2016

Several hundred people armed with knives, slingshots and small number of firearms 9 Oct launched three separate, coordinated attacks on border police bases near Maungdaw in N Rakhine state, near border with Bangladesh. Nine police and eight attackers killed, at least 50 weapons and 10,000 rounds of ammunition looted. Several deadly clashes in following days as security forces attempted to capture attackers and retrieve arms cache, with at least 22 further casualties and several deaths in custody reported in state media; 10-15,000 Rohingya Muslims and 3,000 Buddhist Rakhine reportedly displaced. Allegations by human rights organisations and media of extrajudicial executions of civilians, rapes and burning of several Rohingya villages by security forces in N Rakhine state following attacks. President's Office 13 Oct released statement saying that attacks were carried out by previously-unknown group Aqa Mul Mujahidin, with some outside financial support and training (including from Pakistan Taliban), however during subsequent visit to India Aung San Suu Kyi said full details still unknown. Humanitarian access to area, including emergency food deliveries, blocked since attacks; UN reported some 50,000 people affected. Fighting between Kachin Independence Organisation and govt forces escalated since mid-Sept in Kachin and N Shan states, including use of airpower and long-range artillery. Thousands of ethnic Kachin marched in Kachin state capital Myitkyina 6 Oct to protest against clashes. Several hundred United Wa State Army (UWSA) troops 28 Sept raided and took control of three outposts of its allied armed group National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA, Mongla) in Shan state; no reported casualties. UWSA has refused to withdraw. Legislature 26 Sept passed motion calling for investigation of Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC, appointed by previous govt) over its mishandling of case involving torture and enslavement of two teenage maids; President's Office indicated it is investigating MNHRC's actions.

- [BRIEFING: Myanmar's Peace Process: Getting to a Political Dialogue](#)

➔ Philippines OCTOBER 2016

Defence secretary 7 Oct said police had apprehended three members of armed Islamist organisation, Maute Group, over 2 Sept Davao City bomb attack, with seven other suspects reportedly still at large. Abu Sayyaf 2 Oct released three Indonesian hostages as Armed Forces of Philippines (AFP) continued counter-terrorism crackdown in Sulu and Basilan. Media 16 Oct reported 94 Abu Sayyaf militants "neutralised" in counter-terrorism operations since late Sept. Ten suspected Abu Sayyaf militants 21 Oct attacked S Korean ship off coast of southern Philippines, abducting captain and one crew

member. 25 Oct report by Jakarta-based Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict highlighted increasing use of Mindanao province as training destination for South-East Asian militants. Representatives of govt and communist rebel groups represented by National Democratic Front (NDFP) met in Oslo 6 Oct for second round of peace talks; 9 Oct reached consensus on terms of framework to serve as foundation for final peace deal, including Comprehensive Agreement on Socio-Economic Reforms (CASER). Draft proclamation calling for release of 434 communist-affiliated political prisoners submitted to President Duterte for approval. Presidential Peace Adviser Jesus Dureza 26 Oct said Indigenous Peoples Advisory Council would be formed to ensure that draft agreements with both NDFP and Bangsamoro Transition Council (BTC), all-Moro body formed in Aug 2016 to negotiate peace roadmap and Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL), are inclusive of minorities. Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) chairman Al Haj Murad Ebrahim 19 Oct said MILF supports govt's pledge for transition to federalism, but passage of BBL "must precede this shift from unitary to federal form of government". Ebrahim said MILF remains "very hopeful" that BBL will pass in congress under Duterte regime.

→ South China Sea OCTOBER 2016

During four-day visit to Beijing, Philippine President Duterte and Chinese President Xi 20 Oct announced plans to resume talks on South China Sea (SCS) disputes for first time since negotiations were suspended in 2012. Philippine FM Perfecto Yasay 24 Oct said Duterte stressed to Chinese leaders his commitment to abide by July arbitral ruling by Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague. Ahead of visit, Duterte 19 Oct said July's contentious ruling could "take a back seat" in future negotiations. Chinese FM Wang Yi said China is willing to resolving disputes through negotiation and constructive dialogue; called Duterte visit new starting point for bilateral relations. Philippine officials 29 Oct said Chinese coast guard vessels had left disputed Scarborough Shoal area and Philippine fishermen had unimpeded access to surrounding waters for first time in four years. Joint statement following Duterte's meeting with Japanese PM Abe in Tokyo late Oct announced both nations' continued commitment to "self restraint" and "acknowledged the importance of a rules-based approach to the peaceful settlement of maritime disputes". In move to challenge China's "excessive maritime claims" in SCS, U.S. navy destroyer 21 Oct sailed near disputed Paracel islands; freedom of navigation operation did not involve Japan-based Seventh Fleet, but was under orders from Third Fleet headquartered in San Diego. China defence ministry reportedly ordered ship to leave, calling it "illegal" and "provocative". China carried out military drills in SCS 27 Oct; defence ministry said exercise was planned joint search and rescue training.

