In June, Iran–U.S. tensions continued to climb, raising the risk of a military conflagration. Yemen’s Huthi forces, seen as Iran-backed, increased the pace of strikes in Saudi Arabia, which in turn stepped up bombing in Yemen. Attacks on U.S. assets in Iraq multiplied, and protests erupted in the south. High-level assassinations rocked Ethiopia, and Sudan’s security forces reportedly killed over 120 protesters. Major ethnic violence hit north east DR Congo and Mali’s centre and could escalate in both places. In Cameroon, violence raged in Anglophone areas and Boko Haram upped attacks. Political tensions rose in Guinea, Malawi and Tunisia, and Algeria could enter a constitutional void in July, possibly inflaming protests and
repression. In both Honduras and Haiti, anti-government protests turned deadly. In the Caucasus, killings in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone pushed up tensions, and in Georgia anti-Russian sentiment fuelled major protests. Widespread repression marred Kazakhstan’s elections. In a positive step, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and U.S. President Trump agreed to restart talks on denuclearisation.

In his introduction to this month’s edition of CrisisWatch, Crisis Group’s conflict tracker, our President Robert Malley urges the U.S. and Iran to step back from a dangerous conflagration and calls f...

Continue reading

Tensions between Iran and its allies on one hand and the U.S. and its allies on the other rose to alarming levels in June, raising the risk of more intense political and military confrontation in July. The U.S. blamed explosions on two tankers in the Gulf of Oman on Iran, which denied responsibility. Fanning the fire, Iran downed a U.S. drone on 20 June off the Iranian coast, which nearly led to U.S. strikes on Iranian soil. Huthi forces in Yemen, whom Riyadh considers Iranian proxies, stepped up the pace of cross-border attacks into Saudi Arabia. Riyadh in turn intensified bombing of Huthi areas in Yemen, especially in the capital Sanaa, risking a further aggravation in July. Meanwhile, in Iraq, unclaimed attacks on U.S. assets multiplied and protests erupted in the south, with demonstrators demanding more jobs and better services. To avoid a military conflagration, Iran and the U.S. can still and should walk back from the brink.

In the Horn of Africa, high-level murders in Ethiopia exposed a dangerous power struggle. Gunmen shot and killed five officials, including the leader of Amhara state, the second-largest federal region, and the military chief-of-staff, triggering a wave of arrests targeting ethnic Amhara nationalists. The ruling coalition and government should take urgent steps to restore calm, including a clear commitment by Prime Minister Abiy to try to rein in discord within the ruling alliance. Security forces in Sudan unleashed attacks on protesters early June reportedly killing over 120 and the military leadership continued to resist demands to hand over power to civilians. To...
prevent widespread conflict, world leaders, including Sudan’s Arab backers, must press the military to resume talks toward a civilian-led transitional administration.

In north east DR Congo, longstanding enmity between ethnic Hema and Lendu in Ituri province erupted in attacks that have left at least 170 dead and, with tensions still high, the toll could climb in coming weeks. In Cameroon, Boko Haram upped attacks on security forces and civilians in the Far North and violence intensified in the west as government forces continued efforts to crush the Anglophone separatist insurgency. In Mali’s troubled centre, ethnic Fulanis carried out large-scale attacks – suggesting a new level of organisation and ambition – leaving at least 73 dead and raising the risk of reprisals in July.

Ahead of Guinea’s 2020 presidential polls, tensions continued to rise between those supporting and those opposing a third term for President Condé and security forces violently suppressed an opposition march. In Malawi, thousands demonstrated to denounce alleged vote-rigging in May’s election, which President Mutharika narrowly won. With neither side backing down, the confrontation could escalate in July.

Meanwhile, in North Africa, tensions mounted in Tunisia between the ruling coalition and opposition when parliamentarians voted to change the eligibility criteria for presidential candidates. If signed into law, the amendments would bar three opposition front-runners from taking part in polls due later this year. President Essebsi’s “severe health crisis” also sparked speculations about a possible power vacuum. Algeria could enter a constitutional void in early July when interim President Bensalah’s mandate ends, possibly leading to more intense protests and repression.

In Latin America, tensions increased in Honduras, where protesters initially demonstrating against planned health and education reforms clashed with police, leading to several deaths and the army deploying across the country to maintain order. Deadly protests also rocked Haiti, with demonstrators demanding President Moïse resign over corruption allegations.

Tensions rose in Georgia and between Georgia and Russia when a Russian legislator visiting parliament committed what was seen as an insult to Georgia on live TV, sparking mass protests. The killing of four soldiers in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone strained relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia. In Kazakhstan, widespread repression of protesters and arrests of journalists marred presidential elections.

Finally, on a positive note, U.S. President Trump and North Korea’s leader Kim Jong-un held a meeting in the demilitarised zone between North and South Korea. Although both agreed to restart denuclearisation talks, all
parties will now need to work toward realistic goals based on mutual concessions to build confidence and generate momentum.

Latest Updates

Africa

Burkina Faso  JUNE 2019

Violence involving security forces, self-defence groups and jihadist groups Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) and Group to Support Islam and Muslims (JNIM) continued to extract heavy toll on civilians especially in Sahel, North, Centre-North and East regions. Notably, in Soum province, Sahel region, suspected jihadists 10 June attacked Arbinda village killing nineteen civilians and 19 June attacked Belehede village, reportedly killing seventeen civilians. Jihadists 22 June attacked Sagho and Toékodogo villages, Centre-North region, killing fifteen. Unidentified assailants killed Guibga village chief, Centre-North, night of 25-26 June. Gendarmerie patrol ambushed near Arbinda 24 June, two gendarmes killed. Govt 17 June announced creation of commission on national security to strengthen security forces, amid growing accusations that they have committed human rights abuses. Govt’s early June proposal to introduce law permitting authorities to imprison people for up to ten years for sharing information on military operations sparked concern among civil society that law could curb free expression and criminalise work of journalists and advocacy groups. Govt early June welcomed ruling by France’s highest court approving extradition of François Compaoré, brother of ousted former President Blaise Compaoré; François Compaoré faces prosecution for murder of journalist in 1998; decree by French govt needed for extradition to go ahead.

Mali  JUNE 2019

Ethnic militia carried out large-scale attacks in centre leaving at least 73 dead and raising risk of reprisals in July, and insecurity persisted in north. In Bandiagara circle, Mopti region, suspected Fulani gunmen 9 June attacked Dogon village of Sobane Da, killing between 35 and 95, and 17 June attacked Dogon villages of Gangafani and Yoro, killing at least 38. Dogon militiamen (Dozos) said Sobane attack was “declaration of war”. President Keïta and PM Cissé 11-12 June visited Sobane and promised strong
measures, including immediate disarmament of all armed individuals. Keïta 20 June announced appointment of Dioncounda Traoré as High Representative for Central Mali to spearhead efforts to halt attacks. Unidentified assailants 23-24 June killed eight civilians in different attacks in Koro and Douentza circles, Mopti region and Macina circle, Séguéla region. In north, violence increased in Ansongo circle, Gao region: unidentified assailants 5 June reportedly raped thirteen women and six girls in Gariya; attack in ethnic Daousak village of Amalaoulou 5 June killed seven. In joint military operation on Niger-Mali border 7-19 June, Malian and French forces killed twenty suspected jihadist militants in Akabar area. Govt 12 June asked for more UN peacekeepers to help protect civilians in centre; UN Security Council 27 June renewed UN mission (MINUSMA)'s mandate for one year, requesting it to respond to deteriorating security in centre in addition to original mandate of stabilising north. Some UN Security Council members, including U.S., urged parties that signed 2015 Algiers peace agreement to step up implementation. As part of govt efforts to implement deal, over 200 disarmed and demobilised former combatants of Mécanisme Opérationnel de Coordination (MOC) arrived in capital Bamako 12 June to start three-month military training before integration into army. National assembly 27 June passed bill proposed by govt to extend MPs' mandate to 2 May 2020, notably due to insecurity in centre. Opposition leader Soumaïla Cissé 13 June described bill as "illegal".

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**Niger** JUNE 2019

Violence continued in south east near Nigeria and in west near Mali, and new law empowering authorities to monitor and sanction mosques and preachers sparked localised unrest. In Diffa region in south east, deadly attacks and kidnappings continued: Boko Haram (BH) faction Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) 8 June claimed abduction and killing of Christian near Bosso; suspected BH militants 9 June abducted thirteen in Alangayari; BH 10 June issued ultimatum to Christians to leave Diffa region; suspected BH militants 15 June killed NGO worker and driver in Tcholori; Fulani and Kanuri tribesmen 12 June clashed in Loumbouroum, four reportedly killed; clashes between farmers and herdsmen in Chetiare killed eleven mid-June. Govt 3 June said it had thwarted attacks in Diffa city and capital Niamey, and that security forces 2 June killed 53 suspected Islamist militants in joint operation with Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) near Lake Chad. Violence continued in Tillabery region in west: near border with Mali, joint operation involving U.S., French and Niger troops killed eighteen Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) fighters 8-18 June; ISGS 4 June reportedly killed man in Alkongouli village; U.S. military vehicle 9 June detonated explosive device reportedly set by ISGS near Ouallam, no casualties. North of Niamey, unidentified gunmen 18 June attacked police station, killing two police officers. Parliament 17 June passed law that guarantees religious freedoms but empowers authorities to identify, monitor and sanction mosques and preachers, sparking outcry from Islamic civil society organisations and preachers. Police in Maradi in south 15 June arrested imam who criticised law as anti-Islamic, sparking riots in city; imam's supporters set fire to church. Imam released 16 June, retracted his criticism and called for calm. Parliament 24 June passed new electoral law despite opposition's boycott. Opposition same day filed vote of no confidence against govt of PM Rafini; parliament rejected it 28 June.
Burundi  JUNE 2019

Govt continued to repress dissent especially members of opposition party National Congress for Freedom (CNL). Authorities 2-3 June arrested two CNL members and local leader in Busoni, Kirundo province. Imbonerakure youth wing of ruling party CNDD-FDD 2 June attacked seven CNL members in Mubimbi, Bujumbura province; 9 June assaulted three CNL members in Ntega, Kirundo province; 16 June assaulted two CNL members and local leader in Murwi, Cibitoke province. After fire burnt down CNL headquarters in Nyabiraba, Bujumbura Rural province 15 June, CNL leader Agathon Rwasa held authorities responsible, but court 19 June sentenced nine CNL members to two years in prison for “complicity in arson”. Govt 3 June banned one of few remaining independent NGOs PARCEM for tarnishing country’s image and threatening peace and stability. Group of local NGOs linked to CNDD-FDD 8 June demonstrated in capital Bujumbura against French media for giving voice to dissidents. Burundi refused to take part in meeting of security sector officials from Great Lakes region 5-6 June in DR Congo (DRC) capital Kinshasa on joint efforts to combat armed groups in eastern DRC. DRC President Tshisekedi visited President Nkurunziza 14 June and both committed to stabilising eastern DRC. UN Security Council same day held discussions on Burundi; Burundi and several other countries called for country’s removal from council’s agenda.

+ REPORT: Running Out of Options in Burundi

Cameroon  JUNE 2019

Boko Haram (BH) upped assaults on security forces and civilians in Far North, violence intensified in Anglophone areas in west, and authorities continued to repress opposition. In Far North, in deadliest attack since 2016, BH militants of Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) faction attacked Darak outpost of Multinational Joint Task Force on Lake Chad night of 9-10 June, fighting left at least sixteen Cameroonian soldiers and eight civilians dead, military claimed to have killed 64 militants. BH launched smaller attacks 9-22 June mostly in Logon-et-Chari division, but also Mayo-Tsanaga and Mayo-Sava, killing nine civilians and at least one soldier. Govt forces continued efforts to crush Anglophone separatist insurgency in Northwest and Southwest regions. In Northwest, dozens of ethnic Fulani, reportedly encouraged by security forces, attacked residents of Wum town 3 June leaving at least one dead. Following 9 June clashes between soldiers and separatists in Esu village (Northwest) which left one soldier dead, security forces reportedly attacked Esu killing twelve civilians. Near Bamenda, capital of Northwest region, suspected separatists 18 June ambushed army convoy killing one soldier; same day suspected separatists briefly kidnapped 40 people. In Southwest, suspected separatists 15 June detonated roadside bomb killing four police in Otu village. Suspected separatists kidnapped archbishop of Bamenda 24 June and main opposition party leader John Fru Ndi 28 June, releasing both after one day. Separatist group Ambazonia Interim Govt 22 June said it was holding informal talks with govt. Switzerland 27 June said conflict parties had talked it
holding informal talks with govt. Switzerland 27 June said conflict parties had tasked it with facilitating talks. Authorities cracked down on opposition protests in Yaoundé, Douala and other towns 1 June, arresting about 350; about 100 released 3 June. Security forces 8 June prevented further protests, arresting about 23. In Geneva, where President Biya was staying, some 250 Cameroonian 29 June protested, demanding end to his rule; security forces dispersed crowd as it marched on Biya's hotel.

