

# CrisisWatch

## Tracking Conflict Worldwide

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CrisisWatch is our global conflict tracker, a tool designed to help decision-makers prevent deadly violence by keeping them up-to-date with developments in over 70 conflicts and crises, identifying trends and alerting them to risks of escalation and opportunities to advance peace.

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## Global Overview

AUGUST 2019

In August, deadly clashes in Yemen between southern separatists and forces aligned with the internationally-recognised government dimmed prospects for ending the war. Suspected Israeli drone strikes on Iran-backed militias in Iraq and Lebanon ramped up regional tensions. Fighting intensified in Libya's south, north west Syria, and Myanmar's northern Shan State, and in Colombia senior FARC leaders returned to armed struggle. Security in El Salvador improved, but murder rates climbed in Mexico. In Asia, tensions rose in the South China Sea, clashes erupted in Indonesia over the treatment of Papuans, and India's change to Kashmir's status could fuel violence. Presidential polls in Somalia's Jubaland state deepened divisions, intercommunal attacks rose in eastern Chad, and violence in Cameroon's Anglophone west could increase in the coming month. Repression intensified in Burundi, authorities cracked down on protesters in Zimbabwe, and friction between

### Outlook for This Month

September 2019

#### ⚡ Conflict Risk Alerts

Cameroon, Malawi, Kashmir, Lebanon, Yemen

#### 🕊️ Resolution Opportunities

Afghanistan

### Trends for Last Month

August 2019

#### 🔴 Deteriorated Situations

Burundi, Cameroon, Chad,

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...rivalry led to a shoot-out. On a positive note, Sudan's protagonists agreed on structures to rule until elections, Mozambique's warring parties officially ended hostilities, dialogue initiatives reduced violence in Mali's centre, and talks to end the U.S.-Taliban conflict in Afghanistan could lead to a framework agreement in the coming weeks.



PRESIDENT'S TAKE

## The Dangers of Ignoring Yemen's Southern Question



**ROBERT MALLEY**  
PRESIDENT & CEO

In his introduction to this month's edition of CrisisWatch, Crisis Group's conflict tracker, our President Robert Malley reflects on signs of hope in Afghanistan and Sudan, and on dangerous new develo

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In **Yemen**, southern separatists aligned with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) seized the city of Aden from the Saudi-backed internationally-recognised government of President Hadi on 10 August. The fighting left at least 40 dead. Violence could escalate in coming weeks as the two factions seek to gain the upper hand. To prevent this rivalry becoming a civil war within a civil war, Saudi Arabia, alongside the UAE and the UN special envoy, **should mediate an end to the fighting**, including by placing the southern question on the agenda of UN-led talks.

Suspected Israeli drone strikes on Iran-backed militias in **Iraq** and **Lebanon** sparked outrage in both countries and further **strained Baghdad's policy of neutrality** amid U.S.-Iran tensions. Fighting intensified in north-western **Syria** as pro-government forces advanced into rebel-held Idlib, targeting the Turkish military. In **Libya**, the war dragged on in and around Tripoli between armed groups aligned with the UN-backed government and those supporting Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA). Hostilities escalated in the south, where clashes between militias aligned with the main rivals left over 100 dead.

In **Colombia**, three senior former FARC rebel commanders, including the group's former chief negotiator, announced their return to armed struggle, becoming the highest ranking guerrillas to have reneged on the 2016 peace deal. **El Salvador** recorded its lowest monthly murder rate this century, but **Mexico's** homicide rate continued to soar; 2019 is on course to become its deadliest year on record.

Fighting escalated in **Myanmar's** northern Shan State, as an alliance of ethnic armed groups launched coordinated attacks on strategic targets, including on a military academy, killing about fifteen. Tensions grew in the **South China Sea** as both Vietnam and the Philippines protested Chinese incursions into disputed waters, while a U.S. warship sailed near Chinese-claimed islands, angering Beijing. India revoked **Kashmir's**

special constitutional status, deployed tens of thousands of troops, arrested Kashmiri

...member in movement of Papua region, large demonstrations against involvement of  
Papuaans resulted in violent clashes with security forces.

Presidential polls in **Somalia**'s Jubaland federal state deepened political divisions, as opposition candidates barred from running and the federal government in Mogadishu rejected the incumbent's victory. Communal violence in eastern **Chad** left about 100 dead and prompted the government to impose a state of emergency. A military court in **Cameroon** handed down life sentences to ten Anglophone separatist leaders, sparking a rise in clashes in the Anglophone regions. Violence could escalate further in September if separatists seek to impose by force a promised lockdown.