→ Thailand OCTOBER 2016

King Bhumibol Adulyadej died 13 Oct aged 88, after 70 years on throne. PM Prayuth Chan-ocha same day announced one-year period of official mourning, said Crown Prince Vajiralongkorn would be next monarch, but wished to delay accession in order to mourn for unspecified period of time. News reports 14 Oct indicated Privy Council President Prem Tinsulanond, 96 years old, automatically regent, in accordance with constitution. Prayuth said king would sign new constitution early Nov, no delay for general election scheduled for late 2017. Several instances of mob violence against people alleged to have made anti-monarchy comments since 13 Oct. Deputy national police chief 10 Oct warned of possible car-bomb attacks in Bangkok late Oct. Security forces next day staged raids across Bangkok and neighbouring Samut Prakan province; police later denied raids connected to car-bomb warning. By 17 Oct, some 48 Malay-Muslims from southernmost provinces arrested in raids, all but five later released without charge. "Forward command" ordered by Prayuth in Sept to coordinate counter-insurgency efforts in southernmost provinces, comprising mostly retired military officers, met for first time 6 Oct in Bangkok. Ongoing violence in Deep South included murder of assistant village chief in Yala's Yaha district by suspected militants 9 Oct; bomb in central Pattani's night market 24 Oct killing one, injuring 21; one teacher shot and killed and another injured in Mayo district, Pattani, 28 Oct. Negotiators from govt and separatist umbrella group MARA-Patani met again in Malaysia 25-27 Oct to continue informal talks, focusing on safety zones; no agreement or date for next meeting.

Europe & Central Asia

➔ Bosnia And Herzegovina OCTOBER 2016

Following controversial referendum in Republika Srpska (RS) 25 Sept approving continued celebration of 9 Jan RS annual day, RS assembly 25 Oct passed law determining that holiday will continue but as secular event with observation not mandatory for non-Serbs. 2 Oct local elections saw RS President Milorad Dodik's SNSD party make significant gains, winning eleven more mayoral posts than in 2012 polls; Bosniak Party of Democratic Action (SDA) was main winner in Federation entity. Ethnic tensions increased in RS town Srebrenica after Bosnian Serb who denies that 1995 massacre was genocide won election as town's mayor, first non-Bosniak mayor since war.

➔ Macedonia OCTOBER 2016

After several days' delay, parliament dissolved 17 Oct, paving way for 11 Dec early elections as agreed by main parties in attempt to end country's political crisis.

➔ Armenia OCTOBER 2016

Ahead of 2017 legislative elections, parliament 19 Oct passed amendments to Electoral Code intended to prevent electoral fraud, including controversial plan to criminalise making “false” election fraud claims. Opposition Armenian National Congress (HAK) 24 Oct welcomed electoral reforms. President Sargsyan 14 Oct hosted Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) meeting which agreed to set up “joint crisis response centre” to exchange information on common threats including terrorism, also adopted collective security strategy.

➔ Azerbaijan OCTOBER 2016

Ali Insanov, jailed former health minister and founder of ruling New Azerbaijan Party (YAP), arrested 11 Oct on charges of resisting prison guard and drug possession; rights activists say Insanov, who was days away from completing eleven-year prison sentence for plotting coup and other charges, is political prisoner, claim new charges fabricated. Human Rights Watch 20 Oct released report criticising Baku’s crackdown on govt critics, lawyers and civil society, use of “politically motivated criminal and administrative charges”. Baku court 25 Oct sentenced activist Qiyas Ibrahimov to ten years’ prison on drug trafficking charges, in case condemned by rights groups. Parliament 30 Sept passed resolution resuming its relations with European Parliament, suspended Sept 2015 in response to EU’s criticism of human rights violations.

➔ Georgia OCTOBER 2016

Ruling Georgian Dream (GD) party secured 48.6% of votes in 8 Oct parliamentary election first round, gaining 67 of 150 seats; in second round voting 30 Oct won 48 more seats, to give total of 115; opposition United National Movement (UNM) came second with 27 seats. Opposition parties accused govt of rigging vote; electoral commission denied, OSCE assessed voting positively, despite some incidents of violence and allegations of unlawful campaigning in first round. Isolated incidents of pre-

election violence reported, including two men injured by gunshots during campaign speech in Gori 2 Oct, and 4 Oct car explosion targeting opposition United National Movement (UNM) MP Givi Targamadze in Tbilisi, no casualties recorded.

➔ Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan) OCTOBER 2016

OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs held separate meetings with Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents and FMs, new Armenian defence minister and de facto N-K authorities 23-25 Oct. Presidents Sargsyan and Aliyev each reiterated agreement reported in May and June to expand Office of Personal Representative of OSCE Chairperson-in-Office; U.S. co-chair James Warlick in 25 Oct Yerevan meeting emphasised need to discuss all elements of a comprehensive settlement. Warlick 27 Oct said Azerbaijani and Armenian FMs will meet at OSCE meeting in Germany 8-9 Dec. Month saw moderate increase in rate and intensity of ceasefire violations along line of contact (LoC). Mutual accusations of ceasefire violations continued; among others Nagorno-Karabakh's ethnic Armenian forces mid-month reported "first attempted incursion" by Azerbaijani forces since April; Baku claimed Armenian units were responsible for numerous violations, including use of large calibre machine guns.