Central African Republic

Violence involving armed groups continued at low level as govt and armed groups made some progress forming bodies to implement Feb peace agreement. In north west, suspected members of armed group Révolution et Justice/Sayo (RJ-Sayo) 16 June killed four herders in Ougo village, Ouham prefecture. UN 20 June said 90 RJ-Sayo fighters had demobilised 30 May-1 June. In centre, clashes between rebel group Union for Peace in Central African Republic (UPC) and anti-bakala militants 20 June reportedly left at least six dead. In Tiringoulou in north east, militants mostly from ex-Seleka armed group Popular Front for the Central African Renaissance (FPRC) dissatisfied with peace deal 28 May formed new armed group Parti du Rassemblement de la nation Centrafricaine (PNRC). PM Ngrebada 13 June presided over third session of Executive Monitoring Committee tasked with implementing Feb agreement. Justice minister next day opened first meeting of National Implementation Committee. Police 15 June assaulted and arrested two French journalists and one protester during peaceful opposition demonstration in capital, Bangui; journalists were released same day and protester 19 June.

REPORT: Making the Central African Republic's Latest Peace Agreement Stick

Chad

Clashes between Boko Haram (BH) and security forces continued in west and tensions emerged between govt and some international partners ahead of legislative elections later in 2019. In Lake Chad province in west, clashes between BH militants and security forces in Ngouboua 21 June left at least eleven soldiers and 26 BH combatants dead. Police 1 June used tear gas to disperse protests by youth-led movement Les Transformateurs in capital N’Djamena; German, Dutch and U.S. diplomats were reportedly present. Govt same day reportedly summoned Western diplomats to explain their presence at protest. U.S. embassy 7 June released statement pressing for credible parliamentary elections – due before end 2019 – and insisting that govt authorise political parties and allow them to organise meetings. Govt 10 June denounced statement as foreign interference in internal matter. French authorities 17 June arrested in France three Chadian opponents of President Déby including Mahamat Nouri, leader of rebel group based in southern Libya, Union of Democratic Forces for Development (UFDD), on suspicion of crimes against humanity committed in Chad and Sudan's Darfur region between 2005 and 2010.
**Democratic Republic of Congo**  
**JUNE 2019**

Ethnic violence erupted in Ituri province in north east and could escalate in July, insecurity and Ebola epidemic persisted in east, and opposition protested against constitutional court’s invalidation of over twenty of its legislative victories. In Ituri province in north east, longstanding enmity between ethnic Hema and Lendu erupted in clashes early June; by 18 June attacks and fighting in Djugu territory had left at least 170 dead. In North Kivu and Ituri provinces, by 23 June Ebola had killed over 1,500 since epidemic began in Aug 2018, and armed groups and communities continued to disrupt response. Two cases identified in neighbouring Uganda. Tshisekedi’s alliance Heading for Change (CACH) and Kabila’s coalition Common Front for Congo (FCC) 22 June agreed that of 45 ministries CACH members would head fifteen and FCC members 30; CACH would hold defence, foreign affairs and justice and FCC interior ministry, but Tshisekedi would choose interior minister. FCC contested Tshisekedi’s “unilateral” 3 June presidential orders to appoint new heads of national railways and mining company, which have yet to enter into force. In response, supporters of Tshisekedi’s party 10-11 June protested in capital Kinshasa, Lubumbashi and Goma, clashing with security forces in Kinshasa. Constitutional court 11 June invalidated election of 33 MPs in Dec polls, 23 of them from opposition Lamuka platform, in each case benefitting FCC. U.S., UK, Switzerland and Canada 14 June criticised decisions for “undermin[ing] a peaceful political climate”. Tshisekedi 17 June met constitutional court’s president, who promised to review decisions. Lamuka supporters defied govt ban and protested on independence day 30 June in Kinshasa and Goma, North Kivu; police violently dispersed protests, one killed in Goma. Several political exiles returned including former VP Jean-Pierre Bemba 23 June, who signalled his opposition to Tshisekedi. Tshisekedi 8 June submitted DRC’s application to join East African Community and 13 June visited Burundian President Nkurunziza.

**Rwanda**  
**JUNE 2019**

Tensions between Rwanda and Uganda persisted. Ugandan govt said that Rwandan security forces blocked some 200 Rwandan citizens from crossing into Uganda to attend religious festival 3 June. Rwanda 10 June reopened Katuna border crossing with Uganda for heavy cargo trucks for two weeks. Despite temporary opening, cross-border movement continued to face restrictions. Uganda 12 June reportedly deported twenty Rwandans.

**Eritrea**  
**JUNE 2019**
President Afwerki 14 June received in Asmara chairman of Sudanese Transitional Military Council for which he has expressed strong support.

**Ethiopia  JUNE 2019**

Several high-level killings, which govt described as attempted coup against Amhara state govt, heightened tensions and triggered police crackdown on Amhara opposition. Gunmen killed Amhara state leader Ambachew Mekonnen and two advisers in regional capital Bahir Dar 22 June. Hours later in capital Addis Ababa, bodyguard reportedly shot dead army chief of staff General Seare Mekonnen and retired officer. Govt 23 June said killings connected and part of attempt to take power in Amhara state led by Brigadier General Asaminew Tsige, head of Amhara state security. Govt same day imposed internet blackout that would last till 27 June. Security forces 24 June reportedly killed General Asaminew in firefight near Bahr Dar. Following attacks, police reportedly arrested over 250 suspects including Amhara security officers, opposition figures, and dozens of supporters of Amhara ethno-nationalist party National Movement of Amhara. In north west, unidentified assailants 24 June reportedly killed over 50 people in Metakel area of Benishangul-Gumuz region; regional govt 26 June said attack could be linked to alleged coup attempt. Ethnic Gumuz attackers early June killed five displaced ethnic Ahmara in same area. Parliament 12 June appointed four new members to electoral board, major step in preparation of elections.

- **STATEMENT: Restoring Calm in Ethiopia after High-profile Assassinations**

**Kenya  JUNE 2019**

Al-Shabaab continued attacks on security forces in north east near Somalia border and Kenya-Somalia tensions remained high over disputed maritime border. In north east, clashes between police reservists and suspected Al-Shabaab militants in Mandera county 3 June left one reservist and one militant dead. Al-Shabaab 13 June abducted three police reservists in Wajir county and took them into Gedo region in Somalia; policemen in pursuit of kidnappers 15 June hit roadside bomb which killed at least ten. Military vehicle detonated roadside bomb in Damasa area 21 June, two injured. Security forces 22 June killed at least three Al-Shabaab militants after they attacked police outpost in Garissa county. In coastal Lamu county, Al-Shabaab militants accidentally detonated explosive device 14 June, four militants killed. Somali govt document leaked early June showing that Somalia had in Feb put on auction offshore oil blocks in maritime area disputed between Somalia and Kenya. Arab Parliament, Arab League's parliamentary arm, 20 June called on Kenya to recognise Somalia’s maritime borders, and accused Kenya of violating Somalia’s sovereignty. International Court of Justice 25 June scheduled hearing for maritime border dispute for 9-13 Sept.
Somalia

Al-Shabaab kept up insurgency in capital Mogadishu and rural areas, tensions remained high between Puntland and Somaliland over contested areas and between Somalia and Kenya over disputed maritime border. In Mogadishu, Al-Shabaab 15 June launched two car bomb attacks in heavily secured govt areas killing eleven. In south, security forces killed five Al-Shabaab fighters in Gedo region 3-9 June; Al-Shabaab ambush of Kenyan soldiers in African Union mission (AMISOM) in Burgavo, Lower Juba 24 June left nine militants dead; clashes between security forces and Al-Shabaab near Bur Eyle, Bay region 22 June left eleven soldiers and five militants dead; Al-Shabaab attack on military base in Bulo Marer, Lower Shabelle 27 June left three militants and two soldiers dead; clashes between security forces and Al-Shabaab 27 June left at least eight militants dead in Jamame, Lower Juba; three Al-Shabaab militants surrendered to security forces in Bay and Gedeon regions 2-11 June. In north, Al-Shabaab fighters 8 June captured military base in Af-Uruur in Puntland only for Puntland forces to retake it 11 June without a fight; after suspected Al-Shabaab militants killed police officer near Galkayo, local militia 14 June killed nine members of Rahanweyn clan which it believes provides recruits to Al-Shabaab; Al-Shabaab bombing of teashop in Af-Uruur 25 June killed four Puntland soldiers and one civilian. Puntland and Somaliland forces 14 June reportedly clashed in Badhan town in Sanaag region, which both administrations claim, no casualties. U.S. claimed its airstrikes killed six Islamic State (ISIS) militants and four Al-Shabaab fighters 4-25 June. Arab Parliament, legislative arm of Arab League, 20 June called on Kenya to recognise Somalia’s maritime borders. International Court of Justice 25 June scheduled hearing for maritime border dispute between Somalia and Kenya for 9-13 Sept.

- **PODCAST:** How Women’s Support Energises Somalia’s Al-Shabaab

Somaliland

Somaliland 3 June released seventeen prisoners from Puntland captured during May-June 2018 clashes in contested town of Tukaraq in exchange for Puntland releasing three Somalilanders. Puntland and Somaliland forces 14 June clashed in Badhan town in contested Sanaag region, no casualties reported. Govt 18 June shut down two independent television stations, allowed them to reopen end month. Somaliland 25 June attended meeting in Kenyan capital Nairobi aimed at building consensus on path toward resuming Somaliland-Somalia talks; Somalia federal govt did not take part.

South Sudan
Implementation of Sept 2018 peace agreement continued to stall ahead of deadline to form unity govt, extended in May for six months to Nov. In anticipation of unification of all signatory forces into national army, main rebel group Sudan People's Liberation Army-In Opposition (SPLA-IO) late May and early June claimed it had started sending troops to cantonment without official funding or commencement of cantonment. Independent Boundaries Commission, body tasked with proposing number of states into which country should be divided, 20 June handed its report to regional bloc Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), but could not recommend specific number of states as it had failed to reach required supermajority on any proposal. President Kiir 12 June replaced petroleum minister. Govt 19 June sent envoy to Sudan to mediate between ruling military council and civilian opposition.

Sudan  JUNE 2019

Security forces escalated attacks on protesters in capital Khartoum and surrounding areas early June, reportedly killing over 120, and external efforts to mediate between military leadership and civilian opposition failed to revive talks. Paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) 3 June stormed sit-in protest outside army HQ in Khartoum, reportedly killing some 120 protesters. In following days paramilitary forces continued to roam Khartoum and abuse civilians and RSF reportedly resumed attacks in Darfur in west. African Union 6 June suspended Sudan’s participation in its activities until transition to civilian-led authority. After initially denying responsibility, Transitional Military Council (TMC) 14 June admitted ordering dispersal of sit-in. TMC 4 June cancelled all agreements with opposition coalition Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC), said it would form interim govt and hold elections within nine months, and imposed internet blackout; FFC same day called for countrywide strike and civil disobedience until TMC stepped down. On strike’s first day 9 June, security forces fired gunshots and tear gas to disperse protesters in Khartoum and Omdurman, reportedly killing four. Tens of thousands demonstrated countrywide 30 June; seven protesters reportedly killed in clashes with security forces. Ethiopian PM Abiy Ahmed and AU launched parallel mediation initiatives. Abiy 7 June met TMC chair al-Burhan and opposition in Khartoum. TMC same day detained protest leader Mohamed Esmat, 10 June deported leader, deputy and spokesman of rebel group and FFC member Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) to South Sudan. TMC 22 June pledged to free all imprisoned fighters from Darfuri armed opposition and hold talks with rebels in Chadian capital N’Djamena. TMC 9 June said it was willing to restart talks and FFC 12 June agreed to resume negotiations and end civil disobedience. FFC 22 June agreed to Ethiopian proposal for joint interim authority, but TMC rejected it 24 June. Ethiopia and AU next day submitted new joint proposal, including civilian-majority governing council, and TMC agreed to resume talks.