As **Zimbabwe**'s economic crisis deepened, the security forces cracked down on protests, while the frequency of attacks on opposition members and activists rose. In **Malawi**, protesters continued to push their claim that President Mutharika won re-election through fraud; violence between protesters and security forces could rise in September if Constitutional Court dismisses the opposition's case to overturn the result. As **Burundi**'s 2020 presidential elections approach, the government and ruling party's youth wing stepped up repression of the main opposition party, arresting and assaulting its members, killing one.

Tensions rose markedly between **Georgia** and its breakaway region of South Ossetia as Russian and de facto South Ossetian border guards resumed efforts to build a fence along the line between Georgia and South Ossetia. In response, Georgia began building police stations in contested areas. Meanwhile, in **Kyrgyzstan**, supporters of former President Atambayev took up arms to resist special forces' attempts to arrest him, killing one.

Conflict resolution efforts took fragile steps forward in several corners of the globe. In **Sudan**, the ruling military council and opposition coalition signed a landmark constitutional declaration and power-sharing accord, beginning a three-year transitional period until elections. **Mozambique**'s former armed opposition group Renamo signed a peace deal with the government, formally ending decades of hostilities. Communal and militant violence fell in **Mali**'s centre, thanks in part to a growing number of local dialogue initiatives. Finally, the U.S. and **Afghanistan**'s Taliban made progress in talks and could announce a deal in September. But the conflict continued to exact an excruciatingly high toll on civilians.

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## Latest Updates

### Africa

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Month saw continued insecurity in north and east, especially in Sahel, Boucle du Mouhoun and East regions, including deadliest attack against security forces since rise of jihadist insurgency. In Sahel region in north, unidentified gunmen 15 Aug ambushed police on Djibo-Mentao road in Soum province, killing three. Also in Soum, suspected jihadists 19 Aug killed 24 soldiers at military outpost in Koutougou; main opposition party Union for Progress and Change (UPC) next day called on govt to step down. Suspected jihadist militants 25 Aug detonated explosives that destroyed bridge in Bangaharia, Soum province. In Centre-North region, four unidentified attackers on motorbikes 27 Aug killed three civilians in Kourao, Bam province. In Boucle du Mouhoun region in north, bomb killed four soldiers in Toéni, Sourou province overnight 13-14 Aug. In East region, suspected jihadists 4 Aug attacked two churches in Tialboanga, Tapoa province, killing three civilians. Lawyers of Gen Gilbert Diendéré, former chief of staff of former President Compaoré on trial for 2015 attempted coup, 8 Aug made final plea for acquittal; prosecutors sought life sentence. In Centre-East region, some 100 local residents 8 Aug staged attack on Turkish-owned Youga gold mine after security guard killed local man illegally panning for gold previous day, prompting security forces to intervene.

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#### 📍 Mali AUGUST 2019

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Violence in centre fell as local peace initiatives proliferated, but jihadist groups and militias continued to attack civilians and military in centre and north. PM Cissé continued initiatives to end violence in centre; 3 Aug oversaw signing of peace agreement between Fulani and Dogon militias in Macina circle, Ségou region. Several other villages organised dialogues and reached peace agreements with help of govt and civil society. Notably, thanks to mediation of civil society group Faso Dambe Ton, jihadist group Katiba Macina early Aug agreed to lift siege on Toguere Coumbé in Tenenkou circle, Mopti region. Fulani, Dogon and Dafing militias in Ouenkoro in Bankass circle, Mopti region, 16 Aug signed peace agreement following mediation by Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. In Mopti region in centre, two army trucks detonated mine on Diougani-Dinangourou road in Koro circle 5 Aug, leaving two soldiers and one civilian dead; jihadist Group to Support Islam and Muslims (JNIM) claimed ambush on Hombori-Boni road 21 Aug that left five soldiers dead. Also in Mopti region, unidentified gunmen 23 Aug reportedly attacked Tagari Dogon in Koro circle, killing two civilians. In Ségou region in centre, unidentified gunmen 6 Aug killed one gendarme in ambush. In north, International Committee of the Red Cross 6 Aug said it would temporarily suspend its operations in Tombouctou area due to growing insecurity. Commission organising national political dialogue continued consultations with civil society, political parties and religious leaders, but UN panel of experts 7 Aug warned dialogue could delay further implementation of 2015 Algiers accord. Sympathisers of prominent Muslim leader Mahmoud Dicko 1 Aug announced creation of new movement to influence religious and political life. UN Security Council 29 Aug renewed until 31 Aug 2020 sanctions regime against individuals and entities derailing peace process.