✚ Russia/North Caucasus OCTOBER 2016

Month saw increase in conflict-related casualties, detentions and counter-terrorism operations across NC region, with more than 47 people, mostly suspected militants, reported injured or killed. National Antiterrorist Committee (NAK) 7 Oct reported two militants and a female civilian killed in Ingush town Nazran, one identified as former Islamic State (IS) militant returned from Syria. Two other alleged fighters killed in Gazi-Yurt village same day. In Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Federal Security Service (FSB) officials 20 Oct detained six militants, allegedly IS members. Chechen interior ministry reported shootout 8 Oct between eight militants and police at mobile checkpoint in Chechnya; four police injured, all militants reported dead. Police in Kabardino-Balkaria 13 Oct killed three militants reportedly involved in 2005 murder of policemen in Prokhladny and in 9 Oct incident in which four attackers killed two policemen. Eight alleged militants apprehended and killed under counter-terrorist operation (CTO) across Dagestan 10-17 Oct. Some 50 people detained near Salafi mosque in Dagestan's capital Makhachkala 30 Sept by Centre to Counteract Extremism and District Interior Division officials, photographed and fingerprinted before being released. NC Regional Military Court 24 Oct convicted Daghestani Islamic cleric Magomednabi Magomedov on terrorism charges; Moscow-based Memorial human rights centre said charges politically motivated. IS claimed responsibility for 23 Oct armed attack on security forces in Nizhny Novgorod east of Moscow; two suspects who opened fire on police killed by security forces.

➔ Moldova OCTOBER 2016

Presidential election 30 Oct, first in twenty years by popular rather than parliamentary vote, saw pro-Russian candidate Igor Dodon win 48.26%, ahead of pro-Europe candidate Maia Sandu with 38.42%; vote to go to second round 13 Nov.

➔ Ukraine OCTOBER 2016

German, French, Ukrainian and Russian presidents met in Berlin under Normandy format for first time in a year 19-20 Oct; announced plans to draw up roadmap to carry out Feb 2015 Minsk agreement, but confirmed that order in which steps of Minsk agreement are implemented would not change. Also discussed zones of disengagement in east. As efforts to separate troops on front line continued substantial exchanges of fire continued, including around industrial town Avdiivka and near Mariupol; Kyiv 28 Oct reported one serviceman killed in fighting, while separatist and Russian news agencies reported several separatist fighters and three civilians killed in fighting late month. In Kyiv, creation of new National Corps party mid-Oct from radical nationalist Azov military battalion was celebrated by veterans marching through city on “Defenders Day” annual holiday; National Corps party’s leader is first Azov commander Andrey Biletsky. Well-known Russian Donetsk People’s Republic (DNR) commander Arsen Pavlov aka “Motorola” killed along with bodyguard 16 Oct by bomb in lift of his apartment building; DNR leadership blamed Ukrainian special forces, though some DNR figures questioned the claim. Ahead of 30 Oct deadline for electronic declarations of income by some 50,000 Ukrainian politicians and officials, reform faced ongoing resistance despite link to EU visa-free regime; President Poroshenko submitted his declaration of income on last day.

- [COMMENTARY: Ukraine’s Unlucky Town Called Happiness](#)

➔ Cyprus OCTOBER 2016

UN-brokered reunification talks between Greek Cypriot President Anastasiades and Turkish Cypriot leader Akıncı continued following Anastasiades' late Sept rejection of roadmap for next steps in negotiation process. Speaking after meeting with Anastasiades 13 Oct, Akıncı said that peace deal without rotating presidency model "is out of question". U.S. Asst Sec State Victoria Nuland met with both Akıncı and Anastasiades 13 October; after his meeting Anastasiades reiterated he would not accept peace deal involving continued presence of Turkish troops on island. Leaders agreed to continue talks in Switzerland 7-11 Nov, focusing on territory for the first time.

→ Turkey OCTOBER 2016

Clashes between state security forces and PKK militants continued in south east at high intensity, together with attacks resulting in death of 49 state security force members, at least 67 PKK/PKK-affiliated militants, and at least fifteen civilians during month. PKK militants killed two AKP officials in Van and Diyarbakır provinces early Oct. Ten civilians wounded in attack near police station in Istanbul's Yenibosna district 6 Oct; ten soldiers and five civilians killed in PKK suicide bomb attack targeting military checkpoint in Şemdinli district, Hakkari province 9 Oct. Co-mayors of Diyarbakır province Gültan Kışanak and Fırat Anlı arrested 30 Oct. Ankara's Euphrates Shield operation in N Syria continued, with Turkish-backed Free Syrian Army fighters capturing symbolically important town Dabiq and Soran 16 Oct (see Syria). Speaking to press same day, FM Çavuşoğlu said operation would continue to push toward el-Bab. Turkish media 19 Oct reported military had struck YPG/PYD targets in N Syrian Mare in attempt to prevent Kurdish PYD/YPG advances into el-Bab; military announced 160-200 PYD/YPG militants killed in offensive, Kurdish sources cited much smaller numbers. Explosion in Beşyüzevler district of Gaziantep in country's west during raid of suspected IS cell house killed three police officers 16 Oct. PM Yıldırım 18 Oct stated that Turkish fighter jets and some 3,000 Turkey-trained Sunni rebels participated in Mosul offensive in Iraq (see Iraq). Govt continued crackdown against alleged members of state-christened FETÖ/PDY, extended state of emergency for another three-month period. Debate over ushering in presidential system reignited 12 Oct when PM Yıldırım announced that ruling AKP would submit its own constitutional draft for a presidential system to parliament. Opposition CHP and HDP parties heavily criticised proposal, while MHP leader Devlet Bahçeli said his party could support putting matter to referendum if govt's proposal is in line with MHP sensitivities. Editor-in-chief and four other journalists of daily opposition newspaper Cumhuriyet taken into custody 31 Oct.