- STATEMENT: Sudan: Stopping a Spiral into Civil War
Uganda  JUNE 2019

Authorities continued to repress opposition and tensions between Uganda and Rwanda persisted. In Gulu in north, authorities 4 June attempted to break up rally organised by opposition group People Power, which triggered protests by residents, one activist injured. During press conference in Gulu 15 June to announce fundraising event for musician-turned-opposition MP Robert Kyagulanyi, known as Bobi Wine, authorities arrested event promoter. Ugandan govt said that Rwandan security forces blocked some 200 Rwandan citizens from crossing into Uganda to attend religious festival 3 June. Rwanda Revenue Authority 10 June reopened Katuna border crossing with Uganda for heavy cargo trucks for two weeks. Despite temporary opening, cross-border movement continued to face restrictions. Uganda 12 June reportedly deported twenty Rwandans.

Madagascar  JUNE 2019

Electoral commission 15 June released provisional results of 27 May legislative elections: of 151 seats, President Rajoelina’s coalition Isika Rehetra Miaraka amin’i Andry Rajoelina won 78 and leading opposition party Tiako i Madagasikara (TIM) of former President Marc Ravalomanana won seventeen; turnout reportedly low at 31%. TIM 51 May denounced campaign irregularities. Police 8 June arrested 27 soldiers accused of killing three civilians same day in extortion attempt in Ambohimahasoa area; soldiers reportedly threatened magistrates handling case.

Malawi  JUNE 2019

Following President Mutharika’s narrow re-election victory in May, thousands demonstrated countrywide to denounce alleged vote-rigging, in places clashing with police; with neither side backing down, confrontation could escalate in July. In capital Lilongwe, protesters 4 June stormed govt offices and clashed with police; during another demonstration 6 June police arrested one MP from opposition Malawi Congress Party (MCP) and seventeen supporters. Protesters again clashed with police 20 June, two police officers injured; protests spread to economic capital Blantyre in south and Mzuzu in north. Govt 8 June pushed back against African Union’s 6 June condemnation of police’s use of force against protesters. High court 21 June rejected Mutharika’s request that it dismiss petitions by two opposition parties MCP and United Transformation Movement (UTM) to nullify election results; MCP and UTM applied to amend petitions, no longer calling for recount but for new election; govt and electoral commission appealed decision.
Mozambique  JUNE 2019

Suspected Islamist militants continued attacks in Cabo Delgado province in far north and friction emerged within former armed opposition Renamo. Suspected Islamist militants 28 May ambushed passenger truck in Macomia district, killing sixteen. For first time Islamic State (ISIS) 4 June claimed presence in Mozambique, saying it had repelled army in Metubi village, Mocimboa area; police denied claim. Insurgents 24 June killed seven people in Dacia administrative post, Mocimboa da Praia district, same day reportedly killed eleven in Quionga administrative post, Palma district. Group claiming to be Renamo’s military wing 12 June threatened to kill party leader Ossufo Momade and derail implementation of disarmament agreement signed with govt 2 June if Momade did not step down. Divisions appear to have been resolved and Renamo 26 June formally nominated Momade as its presidential candidate. South Africa’s armed forces 16 June killed two Mozambican border police in clash near Ndumu in northeastern South Africa; following preliminary investigation, South Africa 18 June said it would send high-level delegation to Mozambique to further investigate.

Zimbabwe  JUNE 2019

Amid worsening economic crisis and rising inflation, President Mnangagwa continued attempts to initiate political dialogue. Mnangagwa 14 June held Political Actors Dialogue (POLAD) meeting; main opposition party Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) same day again refused to take part. Security forces 5 June allegedly abducted and assaulted civil society leader Obert Masaraure for leading teachers’ union strike in early June. Police 7 and 10 June released on bail seven civil society leaders arrested in May for allegedly conspiring with U.S.-based NGO CANVAS to overthrow govt. Mnangagwa 7 June pledged “new currency” by end of year to replace country’s transitional currency Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) dollar. Govt 24 June, without notice, formally reintroduced Zimbabwe Dollar ending decade-long multi-currency regime, but generating uncertainty around prospects of arresting rapidly deteriorating economic conditions.

Benin  JUNE 2019

Security forces continued to disperse anti-govt protests violently reportedly killing four. Opposition continued to organise street protests after authorities barred opposition parties from taking part in 28 April parliamentary election. In Tchaorou in centre, following reported clashes between protesters and security forces 9 June, supporters of opposition leader former President Boni Yayi, under house arrest since April, 14 June set up barricades and set fire to police station; security forces used live
ammunition to disperse protesters, killing at least two. In Savè in centre, security forces 15 June reportedly killed two people in attempt to dislodge protesters from barricades. Following opposition outcry, govt 17 June sent mediators to Tchaorou and Savè to engage local leaders. President Talon 20 June received local dignitaries from affected towns, denied attempts to harm his predecessor Boni Yayi, and pledged to form committee to ease tensions. Following 8 June reports of Boni Yayi’s deteriorating health and opposition’s calls for clemency, authorities 22 June ended his house arrest, allowing him to leave country for treatment.

**Côte d’Ivoire**  JUNE 2019

Struggle between President Ouattara’s coalition Rally of Houphouëtists for Democracy and Peace (RHDP) and opposition Democratic Party of Côte d’Ivoire-African Democratic Rally (PDCI-RDA) led by Henri Konan Bédié continued to polarise political scene in run-up to 2020 elections. Some members of Union for Democracy and Peace in Côte d’Ivoire (UDPCI), part of RHDP coalition, questioned UDPCI’s support to RHDP and so decided to create new movements supporting RHDP called “2020, RHDP first” and “Tonkpi RHDP”. Popular Ivorian Front (FPI), party founded by former President Gbagbo, engaged in dialogue with other parties especially PDCI, officially for sake of national reconciliation as intercommunal violence continued in centre. Unidentified assailants 5 June shot dead Bohizra village chief in Zénoula area in centre west. Former youth leader Charles Blé Goudé, who was acquitted of crimes against humanity by International Criminal Court along with Gbagbo in Jan, said early June he wished to return from exile and help bring peace to country.

**Gambia**  JUNE 2019

Authorities mid-June detained six members of army, reportedly after they admitted before Truth and Reconciliation Commission to having committed human rights violations during rule of former President Jammeh.

**Guinea**  JUNE 2019

Tensions continued to rise between supporters and opponents of third term for President Condé ahead of 2020 presidential elections. Ruling party Rally for the Guinean People (RPG) and govt officials continued to promote referendum on constitutional amendments to allow Condé to run for third term. National Front for the Defence of the Constitution (FNDC) – coalition launched in April by leading opposition
and civil society figures to oppose constitutional reform – organised protest march 13 June in N’Zérékoré in south despite govt’s ban; security forces violently dispersed protest, one killed, 28 wounded and 38 arrested; local authorities imposed curfew in municipality. FNDC 19 June cancelled call for another march planned for next day in N’Zérékoré after reaching deal with local authorities.

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**Guinea-Bissau**  **JUNE 2019**

President Vaz reappointed PM Gomes ending three-month stalemate, Vaz’s term ended 23 June, and regional bloc Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) said Vaz would remain in office until Nov presidential polls, but play no part in govt. With Vaz refusing to name as PM leader of ruling African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) Domingos Simões Pereira, PAIGC 22 June, as compromise, proposed that Aristides Gomes continue as PM for second term “on behalf of peace and stability”; Vaz same day announced Gomes’s nomination but held off approval of cabinet. Opposition parties allied to Vaz Movement for a Democratic Alternative G-15 (MADEM G-15) and Party for Social Renewal (PRS) did not attend nomination ceremony. Parliament 27 June voted (54 to 48) that Vaz should step down and parliamentary speaker Cipriano Cassama should become interim president until Nov presidential elections. At 29 June summit, ECOWAS said Vaz would remain in office until Nov polls, but play no part in govt affairs. Attorney general 30 June opened criminal inquiry against speaker and PAIGC’s parliamentary leader for “subversion of democratic order” for trying to unseat Vaz. Struggle over parliamentary leadership continued to fuel protests: opposition parties MADEM G-15 and PRS demanded PAIGC accept their proposals for vice presidents of parliament; opposition and ruling coalition’s supporters staged rallies 6-7 June. After parliament 11 June suspended its session due to protests, MADEM G-15 chairman Braima Camará 20 June withdrew his candidacy for parliament’s vice-presidency in bid to resolve crisis and maintain peace; MADEM G-15 leadership same day said it would continue discussions to determine alternative candidate.

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**Liberia**  **JUNE 2019**

Thousands demonstrated 7 June in Monrovia to protest inter alia corruption and country’s economic decline, with some protesters calling President Weah “traitor”. Council of Patriots, coalition of opposition parties, trade unions and civil society organisations, which organised protest, same day circulated petition accusing govt of misusing public funds, violating press freedoms, and failing to adequately fund health and education programs, 9 June gave govt one month to address their concerns.
Boko Haram (BH) continued attacks in north east, criminal violence persisted in north west killing at least 170, and ethnic and herder-farmer violence persisted in north centre. In north east, military kept up counter-insurgency, notably killing nine members of BH faction Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) 10 June and 42 militants in operation by Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) 21 June. ISWAP 12 June attacked military base in Kareto, Borno state, claiming to have killed at least twenty soldiers; 17 June attacked Gajiram base, killing at least 28 soldiers. Three BH suicide bombers 16 June attacked improvised cinema in Konduga, 25km from Borno state capital Maiduguri, killing at least 30. Borno state's governor 19 June urged federal govt to complement military campaign against BH with non-military strategies. Borno state govt 20 June secured release of civilian abducted by BH in Jan; govt said release was in line with efforts to open lines of communication with insurgents. In north west, army and air force killed scores of bandits in various operations, but banditry and other criminal violence continued in Zamfara, Katsina, Sokoto and Niger states, killing at least 170. Notably, in Zamfara state, bandits 6 June attacked village in Kanoma district, killing sixteen; 14 June attacked three villages, killing 34. In Sokoto state, bandits 8 June attacked three villages, killing at least 25 and looting hundreds of livestock; same day attacked Sapiru village, killing at least eighteen. Police said it arrested hundreds of suspected criminals in various states. President Buhari pledged renewed efforts to stop violence. In north centre, ethnic and herder-farmer violence killed at least 38 in Taraba and Benue states. Notably, in Taraba state, clashes between Tiv and Jukun communities and herder-farmer violence killed at least 21 in Wukari area 11-16 June and Ardo Kola and Donga areas 17 June; in Benue state, communal clash in Agatu area killed twelve people 30 June.

- VIDEO: Video – Returning from the Land of Jihad: The Fate of Women Who Lived with Boko Haram

Asia

China/Japan

Amid continued efforts to improve relations, Chinese President Xi met with Japanese PM Abe 27 June ahead of G20 summit in Osaka; at meeting Abe called for “new age of Japan-China relations”. Japanese warships 10 June spotted Chinese guided missile destroyer and combat supply ship near Okinawa, while Japan's Defence Ministry reported seeing Chinese aircraft carrier sailing through Miyako strait in East China Sea next day. Japan Air Force 16 June scrambled jets to intercept Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) electronic warfare and surveillance plane passing through Miyako strait. Japan's Foreign Ministry 17 June lodged protest with Beijing after Chinese maritime ship spotted conducting survey near disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu islands; same day, Japanese coast guard reported seeing four Chinese patrol ships around islands.
Korean Peninsula

North Korea leader Kim Jong-un and U.S. President Donald Trump held meeting in demilitarised zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea, agreeing to restart stalled denuclearisation negotiations. During visit to South Korea, Trump 29 June tweeted invite to Kim, asking latter to meet next day at "border/DMZ"; North quickly responded. Trump and Kim 30 June met in DMZ, with Trump becoming first sitting U.S. president to set foot in North Korea. Kim said meeting was "very significant" and would have "positive influence" on future discussions, while Trump said he was "proud to step over line" into North Korea and said negotiators from both countries would meet in coming weeks. South Korean leader Moon Jae-in also present at parts of DMZ meeting. Meeting followed letter from Kim to Trump mid-June, and North Korean state media 23 June reporting Kim Jong-un received letter from Trump which Kim praised as "excellent"; U.S. Sec of State Mike Pompeo same day confirmed Trump sent letter. Earlier in month, Chinese President Xi 20-21 June visited Pyongyang and met with Kim for celebration of 70 years of China-DPRK diplomatic relations, first visit of a Chinese leader to North Korea in fourteen years. U.S. defence intelligence agency director 24 June said in interview Kim is "not ready to denuclearise". South Korea's Unification Ministry 5 June approved $8mn aid package to North Korea and 19 June announced it would send 50,000 tons of rice, worth more than $100mn, to be delivered through UN agencies. South Korea reported that during 5 June meeting in Seoul, South Korean President Moon and acting U.S. Defence Secretary Patrick Shanahan reaffirmed sanctions on North Korea must remain in place to achieve successful denuclearisation.

- REPORT: The Case for Kaesong: Fostering Korean Peace through Economic Ties

Taiwan Strait

Chinese defence minister 2 June warned that foreign intervention over "Taiwan question is doomed to fail" and said China would not "cede an inch" of territory. Taiwan defence ministry requested purchase of tanks and air defence systems from U.S. early June, prompting protest from China’s foreign ministry. Members of Taiwan’s main opposition Kuomintang (KMT) party attended opening ceremony of cross-strait forum, aimed at promoting exchange and integration between mainland China and Taiwan, held in China mid-June; govt criticised move and warned KMT it could face disbandment if it engaged in political talks or signed any agreement. Canadian warship 18 June sailed through Taiwan Strait.

Afghanistan

Intra-Afghan peace efforts continued, while violence on civilians remained high with
Intra-Afghan peace efforts continued, while violence on civilians remained high with insurgent bomb attacks and U.S. and Afghan airstrikes in numerous provinces including Ghazni, Logar, Paktika and Helmand. Taliban leader Hibatullah Akhundzada 1 June rejected govt-requested temporary truce during Eid al Fitr religious holiday. Govt 11-14 June released 490 Taliban prisoners, first batch out of nearly 900 promised total; insurgent group praised move but claimed that only 261 prisoners were Taliban members. Seventh round of U.S.-Taliban talks began in Doha 29 June; talks followed U.S. Special Envoy Khalilzad 18 June remarks that U.S. sought “comprehensive peace agreement, not withdrawal agreement”. Violence in urban centres increased; in Kabul, Islamic State-Khorasan Province (IS-KP) claimed 2 June explosion that killed two people, allegedly targeting bus with members of Shiite community; two more explosions followed, wounding several; unclaimed bombing 3 June killed five govt employees. In south-eastern Ghazni province, Taliban car bomb 1 June killed seven police. In Nangarhar provincial capital Jalalabad, IS-KP suicide bomber 13 June killed nine people. In Kandahar province, authorities 16 June reported eight Taliban killed in clashes in Takhta Pul district and along Kandahar-Tarinkot highway. Taliban late June continued attacks including suicide bombers killing at least 34 in attack on govt compound in Maruf district, Kandahar 30 June. U.S. and govt forces reportedly increased night raids and airstrikes, leading to civilian casualties; in northern Kunduz province, in case of mistaken identity, U.S. airstrike 11 June accidently killed six Afghan soldiers in response to soldiers mistakenly firing on U.S.-Afghan joint patrol; U.S. military reported two servicemen killed 26 June, in Taliban attack in Uruzgan province. UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan 9 June issued statement denouncing insurgent groups’ deliberate attacks on civilians, reporting at least 100 deaths in Kabul alone during Ramadan that ended 3 June, and urged all parties to meet obligations on civilian protection in line with international law. President Ghani 27 June visited Pakistani capital Islamabad for “wide-ranging talks”, including on Pakistan’s help facilitating intra-Afghan talks with Taliban.

Bangladesh  JUNE 2019

Security forces continued anti-militancy operations while govt criticised Myanmar over delays to proposed repatriation of Rohingya refugees. Following late May arrest of a top leader of banned Hizb ut-Tahrir and an Islamic State-(ISIS) claimed bomb that injured three in Dhaka, Minister for Home Affairs 1 June said despite increasing organisation, militants “have no capacity to carry out big attacks”; however, govt put all police units on heightened alert. Following Myanmar Minister for State Counsellor’s Office 31 May saying Bangladesh “not cooperating” with bilateral processes for repatriation of Rohingya, PM Hasina 9 June said Myanmar “in no way” wants repatriation; FM Momen 12 June criticised Myanmar for spreading “blatant lies” and failing “to keep its promises” and urged international community to increase pressure on Naypyitaw.

India (non-Kashmir)  JUNE 2019

Clashes between security forces and Maoists continued: in Jharkhand state, insurgents
Clashes between security forces and Maoists continued: in Jharkhand state, insurgents and security forces clashed in Gumla district 1 June, killing one soldier and five militants, while insurgents 14 June killed five policemen in ambush in Tiruldih; in Bijapur district, Chhattisgarh state, Maoists 23 June assassinated police officer and gunfight broke out 28 June, killing two soldiers and two children. Maoist cadres carried out targeted killings of alleged "police informers": in Bastar district, Chhattisgarh, suspected Maoists 1 June hacked alleged informer to death; in Jharkhand, insurgents 1 June shot civilian – abducted previous day – in Lohardaga district and 5 June killed civilian in Garhwa district. Maharashtra state police arrested two top Maoist commanders, suspected of 1 May bombing which killed fifteen commandos and one civilian in Gadchiroli district, in Hyderabad 12 June. In Bijapur district, Chhattisgarh, Maoists 18 June abducted and executed local Samajwadi Party leader Santosh Punem.

Kashmir

Pakistan attempted to restart bilateral dialogue process with India, while militant attacks against security forces continued in Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). Pakistani PM Khan and FM Qureshi renewed offers to resume dialogue – frozen since 2016 terror attacks in India's Punjab province that New Delhi attributes to Pakistan-based militants Jaish-e-Mohammad (Jaish) – in letters sent to Indian counterparts 8 June; Pakistani official 20 June claimed Indian PM Modi and FM Jaishankar "responded positively"; Indian officials same day rejected Pakistani account, reporting Modi stressed importance of environment "free of terror" as condition to resume talks. In J&K, militant-related violence continued. In Pulwama district, security forces 7-14 June killed six alleged Jaish militants, including two police deserters, and 26 June killed suspected Lashkar-e-Tayyaba member while explosion killed two soldiers 17 June. In Anantang district, militants 12-18 June launched several attacks on security forces, leaving at least ten soldiers and four militants dead. Security forces 11 June gunned down two militants in Shopian district. Following May general elections and low turnout in J&K, former J&K Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti 19 June called for ceasefire and resumption of political dialogue with all stakeholders in Kashmir.

Nepal

Govt intensified response against hardline Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) amid allegations of an extrajudicial killing. Local media reported police 20 June killed Kumar Paudel, CPN's top leader in Sarlahi district; Paudel second CPN individual killed in alleged police action in two months; death aroused suspicions, including in parliament, of extrajudicial killing; MPs 24 June questioned Home Minister Ram Bahadur Thapa with one MP claiming Paudel may have been shot with his hands tied. CPN 24 June called nationwide strike in protest of killing; IEDs found in several places around country. Govt also received widespread criticism for proposed legislation aimed at nationalising ownership of community-based trusts – known as Guthis; critics claimed govt sought to commercially benefit from nationalisation while undermining religious
govt sought to commercially benefit from nationalisation while undermining religious and cultural practices of indigenous Newar community; police 9 June injured six in alleged use of force against Guthi bill protesters; despite govt 18 June withdrawing bill, thousands 19 June took to streets in Kathmandu in largest mass demonstration since 2006 People’s Movement. Police 7 June arrested comedian Pranesh Gautam on charges of violating Cyber Crime Act, rights activists criticised charges as dubious; Gautam released on court order 16 June.

Pakistan

JUNE 2019

Amid heightened political tensions, authorities escalated corruption probes on opposition leadership while militant attacks continued and govt continued crackdown on Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement (PTM), civil rights movement from former Federally Administered Tribal Areas. National Accountability Bureau (NAB) 10 June arrested Pakistan Peoples’ Party (PPP) co-chairman and former President Asif Ali Zardari on corruption charges and following day arrested Hamza Sharif, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader in Punjab Assembly; PPP and PML-N officials 15 June jointly denounced arrests as politically motivated, vowing to work together against govt. Following 26 May clashes in North Waziristan between military and Pashtun protestors led by PTM-affiliated MPs Ali Wazir and Mohsin Dawar – in which PTM claim military killed fourteen protesters, while police later arrested Dawar and Wazir – tensions increased over govt’s crackdown on PTM; PPP 1 June called on National Assembly speaker to issue order to allow Dawar and Wazir to inform parliament of their version of events. Govt 2 June filed references of misconduct to Supreme Judicial Council against two independent judges, for failing to disclose foreign properties; PPP and PML-N condemned references as attempt to undermine independent judges and called for their withdrawal; leading lawyers’ associations 14 June held countrywide protest calling for resignation of law minister and attorney general. Militant violence continued; in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province’s North Waziristan tribal district militants 1 June killed one soldier in Boya area and 7 June killed three army officers and a soldier in Kharqamar area. In Balochistan province, explosion 6 June killed two soldiers in Harnai district; two explosive devices 7 June killed five in Ziarat district; three Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) suicide bombers 26 June attacked police station in Quetta, killing one officer. In Punjab province, Counter Terrorism Department 20 June reported killing two prominent Islamic State-Khorasan members in raid in Multan city. In Gujrat city in east, security forces 30 June raided suspected TTP hideout, killing three militants.

Sri Lanka

JUNE 2019

Fallout from April terror attack continued with public hearings into bombings and increased anti-Muslims campaigns. During public parliamentary hearings from late May to mid-June, former defence, police and intelligence officials revealed police and intelligence services had prior knowledge of Zaharan Hashim, leader of National
Towheed Jamaat (NTJ) and chief organiser of attacks; testimony revealed major lapses in processing of intelligence, leading to widespread criticism of govt including President Sirisena. Sirisena 22 June extended state of emergency for further month. Security forces arrested over 1800 Muslims in connection to bombings or related incidents; over 350 remained in custody amid Muslim community leaders and detainees’ families protesting that many had no connections to attacks or extremist groups. Buddhist nationalists continued anti-Muslim campaigns; senior Buddhist monk 15 June called on Buddhists to boycott Muslim-owned shops and restaurants as they would lead to sterilisation of Sinhalese; calls came after Sinhalese newspaper’s May accusation that a prominent Muslim doctor – subsequently detained under anti-terrorism laws – secretly sterilised 4,000 Sinhalese women; police investigations found no evidence to support charges. Following nationalist monk 31 May launching hunger strike demanding prosecution of doctor and removal of one Muslim minister and two Muslim governors from posts, accusing them of terrorism links, Galagoda Aththe Gnanasara, leader of hardline Buddhist organisation Bodu Bala Sena released from prison by presidential pardon in May, 2 June threatened national “pandemonium” if govt did not remove politicians; next day, all nine Muslim ministers and two governors resigned, announcing govt had month to hold independent investigation into charges against the three. International community condemned anti-Muslim campaign; officials from Organisation of Islamic Cooperation in Sri Lanka 4 June expressed concern at threats to “lives and livelihoods of Muslims”, urging govt to prevent communal violence, while EU and eight European embassies 12 June issued joint-statement expressing concern at "political and religious pressure” on Muslims.

Indonesia  JUNE 2019

Constitutional Court (CC) rejected bid to annul April presidential election in which incumbent President Widodo was victorious, while police arrested several suspected militants in raids. Lawyers for failed presidential candidate Prabowo Subianto 14 June officially challenged election results to CC claiming systematic fraud; head of electoral commission denied charges. Court 27 June rejected case brought by Subianto. Amid fears of pro-Subianto supporters rioting following violent protests in May, govt deployed close to 50,000 police and military personnel in Jakarta during hearing; media reported hundreds of peaceful protesters gathered outside court prior to decision. Anti-terror police Densus 88 mid-June detained 34 suspects with alleged ties to Islamic State (ISIS)-linked Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) during raids in Central Kalimantan province. Local media reported police 29 June arrested leader of Jemaah Islamiyah group in West Java province. Police 3 June arrested suspected ISIS sympathiser after failed suicide bomb attempt in Central Java, in which only suspect sustained injuries.

Myanmar  JUNE 2019

Fighting between Arakan Army (AA) and Myanmar military continued in Rakhine and
southern Chin states. Clashes in Minbya township, Rakhine, 2-3 June caused civilian casualties including seven killed and seven injured when mortars struck monastery sheltering civilians. UN 10 June reported some 1,000 villagers displaced to Minbya town; further 1,000 reportedly fled villages in southern Chin state due to clashes. Military early June confirmed at least five officers, including two battalion commanders, killed during fighting between late May and early June, but rejected AA claims that over 1,100 soldiers had been killed in 2019. Govt 2o June ordered telecommunications providers to shut down internet services in nine townships in Rakhine and Chin states the following day, claiming internet was used to “coordinate illegal activities”. Lull in fighting in Kachin and Shan states continued amid military’s unilateral ceasefire, and May-agreed fragile ceasefire between two competing Shan armed groups – Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS) and Shan State Progress Party (SSPP) – continued to hold. Nationwide ethnic peace process remained moribund; Karen National Union, one of largest armed groups, continued to suspend participation in formal process. Despite arrival of monsoon and dangerous sea conditions, Rohingya Muslims increased attempts to cross Bay of Bengal from Bangladesh to Malaysia, including more than 60 Rohingya found in boat beached on island in southern Thailand 11 June due to engine issues; Bangladesh govt said hundreds found trying to leave were returned to camps. Govt tensions with Bangladesh increased over issue of repatriation of Rohingya refugees: after Myanmar Minister for State Counsellor’s Office 31 May said Bangladesh “not cooperating” with bilateral processes, Bangladesh PM Hasina 9 June said Myanmar “in no way” wants repatriation; Bangladeshi FM Momen 12 June criticised Naypyitaw for spreading “blatant lies”, failing “to keep its promises” and urged international community to increase pressure on Myanmar for repatriation. Court 18 June began trial in absentia of hardline monk U Wirathu on charges of sedition relating to disparaging comments he made about State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi.