→ Kazakhstan OCTOBER 2016

Energy sector continued to falter, with govt 10 Oct announcing plans to cut up to 3,500 oil industry jobs. Operations of delayed Kashagan oil field project in northern Caspian Sea resumed 12 Oct. 2,300

oil workers in Janaozen went on strike late Sept against reduced salaries. Minister of religious affairs 14 Oct called Salafi branch of Islam “destructive threat to Kazakhstan”, said ministry will target and ban Salafi-inspired extremist and terrorist organisations. Trial opened 18 Oct of 29 alleged militants who carried out attacks in Aktobe in June 2016. Trial began 31 Oct of eight alleged Islamic extremists in Karaganda.

➔ Kyrgyzstan OCTOBER 2016

Govt resigned 26 Oct following collapse of coalition after inter-elite political tensions continued to mount ahead of 11 Dec controversial referendum on series of constitutional amendments, which is taking place despite 2010 moratorium on constitutional changes before 2020. Amendments will expand powers of executive and legislative branches, prioritise Supreme Court decisions over international agreements, and give parliament authority to dismiss Supreme Court and local judges, which observers fear could undermine independence of judiciary. Former Deputy Head of State Committee for National Security (GKNB) Marat Imankulov 29 Sept criticised amendments, accused authorities and president of abuse of power; group of 600 opposition politicians, activists and lawyers 8 Oct called for govt to abandon amendments. Referendum will be held same way as local elections. Re-trial opened 4 Oct of ethnic Uzbek activist Azimjan Askarov convicted for allegedly killing ethnic Kyrgyz police officer in 2010; Askarov denies charge, said conviction politically motivated. U.S. and UK embassies 8 Oct issued security alerts warning of possible terror attacks targeting authorities, diplomats, in first warning of its kind for Kyrgyzstan. Propaganda video released 5 Oct by al-Nusra, who security services connected to Aug Chinese embassy attack, showed three Kyrgyz citizens condemning Kyrgyz president and authorities. President Atambayev 1 Oct returned to Kyrgyzstan after two-week treatment for heart attack.

- [COMMENTARY: Picturing Islam in Kyrgyzstan](#)

➔ Tajikistan OCTOBER 2016

Tajik delegation 20 Sept walked out of annual OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw in protest at participation of activists from Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) demanding release of imprisoned IRPT members; Human Rights Watch reported “violent acts of retaliation” against activists’ relatives in Tajikistan. Joint anti-terror drills with China started 20 Oct near Afghan border. President Rahmon 29 Oct launched construction of Rogun hydroelectric dam.

➔ Turkmenistan OCTOBER 2016

Presidential elections scheduled for 12 Feb 2017, first to be held under newly-introduced constitutional amendments which raised term limit to seven years and scrapped upper age limit for presidency. Amid ongoing concerns over security along Afghan border, Afghan first VP 16 Oct reported over 7,000 Islamic State fighters trying to make their way to Afghanistan's northern provinces near border with Turkmenistan for next fighting season in 2017.

➔ Uzbekistan OCTOBER 2016

Ahead of Dec presidential elections, acting President Mirziyoyev led efforts to repair relations with neighbouring countries. Govt 26 Sept signed agreement with Turkmenistan to increase trade; FM and Tajik President Rahmon meeting in Dushanbe 29 Sept pledged to restore railway and air connections, increase economic cooperation; Kyrgyz delegation 1 Oct visited Andijan, met Uzbek Deputy PM Adkhan Ikramov; Uzbek delegation 26 Oct visited Osh, Kyrgyzstan. President 11 Oct highlighted need to increase trade and cooperation with Afghanistan.