Philippines

Clashes between authorities and communist rebels continued and govt conducted raids against Abu Sayyaf militants in south. Govt troops killed vice chairman of New People’s Army (NPA) 13 June in Sorsogon province; same day, suspected NPA fighters attacked police station in Mindanao province in south. Govt task force to end communist insurgency, created by President Duterte under executive order in 2018, reported NPA members 15 June killed two human rights activists in Sorsogon. In Negros Occidental, military 20 June killed two NPA militants in shoot-out in Santa Catalina town while one soldier died in clash with NPA in Manjuyod next day. Authorities early June arrested six suspected Abu Sayyaf members in separate raids in south; military announced deployment of 1,700 additional troops in Jolo to fight militants. Malaysian officials said Filipino gang members with suspected links to Abu Sayyaf militants abducted ten fishermen off Borneo island 18 June, taking them to southern Philippines; police 22 June reported that some hostages were freed in Sulu province, though total released remained unclear. Suicide bomb at military base in Jolo killed five and injured twelve 28 June; Islamic State (ISIS) claimed responsibility for attack while military said ISIS-linked Abu Sayyaf likely behind attack. Police in Cotabato province 10 June shot dead an ISIS-linked Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighter militant who had escaped detention in 2018. Security forces 15 June arrested two militants in Quezon city who took part in Marawi City siege of 2017. Filipino fishing boat sank following 9 June
collision with Chinese vessel in contested waters in South China Sea.

**COMMENTARY: A Young Leader in the Philippines’ Battle-scarred ‘Islamic City’**

### South China Sea JUNE 2019

Tensions continued between Philippines and China after Filipino fishing boat carrying 22 fishermen sank following 9 June collision with Chinese fishing vessel in contested waters near Reed Bank; Vietnamese vessel in area rescued fishermen. Philippines govt 13 June filed protest with China, which denied its vessel hit fishing boat and abandoned Filipino fishermen; Philippines President Duterte 17 June called it "a maritime incident", accepted China’s 22 June invitation to conduct joint investigation. Philippines coast guard 10 June reported spotting Chinese warship near contested Scarborough Shoal during four-day patrol. Beijing early June held military exercises near contested Paracel Islands. At ASEAN summit in Thailand, Duterte 23 June expressed “concern and disappointment” over delayed negotiations of Code of Conduct in SCS. CNN 21 June published satellite images reportedly showing at least four Chinese fighters jets deployed on contested Woody (Yongxing) Island.

### Thailand JUNE 2019

Violence in deep south continued amid stalled peace talks. Following three separate late May incidents, including two IED explosions, that killed five and wounded several in south, IED blast 3 June, on day that Ramadan ended, wounded civilian in Waeng District, Narathiwat. In Pattani’s Yaring district, gunmen 9 June killed Buddhist defence volunteer, while Muslim man wounded in separate shooting same day. Gunmen 10 June shot four people in three separate attacks in Pattani and Narathiwat, killing three. Gunmen 15 June shot and killed two Buddhists in Rangae district, Narathiwat. Malaysian peace-dialogue facilitator Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Noor visited southernmost Thailand 11-14 June, first visit since appointment as facilitator in Aug 2018, made no announcement of renewed talks between Thai govt and Malay-Muslim separatist groups. After Democrat and Bhum Jai Thai parties formed coalition govt with pro-junta Phalang Pracharat Party late May, parliament 5 June re-elected Prayuth Chan-ocha as PM; new govt to be seated 17 July, with junta to retain authority until then.

### Europe & Central Asia

#### Bosnia And Herzegovina JUNE 2019
Tensions continued between majority Bosnian Serb entity Republika Srpska (RS) and Bosniak-Croat Federation entity over RS parliament’s proposed bill to form reserve police force. In response to new RS parliamentary discussions over draft legislation in RS parliament 11 June, Federation entity announced plans to introduce its own reserve police force. RS 24 June withdrew bill under international pressure, including reportedly from U.S. envoys; instead interior ministry announced it would form gendarmerie that would include young police recruits. In response, lawmakers from Federation entity dropped plans for its own force. Office of the High Representative, international overseer of implementation of 1995 peace agreement, and several European embassies 7 June released joint statement condemning alleged misconduct of president of High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council who faces accusations of bribery.

Kosovo  JUNE 2019

After Kosovo police arrested two UN officials for allegedly impeding security operations in 28 May raid in ethnic Serb-dominated part of Mitrovica in north, head of UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Zahir Tanin, 10 June told UN Security Council that Kosovo police had violated UN officials’ immunity, and that UN would continue to investigate matter. Constitutional court 27 June ruled that negotiating team, which parliament tasked with leading negotiations in EU-led dialogue with Serbia, was unconstitutional, citing overlap with existing institutions. U.S. continued to urge govt to end custom tariffs on Serbian imports, with U.S. Dep Assistant Sec State 10 June calling them “an obstacle” to normalising relations between Kosovo and Serbia. Serbian President Vučić tried to shore up international support for talks with Kosovo; in letter to U.S. President Trump 14 June urged Washington to pressure Kosovo to lift its tariffs in order to advance “a compromise” solution.

North Macedonia  JUNE 2019

European Council 18 June delayed decision on whether to hold EU accession talks on North Macedonia and Albania to “no later than October 2019” after vote requiring unanimous decision by all 28 EU member states failed to pass. NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg during visit to North Macedonia 3 June said alliance was “ready to welcome” country into alliance once all 29 NATO members ratify accession protocol signed in Feb.

Armenia  JUNE 2019
Court 25 June ordered arrest of Robert Kocharyan, country’s second president, first arrested in July 2018 for overturning constitutional order in 2008 but released in May after state prosecutors appealed for his pre-trial release at constitutional court.

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**Azerbaijan**  JUNE 2019

Judicial proceedings targeting journalists continued. Court in Baku sentenced Ikram Rahimov, chief editor of independent news site Realliq, 12 June to five and a half years in prison for extortion. Sabil district court 14 June ordered Polad Aslanov, chief editor of independent new site Xeberman, to remain in detention on charge of high treason. In unexpected reshuffling in key security institutions 20 June, Interior Minister Ramil Usubov was appointed secretary of presidential security council, and replaced by his first deputy Vilayet Eyvazov; head of state security service Madat Guliyev became minister of defence industry and was replaced by Ali Nagiyev, his former deputy chief. Police briefly detained Ali Karimli, leader of opposition Popular Front Party 28 June on charges of trying to undermine public stability.

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**Georgia**  JUNE 2019

Russian MP’s perceived insult to Georgia during 26th General Assembly of the Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy prompted thousands to protest in capital Tbilisi and raised tensions between Georgia and Russia. Russian MP, Sergey Gavrilov, provoked outrage 20 June when, broadcast live on various Georgian TV channels, he addressed Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy held in Georgia’s parliament building in Tbilisi from seat of Georgian parliament speaker and spoke in Russian. Group of Georgian opposition MPs rushed to parliament building to demand suspension of session. Protesters same day gathered outside parliament and Russian delegation’s hotel prompting Russian delegation to return to Russia; thousands took to streets in Tbilisi demanding resignation of senior officials whom they held responsible for Russian MP’s appearance in parliament; that night opposition MPs and supporters stormed parliament leading to clashes with riot police; police forcibly dispersed protesters hospitalising over 240 and arresting about 300. Protests continued till end month and were set to continue in July, with demonstrators calling for resignations of top officials, electoral reform and early elections. Parliamentary speaker and MP who had organised 20 June event resigned 21 June and ruling party agreed to initiate electoral reform. Russian President Putin 21 June temporarily banned passenger flights to Georgia from 8 July and ordered evacuation of Russian citizens from Georgia. Russian FM 24 June blamed West for “engineering” protests. Abkhaz security forces 27 June announced restrictions for crossing into breakaway region in response to Tbilisi protests.
**Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)  JUNE 2019**

Killing of four soldiers in conflict zone raised tensions between Azerbaijan and Armenia and talks between govs in U.S. yielded no significant progress. Two Azerbaijani and two Armenian soldiers reportedly killed at Line of Contact 30 May-13 June. Both Azerbaijan and Armenia voiced strong concerns about killings and blamed each other for failing to sustain environment conducive for talks. Armenian and Azerbaijani troops 17-20 June conducted drills close to conflict region, prompting concerns on both sides. Both FMs met in Washington 20 June and discussed range of issues including common humanitarian projects; OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs reportedly proposed plans for projects’ implementation. Azerbaijani FM 24 June told press that conversations were taking place with Armenia “on substance” along suggestions by OSCE Minsk Group’s co-chairs and that draft agreements considered “withdrawal of armies and possible deployment of peacekeepers”. Armenia and Azerbaijan 28 June exchanged one detainee from each side with support from International Committee of the Red Cross.

**Russia/North Caucasus  JUNE 2019**

Ingush leader Ynus-Bek Yevkurov 24 June resigned amid tension over controversial Sept 2018 border delineation deal between Ingushetia and Chechnya. Security operations against militants continued: police 23 June killed Chechen resident in Grozny after he stabbed one policeman and shot and wounded another, Islamic State (ISIS) claimed responsibility; same day, National Anti-terrorism Committee in Dagestan said security officers killed two suspected ISIS-linked militants in Khasavyurt district. Russian court mid-June granted early release to Oyub Titiyev, director of Chechnya office of human rights organisation Memorial, after nearly 18 months behind bars; Titiyev was sentenced in March to four years in penal colony on drug charges. Dagestan court in Makhachkala 18 June ordered Dagestani reporter to pre-trial detention on accusations of financing terrorism, which he denies. Tensions continued along border between Dagestan and Chechnya after Dagestan residents in Kizlyar 10 June dismantled Chechnya road sign.

**COMMENTARY:** Is Russia Changing Its Calculus in Eastern Ukraine?

**Moldova  JUNE 2019**

New coalition govt formed, unblocking three months of deadlock since no party or coalition won absolute majority in Feb legislative elections. Pre-Europen integration
coalition won absolute majority in rep legislative elections. Pro-European integration Party of Action and Solidarity (ACUM) and pro-Russian Socialist Party 8 June formed coalition, enabling it to form govt during extraordinary parliamentary session and nominated ACUM leader Maia Sandu to prime minister. Former ruling Democratic Party same day appealed against move to constitutional court, which declared new govt invalid, arguing that deadline to form govt had passed 7 June, 90 days after certification of elections. Court 9 June temporarily suspended President Igor Dodon, Socialist Party leader, reportedly to allow then interim PM Filip to dissolve parliament and issue decree calling for snap election; Dodon and ACUM leader Maia Sandu, however ignored verdict. PM Filip resigned 14 June; VP of his Democratic Party, Vladimir Cebotari, said decision was made to “avoid an escalation that could lead to violence”. Constitutional court next day overturned its earlier decision and recognised new govt led by PM Sandu; all six judges of constitutional court resigned 26 June.

Ukraine  JUNE 2019

Fighting continued in Donbas, Ukrainian delegation to Minsk peace process proposed way to break deadlock, and constitutional court removed remaining barriers to snap parliamentary elections in July. At 6 June Trilateral Contact Group meeting in Belarusian capital Minsk, Ukraine envoy proposed both sides’ full withdrawal of forces near civilian checkpoint at Stanytsia Luhanska, lifting of Kyiv’s economic blockade on areas held by Russian-backed separatists, and renewed ceasefire that would prohibit return fire. President Zelensky’s opponents, including former President Poroshenko, characterised proposals as capitulatory; head of far-right National Corps party called subsequent troop deaths “the price of prohibitions on shooting at the enemy”, prompting military command to clarify that troops were still returning fire. Conflict in the East 1-27 June left at least ten Ukrainian Armed Forces and National Guard soldiers and at least fifteen members of Russia-backed separatist groups killed; at least two civilians dead, 22 injured. In victory for head of National Corps party, parliament 6 June approved law granting foreign fighters path to citizenship. Constitutional court 20 June ruled in favour of Zelensky’s May order to disband parliament, paving way for early elections scheduled for 21 July. Dutch prosecutors 19 June announced three Russians and one Ukrainian would be tried for murder of all 298 passengers of flight MH-17, shot down over Donbas in 2015. Russia 25 June announced it would free Ukrainian sailors captured in Nov 2018 Black Sea attack, provided Ukraine try them for violating Russian law; Ukraine 26 June refused. Ukrainian delegation to Council of Europe’s Parliamentary Assembly 25 June announced it would suspend activities in body after council voted 24 June to reinstate Russia’s membership. Drawing condemnation from Kyiv security establishment, opposition leader and family friend of Russian President Putin, Viktor Medvedchuk, 27 June met leaders of self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republics.

- COMMENTARY: Is Russia Changing Its Calculus in Eastern Ukraine?
Cyprus

Tensions persisted between Republic of Cyprus and Turkey over hydrocarbon exploration in east Mediterranean. After Ankara 4 June announced it would soon start drilling north east of Cyprus, Turkish President Erdoğan 7 June vowed not to allow Nicosia to proceed with gas exploration without including Turkish Cypriots. Cypriot authorities 14 June confirmed arrest warrants against companies, company executives and crew involved in exploration activities of the Turkish drilling vessel “Fatih” off Cyprus coast, in what Nicosia says is its exclusive economic zone. Erdoğan 16 June threatened to deploy navy if Nicosia attempted to arrest crew, and Turkey 20 June sent second drilling vessel, Yavuz, to east Mediterranean Sea. Nicosia 28 June issued reserve for early-July naval exercises, covering area where Turkish vessel is anchored. French President Macron 14 June reiterated his “solidarity with Cyprus” and called Turkey to “respect its [Cyprus’] sovereignty”. At EU Council meeting in Brussels 2o June, European Council endorsed Greek PM Tsipras’s invitation to EU Commission and European External Action Service “to submit options for appropriate measures [against Turkey] without delay”.

Northern Ireland (UK)

Amid growing concerns over possible escalation of dissident violence following UK’s planned departure from EU, police 1 June reported finding bomb under car belonging to off-duty police officer at a golf club in east Belfast; police defused device without causing casualties or damage; republican dissident group New IRA (Irish Republican Army) 6 June claimed responsibility for the bomb device, pledged to carry out future attacks.

Turkey

Main opposition party’s candidate won re-run of Istanbul mayoral elections, military continued operations against Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) insurgency, and tensions increased with U.S. over Ankara’s purchase of Russian missile systems. Opposition Republican People’s Party (CHP) candidate Ekrem İmamoğlu won 23 June re-run of Istanbul’s mayoral election with 54%; following appeal by ruling party Justice and Development Party (AKP), High Election Board had cancelled results of first vote in March, which opposition won with 48.8%. AKP’s candidate Binali Yıldırım and President Erdoğan conceded defeat. Military continued to carry out operations against PKK in south east, along Black Sea in north, and near Iran border in east: insurgents killed fifteen security force members in June and two civilians 10 June. Crackdown continued against members of pro-Kurdish Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) and activists supporting Kurdish movement. In northern Iraq, Turkish warplanes hit PKK targets in several regions. In north west Syria, Turkey and Russia 12 June announced they had brokered ceasefire between Syrian govt and opposition forces in Idlib, but...
fighting continued. Next day Syrian pro-govt forces attacked Turkish observation post, injuring three soldiers; followed by 27 June attack, killing one Turkish soldier (see Syria). President Erdoğan reiterated 4 June that govt would go ahead with purchase of S-400 missile defence systems from Moscow. In response, U.S. 7 June said it would “suspend indefinitely” training of Turkish pilots on F-35 fighter jets and discontinue F-35 material deliveries unless Ankara cancelled deal. Erdoğan met U.S. and Russian presidents during G20 summit in Japan 28-29 June and discussed Turkey’s purchase of Russian S-400s. Court in Istanbul 25 June released from house arrest U.S. Consulate employee being tried on terrorism charges. Authorities 21 May-27 June detained 119, and arrested at least 35 suspected Islamic State (ISIS) members in more than ten different cities, including Mersin, Adana, Kilis, Urfa. Tensions rose between Turkey and Republic of Cyprus over gas exploration off island (see Cyprus).

Kazakhstan JUNE 2019

Interim President Tokayev, who took office in March after former president resigned, won snap presidential elections 9 June amid widespread repression of anti-govt protests. Tokayev named winner with 71% of vote and 12 June took oath of office. UK-based organisation NetBlocks reported several social networks blocked 12 June. Election monitors from Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe same day said “lack of regard for fundamental rights, including detentions of peaceful protesters, and widespread irregularities on election day, showed scant respect for democratic standards”. UN Human Rights Office for Central Asia 12 June called on authorities “to respect freedoms of peaceful assembly, expression and right to political participation”. Interior Minister Turghymbayev 18 June said authorities had released most of almost 4,000 people arrested around poll. Major explosions at ammunition warehouse in Arys, near Shymkent in south 24 June killed two, wounded dozens.

Kyrgyzstan JUNE 2019

Amid ongoing tensions between President Jeenbekov and his predecessor former President Atambayev, authorities continued to take steps undermining Atambayev. State Committee for National Security 3 June arrested Manasbek Arabayev, Atambayev’s former chief of office, on corruption charges. Parliament 20 June voted to strip Atambayev of his immunity amid claims that he abused his power; Atambayev 21 June called move “politically motivated”. At summit of Eurasian regional bloc Shanghai Cooperation Organization in capital Bishkek 14 June, leaders called for greater cooperation among members and reaffirmed intent to ensure security in region. Former prosecutor-general Aïda Salyanova detained 3 June over allowing “illegal early release” of crime boss Aziz Batukayev in 2013; Batukayev was released and left for Chechnya after he was diagnosed with leukaemia, but diagnosis was later found to be falsified.
Latin America & Caribbean

Tajikistan  JUNE 2019

President Rahmon and Chinese counterpart Xi 15 June signed eighteen agreements bolstering bilateral ties.

Colombia  JUNE 2019

Violence between armed groups remained high, while political tensions continued over role of transitional justice mechanism of 2016 peace deal with Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Ex-FARC commander Jesús Santrich, released from prison in May after Special Jurisdiction for Peace (SJP, created under peace deal to handle cases deriving from govt-FARC conflict) ruled against his extradition to U.S. on drug trafficking charges, took seat in Congress 11 June as part of peace deal; other legislators protested his swearing in, claiming incident undermined legitimacy of peace agreement. Despite previous objections, President Duque 6 June signed statutory law regarding functioning of SJP. Violence between armed forces and FARC dissident groups continued; military operation killed seven fighters from Seventh front dissident group in Meta (centre) 1 June, while one soldier died in clash with dissident group in Cauca (south west) 10 June. FARC dissident groups revealed proof of life videos for two people previously abducted: 9 June for soldier taken 5 March in Arauca (east) and 15 June for civilian kidnapped 10 June in Cauca. Dissidents 3 June attacked National Liberation Army (ELN) guerrilla group unit, prompting displacement of over 400 people, in Litoral San Juan in Chocó (west); army 16 June killed regional ELN commander in Cauca. In north west, conflict between Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia (AGC, country’s main drug trafficking group) and AGC splinter group “Caparrapos” continued; gunmen killed four members of same family in Antioquia 4 June, with local media reporting killing was part of AGC-“Caparrapos” conflict. Attacks on activists increased including unknown assailants killing social leader María del Pilar Hurtado in Tierralta, Córdoba (northwest) 21 June.

Venezuela  JUNE 2019

Political crisis continued amid international efforts to foster govt-opposition dialogue, while opposition remained divided over whether to negotiate with govt and over allegations of corruption. Opposition split between those seeking dialogue and hardliners pushing for opposition leader and “interim President” Juan Guaidó to request international military intervention. Early June allegations that two of Guaidó's
representatives in Colombia embezzled money assigned to cover cost of Venezuelan military deserters heightened tensions within opposition; anti-dialogue faction, backed by Organization of American States Sec Gen Almagro, demanded full investigation, while Guaidó’s chief representative to Colombia, Humberto Calderón, said investigation began two months ago and neared completion. Russian military plane reportedly landed 24 June; Russian embassy 26 June announced its military specialists were leaving country. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Bachelet 19-21 June visited Venezuela, meeting with govt, opposition and victims of human rights abuses; visit followed lengthy UN negotiations with govt over visit, as well as govt’s release of some political prisoners and consent to possible establishment of a permanent UN human rights office in Caracas. Human rights group Penal Forum and relatives of detainees reported govt 21-23 June detained six members of military and police, including an Air Force general; navy captain Rafael Acosta, one of six arrested, who according to Lima Group showed “visible signs of torture” when brought to military tribunal 28 June, died in custody 29 June, sparking opposition and international outcry. International efforts to find negotiated end to crisis continued; Norwegian govt continued push for resumption of May talks between govt and opposition representatives in Oslo; Sweden hosted preliminary meeting of relevant external actors including Russia, Cuba, Vatican and UN 13 June. Amid continued economic deterioration, UN High Commission for Refugees 7 June released updated figures showing 4mn had fled country. Mass migration continued to cause regional strain; Peru 14 June introduced new immigration rules requiring Venezuelans to obtain visa before arriving at border, leading to large increase in numbers arriving in days before deadline, including 6,000 crossing from Ecuador 13 June.

OP-ED: Venezuela’s Mining Arc: A Legal Veneer for Armed Groups to Plunder

Guatemala JUNE 2019

Presidential and legislative elections held mid-June marred by fraud allegations amid reports of death threats on electoral officials prior to elections. In first round of presidential vote 16 June, Sandra Torres, candidate for Unidad Nacional de la Esperanza (UNE), won 25.54% of vote, Alejandro Giammattei of Vamos party won 13.95%; both set for second round run-off 11 August. Organization of American States initial assessment of election 18 June found no evidence of fraud but highlighted pre-election violence. However, Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) 20 June announced recount following fraud allegations. Recount began 26 June but suspended same day after Public Prosecutor raided TSE offices as part of investigation into possible irregularities in results. Recount restarted 27 June. In lead up to election TSE had identified 91 municipalities posing high risk of political violence; attorney general 12 June confirmed electoral crimes prosecutor fled country after receiving death threats. On election day, TSE reported incidents in at least four departments including suspension of voting in San Jorge, Zacapa, department after electoral authorities received death threats. Regional focus on migration continued; govt 13 June began talks in Guatemala City with U.S. officials, reportedly on designating Guatemala “safe third country”, which would require Central American migrants to seek asylum in Guatemala, rather than continuing north to U.S. Despite U.S. claims agreement was close, govt 26 June said such agreement was not under discussion.
Honduras  JUNE 2019

Political tensions worsened as protests against govt’s planned reforms continued, while clashes between anti-govt demonstrators and police led to nationwide deployment of army. Despite President Hernández 2 June revoking planned reforms to health and education systems that could potentially lead to privatisation and mass dismissals, political tensions remained high and protesters demanded Hernández’s resignation; Hernández 10 June said govt would not tolerate protesters’ vandalism while defence secretary reaffirmed army’s willingness to support police in maintaining order. Truck and taxi drivers 17 June and members of police special forces unit 18 June began strikes for better pay and conditions but called them off 20 June after reaching agreements with government. Widespread anti-govt demonstrations continued, including severe unrest in Tegucigalpa 19 June in which police accused of killing two people. Hernández 20 June announced indefinite deployment of army nationwide to maintain order. Same day, military police reportedly shot dead 17-year-old protester in La Paz department. In Tegucigalpa, students and security forces 24 June clashed, with media reporting that after military police fired tear gas on protesters, who responded by throwing stones, police opened fire and wounded at least five students; military policeman also injured in clash 26 June.

El Salvador  JUNE 2019

New President Nayib Bukele, sworn in 1 June, launched flurry of anti-gang measures. Bukele early June named cabinet including two hardliners in fight against armed groups, René Merino Monroy as minister of defence and Mauricio Arriaza Chicas as director of national police. Human Rights Institute of Central American University decried Arriaza appointment, said he previously led police units accused of extrajudicial killings. Bukele 11 June ruled out possibility of truce with gangs while Arriaza next day said police would adopt harsher measures. Bukele’s “Territorial Control Plan” began 20 June with three focus areas: tightening control of jailed gang leaders; curbing financing for illicit activities; and strengthening capacity of security forces. Gang attacks on security forces continued with four police officers killed 1-17 June, and a soldier 26 June. Amid regional focus on migration and govt criticism that U.S.-Mexico 7 June deal to increase anti-migration efforts did not include Northern Triangle countries, Bukele 20 June met Mexican President López Obrador in Tapachula, Mexico, to discuss migration, with latter pledging $30mn in support for El Salvador.