- **OP-ED: Starting Anew in Uzbekistan**

Latin America & Caribbean

➔ Colombia OCTOBER 2016

2 Oct plebiscite to approve final peace agreement between govt and Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) lost unexpectedly by margin of less than 0.5%, with voter turnout reported at 37%. President Santos immediately called for dialogue with other political forces to renegotiate disputed parts of accord; various opposition parties and movements, foremost former President Uribe's Democratic Centre party, handed in series of proposed changes, some minor and others touching on fundamentals of agreement. Govt and FARC negotiators resumed discussions in Havana 4 Oct. FARC expressed willingness to make adjustments and changes, but said will not renegotiate substance of agreement. Talks between govt and FARC continued, resulting in 28 Oct communiqué highlighting willingness to find a solution. FARC commanders remain in Havana, while some 6,000 FARC fighters

currently in around 50 “pre-concentration” sites across country. Supporters of peace deal marched in Bogotá and other cities 5 and 12 Oct calling for quick peace deal with FARC. Govt 13 Oct extended ceasefire to 31 Dec. Govt and Colombia’s second largest guerrilla group ELN announced peace talks will begin 3 Nov in Ecuador, however govt still waiting for Odín Sánchez, politician kidnapped by ELN, to be released before initiating talks. Fighting between army and ELN in east and SW mid Oct left two guerrilla fighters dead; 24 members of group demobilised 17 Oct in Chocó province, seriously weakening ELN’s Cimarrón Resistance Front. Clan Úsuga/Gaitán Self-defence Forces (GSF), country’s largest drug trafficking organisation, released communiqué 8 Oct stating again that it would be disposed to political negotiations with govt, despite govt’s insistence that GSF are not a politically-motivated group. Four mid-level commanders of group captured or killed in police operations late Sept-Oct.

- **OP-ED: Una estrategia política para la renegociación del Acuerdo**

✈ Venezuela OCTOBER 2016

National Electoral Council (CNE) 20 Oct indefinitely suspended process of signature-gathering by opposition Democratic Unity (MUD) alliance trying to trigger recall referendum against President Nicolás Maduro, exacerbating political conflict and blocking electoral solution. CNE decision cited rulings of five lower courts from different regions, all run by pro-regime governors, based on alleged fraud in initial opposition petition for recall referendum. Shortly after CNE announcement, court Valencia ruled eight opposition leaders no longer allowed to leave country. Govt-controlled Supreme Court (TSJ) 11 Oct abolished constitutional requirement that national budget be approved by parliament, leaving opposition-controlled National Assembly effectively powerless. Govt reportedly refusing to pay salaries, expenses of assembly members. Opposition decried what it called establishment of dictatorial rule in Venezuela, launched so-called “political trial” of Maduro by parliament. Nationwide protest 26 Oct ended with decision to march on presidential palace 3 Nov to demand Maduro’s resignation. Maduro 20 Oct left for tour of oil-producing nations in Central Asia and Middle East. Following suspension of referendum, twelve members of Organization of American States (OAS) including Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and U.S. issued joint statement declaring “deep concern”. After intervention by Vatican, MUD and govt representatives 31 Oct agreed agenda for talks jointly facilitated by Vatican and Union of South American Nations (UNASUR); however MUD split over issue, threatened to walk away if substantive progress not made in short term. Govt later same day released five opposition politicians.

- **COMMENTARY: Crisis-hit Venezuela’s Political Rivals Stumble Towards Talks**

➡ Guatemala OCTOBER 2016

President Morales' administration faced fresh obstacles: Morales 4 Oct forced to backtrack on his 23 Sept decision to declare state of emergency in rain-affected parts of country, which would have limited constitutional liberties of assembly and expression and allowed exemption of contracts and procurement law to use funds directly; Supreme Court assigned judge to consider lifting Morales', VP's and cabinet members' immunity for signing decree. Media reports 29-30 Sept questioned VP's honesty regarding how much and who pays rent for mansion where he lives, while UN-backed International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) and Attorney General's Office (AGO) revealed alleged involvement of president's brother and son in corruption scandal. CICIG and AGO expanded efforts against corruption and organised crime in interior, with creation 10 Oct of new offices in Quetzaltenango, main city in Western Highlands, where powerful narcotics, human and weapons trafficking networks operate. Continued threats against life of attorney general and special judge handling most prominent corruption cases.

📌 Haiti OCTOBER 2016

Hurricane Matthew struck Haiti 4 Oct killing 546 people according to official reports, creating worst humanitarian crisis since 2010 earthquake and prompting cancellation of 9 Oct elections. UN reported 1.4 million people in need of humanitarian aid, 800,000 requiring urgent help, 150,000 displaced; South and Grand'Anse departments worst affected. Communication networks and public infrastructure out of service, reports of attacks and looting of aid convoys; spread of cholera intensified. Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) re-scheduled first round of repeat presidential and parliamentary elections for 20 Nov, second round for 29 Jan 2017. However many voting centres damaged, destroyed or inaccessible, many Haitians lost ID documents. UNSC renewed mandate of MINUSTAH for six months until 15 April 2017.