Nicaragua  JUNE 2019
Political tensions continued as govt alternated between adopting conciliatory measures and repressing opposition. Govt 8 June passed amnesty law for political and other crimes related to 2018 uprisings; opposition criticised law for reportedly ensuring immunity for police and para-police units accused of rights abuses. Govt continued to release political prisoners with 106 freed 11-12 June, including main protest leaders. Deadline for release of all political prisoners, agreed in March between govt and opposition, passed 18 June; opposition Civic Alliance insisted over 80 still jailed but govt declared it had fully complied and did not have to release more prisoners; opposition 18-19 June staged minor protests in Managua and promised further protests. Govt continued repression of opposition, including harassment of released prisoners, such as activist Irlanda Jerez, leading some to flee country. Pro-govt groups and police attacked groups celebrating political prisoners' release in León 15 June and Managua 16 June; media reported some of those celebrating injured and others detained. International pressure on govt continued; U.S. State Department 12 June reiterated call for investigation into 2018 unrest, objecting to amnesty law. Organization of American States General Assembly 26-28 June passed resolution creating commission to conduct high-level diplomacy to seek solution to crisis and to produce report on state of Nicaraguan democracy. Amid continuing economic deterioration, U.S. and Canada 21 June announced new sanctions against several officials including Gustavo Porras, National Assembly head.

- REPORT: The Keys to Restarting Nicaragua's Stalled Talks

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**Haiti**  JUNE 2019

Violent anti-govt protests gripped country, while tensions increased over political impasse and alleged corruption. Protesters 9 June demonstrated in Port-au-Prince and elsewhere, demanding President Moïse's resignation and clashing with police; two people shot dead and further four injured with responsibility for deaths unclear. Demonstrators 10 June began two-day strike in Port-au-Prince and established roadblocks throughout capital; same day, unknown gunmen killed prominent radio journalist who had reported on corruption allegations against Moïse. Protests followed late-May High Court of Auditors final report on PetroCaribe (alliance giving Caribbean states access to cheap Venezuelan oil) scandal, that said Moïse was centre of mass embezzlement scheme of public money; Moïse 12 June denied wrongdoing and refused to leave office, sparking further mass protests 12, 14 and 16 June. Opposition senators continued to block ratification of new PM Lapin's cabinet for including eight members from heavily-criticised previous cabinet. UN Security Council 24 June approved creation of UN "Integrated Office" supporting political stability and governance to replace UN police force when latter's mandate ends Oct.

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**Mexico**  JUNE 2019
High levels of violence continued amid competition between armed groups, while govt reached preliminary agreement with U.S. to increase anti-migration efforts. In Guanajuato state (centre) armed groups continued to compete over oil siphoning, leading to 23 murders 7-9 June. Heavy fighting also ongoing in Michoacán state (centre), with some twenty groups competing over criminal markets; convoy of two dozen vehicles supposedly belonging to Jalisco Cartel New Generation attacked police in Zamora, Michoacán late May, killing three and wounding ten. Targeted killings of journalists continued including journalist Norma Sarabia, shot dead in Huimanguillo, Tabasco (south) 11 June, seventh journalist killed in 2019; Sarabia had reportedly received threats for investigating police corruption. Govt and U.S. 7 June announced preliminary agreement on increasing anti-migration efforts: govt will deploy 6,000 National Guard, controversial main instrument of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador’s security plan, troops to Guatemala-Mexico border and agreed asylum seekers will remain in Mexico as claims are processed, while U.S. refrains from retaliatory economic measures; agreement to be reviewed within 45 days; rights groups criticised deal’s militarisation of border. Federal police 15 June pursued and shot vehicle refusing migration officials’ orders to stop in Veracruz state (Gulf coast); govt reported one woman killed and two men from El Salvador wounded.

* OUR JOURNEYS: Mexico’s Hydra-headed Crime War

### Middle East & North Africa

**Israel/Palestine** **JUNE 2019**

Tit-for-tat attacks continued between Israel and Palestinian militants in Gaza, and U.S. release of economic component of peace plan provoked Palestinian condemnation and protests. In Gaza, Israel 4-11 June increased and decreased size of fishing zone and, responding to Hamas’s use of incendiary balloons, 12 June banned fishing entirely. Palestinian militants 15 June launched rockets from Gaza at Israeli town; Israel next day carried out airstrikes on several Hamas targets in Gaza, no casualties reported. Following mediation by UN Envoy Nikolay Mladenov, Israel 18 June allowed fishing up to ten nautical miles off coast. Qatar 20 June began disbursing $15mn to Palestinians in Gaza. Qatar also transferred $10mn to Israel for Gaza’s fuel and 16-18 June held talks in Israel and Gaza on funding construction of power line for Gaza. In West Bank, tensions increased between Palestinian Authority (PA) and Israel when Israeli soldiers 11 June opened fire on PA security forces causing injuries, afterwards claiming to have mistaken their identity. Arab League 22 June held emergency meeting on PA’s finances and renewed its commitment to provide PA safety net of $100mn per month. Israeli court mid-June approved demolition of sixteen apartment buildings containing 100 housing units in PA-controlled neighbourhood bordering East Jerusalem. U.S. 22 June unveiled economic part of Middle East peace plan outlining desired investments of $50bn, of which $27.8bn would be invested in Gaza and West Bank over ten years. U.S. convened "Prosperity to Peace" conference in Manama, Bahrain 25-26 June in bid to build support for peace plan among Arab states; several thousand demonstrated against conference throughout Palestinian territories 24-26 June. In retaliation to 1 June rocket attack from Syria into Golan Heights, Israeli 2-3 June carried out airstrikes targeting Syrian govt positions, killing eight soldiers and seven non-Syrians; two Israeli airstrikes
Syrian govt positions, killing eight soldiers and seven non-Syrians; two Israeli airstrikes near Damascus and Homs 30 June reportedly killed four civilians. Oman 26 June announced it planned to open embassy in Ramallah.

- **COMMENTARY**: Bahrain Workshop Sets Back Arab-Israeli Rapprochement

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**JUNE 2019**

**Jordan**

U.S. 12 June announced Jordan would attend U.S.-led conference 25-26 June in Bahrain aimed at building support for Middle East peace plan among Arab states. Hundreds took to streets of capital Amman 21 June in protest against peace plan and called for govt to boycott Bahrain conference. Govt 22 June announced it would attend. U.S. same day unveiled economic part of peace plan which would include $7.4bn of investments in Jordan over ten years.

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**Lebanon**

Former Islamic State (ISIS) fighter 3 June opened fire on police station and military vehicle in northern city of Tripoli, leaving two policemen and two soldiers dead, before blowing himself up; no group claimed attack. Interior minister 4 June described incident as "lone-wolf attack". In southern village of Yater security forces 17 June arrested two Syrians suspected of ties to ISIS who were plotting attacks on religious sites. U.S. 22 June unveiled economic part of Middle East peace plan which includes investments worth $6.3bn in Lebanon over ten years. Military veterans protesting austerity measures 19 June blocked entrances to govt offices in capital Beirut; hundreds of veterans protested again 27 June blocking roads in Beirut and throughout country. Suspected supporters of ethnic Druze politician Walid Jumblatt fired on convoy of minister of refugee affairs, who belongs to rival Druze faction in Aley near capital Beirut 29 June, leaving two of his assistants dead.

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**Syria**

Fighting continued in Idlib in north west between pro-govt forces and jihadist and other opposition groups with high civilian toll; suspected Islamic State (ISIS) and govt kept up arson campaign in opposition-held areas in east; and Israel continued airstrikes in west. In north west, pro-govt forces and Russia maintained shelling and airstrikes on opposition areas, but with Turkey stepping up support, opposition managed to hold off offensive and retake some territories. Turkish-backed rebels National Liberation Front (NLF) and jihadist coalition Hei’at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), along with other opposition factions, 6 June launched counteroffensive against pro-
along with other opposition factions, 6 June launched counteroffensive against pro-govt forces, pushing south toward Hama province. Russia and Turkey 12 June brokered ceasefire between gov't and opposition forces in Idlib, but fighting continued. In Idlib province, pro-govt forces 13 June attacked Turkish observation post, injuring three soldiers; 27 June attacked Turkish observation post killing soldier. In Hama province, heavy clashes 17-20 June left around 135 rebel and pro-govt fighters dead. UN 18 June reported over 230 civilians killed since early May. In north east, U.S. 4 June said Kurdish-led rebels Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and Turkey had agreed in principle that SDF core Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) would withdraw from future safe zone. In east, fires continued to destroy crops around Manbij city and in Deir al-Zour and Raqqa provinces: SDF 1 June accused ISIS and gov't of using arson against it. ISIS 5 June claimed bombing in Raqqa; 17 June claimed suicide bomber's failed attempt to attack Kurdish internal security HQ in Qamishli; 23 June ambushed pro-govt militias in Al-Mayadin desert. In south west, in response to artillery fire, Israeli warplanes 1-2 June killed ten pro-govt forces in Golan Heights; same day killed five govt soldiers in Tiyas air base near Homs, allegedly targeting Iranian facility. State media 12 June claimed govt forces had shot down Israeli missiles near Golan Heights; 30 June reported Israeli strikes in Damascus and Homs, allegedly killing four civilians.

**Bahrain**

Following U.S. release of economic component of its Middle East peace plan 22 June, Bahrain hosted U.S.-led conference in Manama 25-26 June aimed at building support for peace plan among Arab states. In Iraq, some 200 demonstrators 27 June stormed Bahrain's embassy in Iraqi capital, Baghdad in protest against Bahrain's role in hosting U.S.-led conference; gov't same day recalled its ambassador to Iraq.

**Iran**

Tensions between Iran and U.S. and its Gulf allies rose to alarming levels, raising risk of more intense political and military confrontation in July. Unidentified assailants 13 June caused explosions on two tankers (one Norwegian-owned, one Japanese-owned) in Gulf of Oman; U.S. blamed Iran, which denied responsibility. U.S. 14 June released video it said showed Iranian vessel removing unexploded ordinance from side of one of tankers after attack. U.S. 16 June said Iranian missile 13 June had tried but failed to hit U.S. drone surveying damaged tankers and that Iranian-backed Huthis in Yemen had downed U.S. drone there 6 June. U.S. 18 June said it would deploy 1,000 additional troops to Middle East. Iran 20 June downed U.S. drone off Iranian coast; Iran claimed drone was in Iranian airspace, U.S. said it was in international airspace. President Trump 20 June approved airstrikes in Iran; next day Trump said he had called off attack because it would have been disproportionate. Foreign leaders including German FM, Japanese FM and high level EU official visited Tehran to ease Iran-U.S. tensions and salvage 2015 nuclear deal. Mechanism created by E3 (France, Germany and UK) to facilitate trade with Iran 17 June held consultations in Tehran; same day E3...
facilitate trade with Iran 15 June new consultations in Tehran; same day E3 ambassadors to Iran said "both sides have agreed a roadmap to expedite progress". FM Zarif 1 July said Iran’s stockpile of low enriched uranium had exceeded deal’s limit. E3 28 June said mechanism to facilitate trade with Iran avoiding U.S. sanctions, Instrument for Supporting Trade Exchanges (INSTEX), was operational. U.S. issued more sanctions to squeeze Iran's economy: 7 June on exporters of Iran's petrochemicals; 11 June on companies facilitating Iranian oil exports to Syria; and 12 June on company alleged to have trafficked weapons to Iranian-backed Iraqi militias. U.S. 15 June extended Iraq's sanctions waiver, allowing it to continue importing Iranian energy for another 120 days. U.S. 24 June imposed sanctions on Supreme Leader Khamenei.

· BRIEFING NOTE: Iran Briefing Note #2

Iraq

Amid rising U.S.-Iran tensions, unclaimed attacks on U.S. assets increased (see Iran), and in south protests erupted demanding jobs and better services. Unidentified assailants fired rockets at military bases housing U.S. personnel near capital Baghdad and in Mosul 17 and 19 June; 19 June fired rocket on facility housing staff of foreign oil and gas companies including U.S. company ExxonMobil in Basra; attacks caused no casualties and nobody claimed responsibility. PM Mahdi 18 June ordered Iraqi armed groups to cease attacks on military installations and said foreign troops in Iraq could not act against another country without govt approval. U.S. Sec State Pompeo 15 June granted Iraq new 90-day sanctions waiver to continue importing Iranian electricity and gas. Parliamentary blocs threatened to withdraw support to govt which would undermine its ability to rule: Hikma parliamentary group 17 June declared intention to join opposition. Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr 18 June gave govt ten-days to fill five remaining ministerial posts; if not, Sadrist movement currently supporting govt would "change its stance"; parliament 24 June approved appointment of interior, defence and justice ministers. Protests erupted 20 June in southern provinces and Basra, where demonstrators called for more jobs and better services. In Baghdad, protesters 28 June stormed Bahrain’s embassy in protest against Bahrain’s hosting of U.S. conference to build support for its Middle East peace plan, prompting Bahrain to recall ambassador. In Kurdistan region, regional parliament 10 June elected Nechirvan Barzani of dominant Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) as new president; second strongest party Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) boycotted vote in protest against what it called KDP’s unilateral decisions on how to share key positions. Regional parliament 11 June including PUK MPs approved Barzani’s nomination of his cousin Masrour Barzani as region’s PM. Islamic State (ISIS) maintained low-level operations in Salah al-Din and Kirkuk provinces, killing thirteen. In north, Turkey continued strikes against Kurdistan Workers’ Party.
Parliament called on govt to boycott U.S.-led meeting in Bahrain on economic development in Palestine 25-26 June, which it did.

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**Oman** JUNE 2019

Foreign Ministry 26 June announced that it planned to open embassy in Ramallah, Palestine.

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**Qatar** JUNE 2019

FM al-Thani 21 June called for dialogue to end conflict between Iran and Gulf states. Govt 27 June hosted new round of U.S.-Taliban talks in Doha.

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**Saudi Arabia** JUNE 2019

As tensions continued to rise between U.S. and Gulf states on one hand and Iran and its regional allies on other, Huthi forces in Yemen increased pace of cross-border attacks into Saudi Arabia, including on infrastructure; Saudi followed with higher-intensity bombings in Yemen, especially in capital Sanaa, raising risk of further escalation in July. Huthis launched missile and drone strikes on Abha and Najran airports in Saudi Arabia, attacking Abha airport 12, 14, 15 and 23 June. Govt officials described Huthis as Iran-backed terrorists and U.S. framed Huthi cross-border attacks as part of Iranian regional campaign against Saudi and U.S. interests (see Iran). Quad comprising Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), UK and U.S. 22 June expressed concern over “escalating tensions in the region and the dangers posed by Iranian destabilising activity to peace and security both in Yemen and the broader region”. After Sudanese security forces 3 June attacked protesters in Sudanese capital Khartoum, U.S. official next day called Saudi and UAE govts which support Sudan’s military leadership; both released statements regretting violence and urging military to reopen talks with protesters.

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**Yemen** JUNE 2019
As tensions continued to rise between U.S. and Gulf states on one hand and Iran and its regional allies on other, Huthis increased pace of cross-border attacks into Saudi Arabia, provoking Riyadh to step up bombing on Huthi areas in Yemen especially on capital Sanaa; further attacks could fuel escalation in July (see Iran). Huthis launched missile and drone strikes on Abha and Najran airports in Saudi Arabia, attacking Abha airport 12, 14, 15 and 23 June. In retaliation, Riyadh intensified bombing campaign in Huthi areas, particularly Sanaa. U.S. late May said Huthi cross-border attacks were part of Iranian regional campaign against Saudi and U.S. interests; Saudi officials described Huthis as Iran-backed terrorists. United Arab Emirates (UAE) has drawn down some forces along Red Sea coast, removed heavy weaponry from Hodeida and repatriated missile system, likely mitigating immediate risk that major fighting resumes in Hodeida. Following govt’s criticism of UN in wake of Huthi unilateral redeployment from Red Sea ports mid-May, international pressure on President Hadi helped avert collapse of UN-led effort to demilitarise Hodeida. After Hadi late May said he would meet UN Envoy Martin Griffiths, Griffiths 26 June met VP al-Ahmar to discuss implementation of Dec 2018 Stockholm Agreement. U.S. 16 June said Huthi surface-to-air missile had 6 June shot down U.S. drone over Yemen. World Food Programme 20 June began phased suspension of food aid deliveries in Huthi-controlled territory after negotiations between WFP and Huthi leadership repeatedly failed to resolve issue of Huthi aid diversion. Fighting reported 20 June around Ataq, capital of Shabwa governorate, between govt and UAE-backed secessionist forces, followed by pro-secessionist protests. Fighting also reported in Hodeida, Hajja, al-Dhale and al-Bayda governorates; pro-govt forces 27 June repelled Huthi offensive targeting residential areas in Hodeida outskirts, reportedly inflicting heavy casualties. Saudi military 25 June announced capture of Abu Osama al-Muhajer, Islamic State’s (ISIS) leader in Yemen, and three other associates.

United Arab Emirates  JUNE 2019

As tensions continued to rise between U.S. and Iran and their respective allies, United Arab Emirates (UAE) took steps to avoid inflaming situation. While U.S. and Saudi Arabia blamed Iran for 15 June attacks on tankers in Gulf of Oman, UAE refrained from attributing blame, pending ongoing investigation. Quad comprising Saudi Arabia, UAE, UK and U.S. 22 June expressed concerns over "escalating tensions in the region and the dangers posed by Iranian destabilising activity to peace and security both in Yemen and the broader region" (see Iran). In Yemen, UAE has drawn down some of its forces along Red Sea coast, and removed some military equipment from Hodeida. After Sudanese security forces 3 June attacked protesters in Sudanese capital Khartoum, U.S. official next day called Saudi and UAE govs which support Sudan’s military leadership; both released statements regretting violence and urging Sudan’s military to reopen talks with protesters.

Algeria  JUNE 2019
Algeria

Interim govt and security forces responded to weekly nationwide protests demanding regime change with repression and some concessions; in July country could enter constitutional void when interim president’s term ends possibly triggering more intense protests and repression. Hundreds of thousands continued to protest in major cities each Friday demanding dismantling of regime; authorities tried to discourage protests with intimidation including arrests of journalists, civil society and political opposition members. Authorities 30 June arrested independence war veteran and founder of opposition party Front for Socialist Forces (FFS) Lakhdar Bouregaa for comments made against military, prompting outcry among opposition. Constitutional Council 2 June cancelled 4 July presidential elections on grounds they were “impossible to organise” in time, setting no new date and paving way for possible constitutional void when interim President Ben Salah’s mandate ends early July. Military 7 June reiterated calls for presidential elections as soon as possible, but accepted need to have inclusive dialogue ahead of vote. Army Chief of Staff Gaid Salah 18 June accused opposition parties of being “enemies of Algeria” and favouring constitutional void. In capital Algiers, 400 leading opposition figures and 70 civil society organisations 15 June proposed roadmap for political transition, including creation of presidential committee and independent electoral commission and national dialogue; seven opposition parties 18 June formalised alliance to work toward democratic transition. Govt intensified anti-corruption purge: authorities 10 June arrested businessmen Tahkout brothers on corruption charges; 12 and 13 June jailed former PMs Ahmed Ouyahia and Abdelmalek Sellal for embezzlement of public funds and abuse of power; justice ministry 18 June requested waiver of twenty MPs’ parliamentary immunity.

Egypt

Clashes between security forces and Islamic State (ISIS) Sinai Province continued in Sinai and death of former President Morsi in detention sparked accusations of govt responsibility. In Sinai, suspected ISIS insurgents 5 June attacked checkpoint near El Arish city, killing eight police; security forces 6-8 June conducted operation in North Sinai, killing 31 militants; ISIS fighters 25 June killed seven policemen near El Arish; following attack, clashes between militants and security forces left four militants dead. Former President Morsi 17 June died of cardiac arrest while on trial in Cairo courtroom; Morsi, senior leader of Muslim Brotherhood, won 2012 presidential election and ruled until he was deposed in July 2013 military coup and arrested on terrorism charges. NGO Human Rights Watch same day called for investigation by UN Human Rights Council into authorities’ possible mistreatment of Morsi and denial of medical care; UN High Commissioner for Human Rights spokesman 18 June called for independent inquiry into death; Turkish President Erdoğan 19 June accused authorities of killing Morsi, prompting Egyptian FM to call remarks “irresponsible”. Son of former presidential candidate Abdel Fotouh 29 June said his father had suffered two heart attacks in prison, adding that he may die “at any time” due to harsh conditions. NGO Amnesty International 25 June reported new govt crackdown on opposition with arrests of at least eight individuals including former MP Zyad El-Eleaimy, leader of Istiqlal party Ahmed el-Akabawy, journalists and activists.
Libya JUNE 2019

Fighting continued in and around capital Tripoli between Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar’s Libyan National Army (LNA) and forces nominally loyal to UN-backed Govt of National Accord (GNA) pushing death toll to over 700 since early April. Both sides relied heavily on airpower and continued to receive military support from regional allies. In offensive launched late May to capture city centre, LNA forces advanced only 2-3km into southern Salaheddin neighbourhood; LNA airstrikes hit GNA depots on airport road and eastern suburb Tajoura. GNA forces 19 June claimed they had retaken former international airport, but control over airport still contested. GNA forces 26 June reconquered and expelled LNA from Gharyan, key logistic base 80km south of capital under LNA control since April. Turkish engineers in Tripoli trained GNA forces to use anti-aircraft technology and armoured vehicles, reportedly provided by Turkey but paid for by Qatar. Turkey 30 June said if militias loyal to Haftar did not release six Turkish nationals they were holding, Haftar’s “illegal militia forces” would be “legitimate targets”. Forces loyal to Haftar 30 June said they had destroyed Turkish drone parked at Tripoli’s only working airport, halting civilian flights. United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia and Russia reportedly continued to deliver military supplies to LNA, and Egypt manpower. Both sides rejected calls for ceasefire and political talks. In speech 16 June, PM Serraj refused talks with Haftar and excluded him from his proposed political roadmap, including National Conference under UN aegis to appoint judicial committee to draft legislation for parliamentary and presidential elections to be held before end of 2019. In 19 June interview, Haftar said LNA would continue military operations until it controlled capital; he would then abolish bodies created by 2015 Skhirat agreement, including Tripoli-based Presidency Council, form constitutional committee, hold referendum, disband militias and hold elections. Islamic State (ISIS) claimed two bomb blasts in Derna in east 2 June.

Mauritania JUNE 2019

In presidential election 22 June, defence minister and ruling majority’s candidate Mohamed El Ghazouani won absolute majority with 51.5% of vote. Opposition candidates said they saw “worrying signs” of election irregularities and would use “every legal means” to contest results.

Morocco JUNE 2019
On occasion of Eid al-Fitr, marking end of holy month of Ramadan 5 June, King Mohammed VI pardoned 107 activists of Hirak protest movement that formed in Rif region in north in late 2016 to demand jobs and denounce state corruption and repression. Court of appeal of Salé near capital Rabat 21 June closed hearing of 24 defendants suspected of involvement in killing of two Scandinavian tourists near Imlil village in Atlas Mountains in Dec 2018, prosecutor 27 June sought death sentence for three main suspects.

**Tunisia**  JUNE 2019

Ahead of presidential and legislative elections scheduled for late 2019, tensions heightened as ruling majority tried to bar potential candidates, President Essebsi suffered “health crisis” and two suicide bombings rocked capital Tunis. Parliament 18 June voted through amendments to 2014 electoral law so that new law, if implemented, would render three would-be presidential candidates opposed to ruling coalition ineligible: philanthropist Olfa Terras Rambourg, owner of private TV channel Nabil Karoui and former official of former President Ben Ali’s party Abir Moussi. Amendments set conditions for candidacy, ruling out citizens who received “unfair political publicity” or distributed “aid to the population” during year preceding election or have record of human rights violations. Pro-govt media welcomed vote as victory against political corruption. But more than 40 MPs 20 June reportedly signed petition against amendment. Several jurists said this move could delay elections, notably if Essebsi refuses to sign new law. Armed group early 27 June shot at broadcasting station at Mount Orbata in Gafsa in centre. Hours later jihadists carried out two suicide bomb attacks in capital Tunis, killing one police and injuring four people; Islamic State (ISIS) claimed both. Same day, Essebsi, 92, suffered “severe health crisis” and was hospitalised in Tunis; health reportedly improving end-month.

**Western Sahara**  JUNE 2019

In city of Smara, Moroccan security forces 6 June prevented residents from celebrating release of Sahrawi journalist Salah Lebsir after four years in prison, reportedly assaulting sympathisers. Polisario Front independence movement 8 June sent official complaint to UN, urged independent monitoring of human rights in disputed territory. At UN Human Rights Council meeting in Geneva 25 June, Middle Eastern and African countries reiterated support for Morocco’s Western Sahara Autonomy proposal.