➡ Mexico OCTOBER 2016

President Peña Nieto's PRI party faced new scandals, including resignation 12 Oct of ex-Veracruz governor Javier Duarte, target of federal corruption investigation, suspected of creating system that diverted public funds to net of fictitious companies; Duarte went into hiding after issue of arrest warrant 15 Oct. Five killed in ambush on military convoy in Culiacán (Sinaloa) 30 Sept, thought to be organised by Sinaloa Cartel, in conflict with Beltrán Leyva cartel in region; govt subsequently stationed military in region. In Baja California state, Cartel Jalisco Nueva Generación (CJNG) reported to be cooperating with Arellano Félix cartel to create Tijuana Nueva Generación (CTNG), to challenge

Sinaloa. In San Pedro (Coahuila), NGO early Oct discovered hundreds of bone fragments in site of mass executions by Los Zetas. National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) 30 Sept asked for investigations into 42 members of state government over irregularities in investigations concerning graves in Morelos, discovered in June and containing 119 bodies. New search for 43 students who disappeared from Ayotzinapa in 2014 launched 17 Oct. Three university students who went missing in Veracruz 29 Sept found dead; Aug homicide figures showed Veracruz country's most violent state with 229 registered homicides.

Middle East & North Africa

➔ Israel/Palestine OCTOBER 2016

Palestinian Supreme Court 3 Oct ruled that municipal elections, originally scheduled for 8 Oct and suspended early Sept over inability to hold vote in E Jerusalem, could take place in W Bank alone. Central Election Commission recommended all elections be postponed for six months to allow time to prepare for them to be held in both territories; Palestinian Authority (PA) 4 Oct announced elections would be postponed indefinitely. President Abbas criticised by many Palestinians for attending 30 Sept funeral of former Israeli President/PM Shimon Peres, which Arab Knesset members refused to attend. As Jewish high holidays began, Israeli security forces 6 Oct shut down three bodies linked to outlawed northern Islamic Movement. Hamas-affiliated Palestinian from Jerusalem's Murabitoun (Guardians of al-Aqsa) 9 Oct shot dead two Israelis, injured four; Israeli politicians called for blocking most Arabs from Jewish parts of city. Israeli police killed Palestinian man in E Jerusalem 12 Oct. In Gaza, Israel launched airstrikes 5 Oct and again 24 Oct in retaliation for rocket fire from Islamic State (IS)-affiliated Ahfad al-Sahaba Aknaf Bayt al-Maqdis. Palestinian man shot dead after opening fire on and wounding Israeli soldiers in West Bank 31 Oct. Amid worsening conditions in Gaza, Egypt 15-16 Oct opened Rafah crossing, allowing 783 Gazans to leave. U.S. 5 Oct condemned plans to build 98 housing units east of Shilo, north of illegal Amona outpost; PM Netanyahu asked Supreme Court to postpone evacuation of Amona for six months. UNSC 14 Oct discussed effect of settlements on proposed two state solution. Israel condemned UNESCO resolution on Jerusalem's Holy Esplanade 13 Oct over its sole use of Muslim name Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif to refer to site. Israel and Turkey 13 Oct held first meeting at ministerial level since June 2016 reconciliation to discuss energy exports.

- **OP-ED: Don't Let Symbols Blind You to the Mundane at the Temple Mount**

➔ Lebanon OCTOBER 2016

Parliament 31 Oct elected leader of Free Patriotic Movement Michel Aoun president of Lebanon, ending presidential vacuum after 45 failed attempts to elect president since May 2014. Breakthrough came after former PM Saad Hariri 20 Oct endorsed Aoun, who is Maronite Christian and Hizbollah ally, for presidency, in order to “protect Lebanon ... protect the state and protect the Lebanese people”. Eight Syrian nationals detained on terrorism charges 19 Oct; alleged targets included UN peacekeeping forces, tourists.

➔ Syria OCTOBER 2016

Multinational pro-regime offensive against rebel-held eastern Aleppo continued, backed by Russian-Syrian air campaign, making significant gains early Oct. Hundreds reported killed in city during month, including in attacks on hospitals and other civilian infrastructure. U.S. 3 Oct suspended talks with Russia on cessation of hostilities in response to intensifying airstrikes in Aleppo; also suspended 9 Sept agreement on military cooperation to mount joint operations against IS and Fath al-Sham (formerly Jabhat al-Nusra). UN Envoy Staffan de Mistura 6 Oct proposed end to Aleppo offensive in exchange for withdrawal of some 900 Fath al-Sham fighters; Fath al-Sham and other rebels rejected proposal. Russia 8 Oct vetoed UNSC resolution demanding end to bombing of Aleppo. Meeting of U.S., Russian, Iranian, Saudi, Turkish, Qatari, Jordanian and Egyptian FMs in Switzerland 15 Oct yielded no discernable progress. U.S. and UK 19 Oct called for “credible” ceasefire as precondition for reopening talks, dismissing Russian offer of shorter humanitarian pauses; intense fighting resumed after three-day humanitarian ceasefire ended 23 Oct. As rebel forces launched operation to break siege 28 Oct, de Mistura 31 Oct said he was “appalled and shocked”, warned that indiscriminate targeting of civilian areas including with heavy weapons “could amount to war crimes”. EU leaders 21 Oct failed to agree on initiative to impose sanctions on Russia over Aleppo bombing. UNSG Ban called for investigation into airstrike on rebel-held Idlib province 26 Oct which hit school killing 35, mostly children. Amnesty International reported at least 300 civilians killed in U.S.-led coalition airstrikes against IS in Syria over two years, over half during campaign for Manbij. Turkish-rebel offensive against IS made further progress, clearing roughly 1,200 km² area along border including symbolically important Dabiq town, captured 16 Oct. Turkey and Kurdish YPG forces competing to capture IS-held al-Bab, east of Aleppo; U.S., allied with both, continued to urge caution. With advance on IS stronghold in Iraq Mosul ongoing (see Iraq), U.S. 26 Oct said campaign to capture Raqqa will begin in “next few weeks”, with urgency driven by intelligence that IS planning “significant external operations” from city; YPG has insisted it will not provide ground troops for offensive on Raqqa city unless U.S. approves its move toward al-Bab. UN investigators 21 Oct reported regime responsible for a third chemical attack in Idlib province in March 2015.

➔ Bahrain OCTOBER 2016

Court 17 Oct overturned nine-year sentence of opposition al-Wefaq movement leader Sheikh Ali Salman handed down for allegedly advocating forceful regime change, and called for retrial. Journalist Faisal Hayyat reportedly detained 9 Oct for alleged defamatory tweet.

➔ Iran OCTOBER 2016

U.S. 7 Oct issued third set of guidelines on doing business with Iran since sanctions lifted Jan 2016, clarified that non-Americans can do dollar-denominated transactions with Iran if they do not involve U.S. financial system. Govt 13 Oct deployed two warships into Gulf of Aden reportedly “to protect trade vessels from piracy” after U.S. warship launched missile attack on coastal radar stations of Iran-backed Yemeni Huthi rebels in retaliation for failed missile strikes from Huthi-controlled territory. State media 18 Oct reported that Iranian-American businessman and his father had been sentenced to ten years in prison for alleged spying. In north east, another Iranian-American sentenced 22 Oct to eighteen years in prison for “collaborating with hostile govt”.

- [OP-ED: Effective Sanctions Relief on Iran for Sanctions' Sake](#)

➔ Iraq OCTOBER 2016

U.S.-backed govt forces and allied militias 16 Oct began campaign to retake Mosul in north from Islamic State (IS), and reportedly ousted IS fighters from some 90 surrounding villages. IS captured parts of Rutba town, Anbar province in west on road from Baghdad to Jordan and Syria 23 Oct. Iraq-Turkey tensions heightened over Turkey's involvement in Mosul offensive: Turkish President Erdoğan 6 Oct reiterated intention to participate and told PM Abadi to “know his limits”; Abadi 22 Oct said Turkey should respect Iraq's sovereignty and rejected offer of support; Turkish artillery 23 Oct shelled IS near Bashiqa near Mosul; U.S. President Obama 26 Oct asked Erdoğan to coordinate actions with Baghdad and Washington DC. Iraqi forces 31 Oct clashed with IS in Mosul's eastern Karama neighbourhood.

→ Saudi Arabia OCTOBER 2016

Huthi rebels in Yemen continued missile attacks on targets in Saudi Arabia: missile fired 9 Oct reportedly targeting military base in Taif, Mecca province landed in Taif but caused no damage; missile fired 17 Oct reportedly hit Al-Mosem base, Jizan region, killing five soldiers and injuring ten. Missile fired 27 Oct, targeting Mecca according to Saudi sources but according to Huthis targeting Jeddah international airport 75km NW of Mecca, caused no damage according to Saudi sources.

→ Yemen OCTOBER 2016

Saudi-led coalition airstrikes and rebel missile attacks continued, undermining UN attempts to secure a ceasefire and renew peace talks. Saudi-led coalition 8 Oct bombed funeral in Sanaa, killing at least 140 including mayor of Sanaa and several military generals and injuring over 500. Next day Huthi rebels aligned with former President Saleh launched two missiles into Saudi Arabia, including one reportedly targeting military base in Taif some 520km from Yemen border (see Saudi Arabia). Under UK and U.S. pressure, Saudi-led coalition 15 Oct acknowledged responsibility for funeral bombing but blamed wrong intelligence from govt of internationally recognised President Hadi; allowed Huthi-Saleh negotiating team to return from Omani capital Muscat to Sanaa 15 Oct and for same plane to evacuate wounded. Huthi forces reportedly launched missiles at U.S. warships in Red Sea 9, 12 and 15 Oct but missed; Huthis denied responsibility, but U.S. warships 13 Oct retaliated with missile strikes on three Huthi-controlled coastal radar stations. UK, U.S. and UN special envoy 16 Oct called for immediate unconditional ceasefire and resumption of talks. Both sides broke UN-sponsored 72-hour ceasefire 20-22 Oct. Hadi 29 Oct rejected UN peace plan including Huthi withdrawals and new unity govt. Car bomb exploded same day outside central bank HQ in Aden, moved from Sanaa in Sept, and Saudi-led coalition airstrikes killed twelve civilians from one family in Taiz in south and over 40 at prison in Hodeidah province in west. Huthis and allies 30 Oct conditionally accepted UN proposal as basis for further talks.

- [OP-ED: Yemen's Terrible War Is About to Get Worse](#)

→ Algeria OCTOBER 2016

Islamic State (IS) 8 Oct claimed bombing of military convoy in Skikda province (NE) same day, no casualties reported, and announced start of operations in country. Army 6 Oct killed Djamel Hennab, deputy of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb's emir Abdelmalek Droukdel, in Boumerdes (N); 13 Oct killed Habbache Sadek, also known as Aboud Doudjana, reportedly leader of IS-allied group Jund al-Khalifa, and another militant in ambush in Skikda province.

➔ Egypt OCTOBER 2016

Islamic State (IS)-related violence intensified in Sinai peninsula. Suspected members of IS-affiliate Sinai Province (SP) 14 Oct killed twelve soldiers in attack on checkpoint near Bir al-Abd, central Sinai; army said fifteen attackers also killed. Army 16 Oct announced new campaign against IS militants in Sinai: at least nineteen suspected militants and one soldier killed 17 Oct; six insurgents killed 18 Oct. Roadside bomb 18 Oct killed two policemen in Sheikh Zuweid. IED killed two policemen near al-Arish 21 Oct. Head of army division operating in N Sinai, Brigadier General Adel Ragaai, shot dead outside his Cairo home 22 Oct; little-known armed group Liwa al-Thawra claimed attack, govt said Muslim Brotherhood responsible. Roadside explosion 29 Oct killed senior military officer and soldier in N Sinai. Army 30 Oct said four soldiers and six militants killed in anti-IS operation around al-Arish. Car bomb injured three police and three civilians 30 Oct in al-Arish. Six inmates including Islamist militants 20 Oct broke out of prison in Ismailia in NE killing civilian and senior police officer; prosecutors 23 Oct ordered detention of fourteen policemen pending further investigation for alleged negligence and complicity.

➔ Libya OCTOBER 2016

Power struggles in Tripoli revealed weakening support for UN-backed PM-designate Serraj and his Presidency Council (PC). Former Tripoli-based PM Khalifa Ghwel and former members of defunct legislative body General National Congress (GNC) 14 Oct seized premises of State Council, advisory body formed under Libyan Political Agreement comprising mainly former GNC members, and declared themselves back in power. Ghwel same day called on eastern Tobruk-based House of Representatives (HoR) to join him and establish national govt against UN-backed Govt of National Accord. Units of Presidential Guard, nominally pro-Serraj force, and some Tripoli-based armed groups, especially those within umbrella coalition Libya Revolutionaries Operations Room, expressed support for Ghwel 14 Oct. Small clashes between opposed armed groups across Tripoli occurred same and following days. State Council 16 Oct said it was still operating and would relocate, Serraj 17 Oct vowed to

restore order, called on attorney general to arrest plotters. Meanwhile PC continued trying to draw up new cabinet to accommodate demands of Tobruk-based HoR parliamentarians supportive of General Khalifa Haftar, opposed to Serraj. Car exploded in eastern Benghazi 29 Oct, killing at least three including political activist close to Haftar. Misratan-led forces, nominally loyal to PC, continued to fight Islamic State (IS) in Sirte, at least eight killed 2 Oct repelling IS ambush. Serraj met world leaders for crisis talks in London 31 Oct.

➔ Mauritania OCTOBER 2016

National dialogue 20 Oct agreed to amend constitution, proposed changes include dissolving senate and establishing regional councils. President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz same day confirmed he will not seek third term.

➔ Morocco OCTOBER 2016

Islamist Justice and Development Party (PJD) won 7 Oct parliamentary elections with 125 of 395 seats, while secular Authenticity and Modernity Party (PAM) took 102. PM Benkirane 12 Oct started consultations with party leaders of current ruling majority on formation of new cabinet. Govt 3 Oct said security forces dismantled suspected Islamic State cell operating in several regions, arrested ten women suspected of planning attacks. Death of fish seller 28 Oct in northern town al-Hoceima after police threw his swordfish into rubbish compactor since catching it at this time of year is prohibited and he jumped in to retrieve it, sparked protests in several cities 30 Oct calling for police accountability and end to “state contempt”.

➔ Tunisia OCTOBER 2016

Under pressure from IMF to cut spending, govt 14 Oct sent 2017 budget law to parliament for approval; budget will freeze wage increases for one year in public sector despite opposition of trade union federation and raise indirect taxes for lawyers and physicians. Court 16 Oct said security forces

had dismantled 62-member Islamist militant cell that was planning attacks against security officials and senior govt official, reportedly Interior Minister Hedi Majdoub. President Essebsi 18 Oct extended state of emergency for three months until Jan 2017.

➔ Western Sahara OCTOBER 2016

Morocco criticised Egypt for hosting delegation of Polisario Front armed independence movement at Arab-African parliamentary congress in Sharm al-Sheikh mid-Oct, Egypt said Pan-African Parliament invited group. U.S. 18 Oct proposed UNSC mission to Western Sahara to speed up UN resolution of conflict between Morocco and Polisario Front, Polisario Front representative at UN welcomed proposal and told media “no opposition” to it among UNSC members.