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#### ➡ Niger AUGUST 2019

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Violence against civilians continued in south east and west despite decrease in attacks against security forces. In Diffa region in south east, abductions of women, traders and traditional chiefs continued. Four soldiers killed when their vehicle detonated mine near Bosso 10 Aug. Boko Haram 23 Aug

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 **Burundi** AUGUST 2019

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As 2020 elections loomed, govt and ruling party's youth wing intensified repression of opposition, arresting and assaulting members of opposition party National Congress for Freedom (CNL), leaving one dead. Fighting between CNL members and supporters of ruling party National Council for the Defence of Democracy–Forces for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD-FDD) in Buhinyuza, Muyinga province night of 2 Aug left five CNL members injured. CNDD-FDD youth wing Imbonerakure 9 Aug “arrested” and handed over to police thirteen CNL members preparing to open party office in Butaganzwa, Ruyigi province. Police 13 Aug arrested four CNL members in Bwambarangwe, Kirundo province. Imbonerakure 13 Aug attacked CNL members in Gasorwe, Muyinga province leaving four injured; 18 Aug attacked opening of CNL office in Muha, Bujumbura Mairie province leaving ten people injured; night of 18-19 Aug ambushed CNL members in Rugari, Muyinga province killing one. Clashes broke out 25 Aug between Imbonerakure and CNL members in Mbimbi, Bujumbura province leaving five Imbonerakure injured; one died of injuries next day. Coalition of opposition parties and individual politicians in exile CNARED Giriteka 4 Aug announced it would participate in 2020 elections and called on govt to engage in dialogue with internal and external opposition. Govt 16 Aug said politicians in exile could return, but those under arrest warrants would be brought to justice. President Nkurunziza 20 Aug reiterated his intention not to run in 2020 elections. Govt 25 Aug signed agreement with Tanzania to start repatriating in Oct some 200,000 Burundian refugees from Tanzania, who fled there following violence in 2015. UN refugee agency 28 Aug described conditions in Burundi as unfavourable for return.

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  **Cameroon** AUGUST 2019

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Court's sentencing of ten Anglophone separatist leaders to life in prison sparked rise in clashes in Anglophone areas, and separatists could intensify violence in Sept to enforce planned economic lockdown; Boko Haram (BH) continued attacks in Far North. In Northwest region, separatists 4 Aug ambushed security forces at Alabukum reportedly killing six. Security forces 7 Aug reportedly killed six civilians in Njinikom. In regional capital Bamenda, fighting 12-18 Aug left at least fifteen dead including ten civilians and five soldiers. After Yaoundé military tribunal 20 Aug handed down life sentences to ten Anglophone separatist leaders, fighting erupted in Bamenda between separatists and security forces, leaving at least two dead. Separatists same day called for three-week “lockdown” in Anglophone regions starting 26 Aug, prompting thousands to flee Anglophone regions; from 26 Aug businesses remained closed and inhabitants stayed at home. Clashes between security forces and separatists 24-25 Aug reportedly left at least 40 dead in Ndop, Bafu, Kumbo, Bamenda in Northwest, and Mamfe and Kumba in Southwest. In Southwest region, security forces 9 Aug clashed with separatists killing unspecified number. Separatists 16 Aug abducted two Catholic priests in Kumbo, releasing them two days later; 21 Aug abducted sixteen civilians, releasing them next day. Security forces searching homes killed seven civilians in Mautu and Banga Bakundu 11-15 Aug. In Francophone Littoral region, separatists 4 Aug killed one soldier and one civilian in Penda-Mboko. Cardinal Tumi 3 Aug advocated for federalism as only solution to Anglophone crisis. Meetings between PM Dion Ngute and organisers of Anglophone General Conference led by Cardinal Tumi 16 and 29 Aug bore no progress toward conference. In Far North, BH attacks on villages and clashes with security forces 1-20 Aug left ten civilians, six soldiers and five militants dead. BH 20 Aug abducted a dozen bus passengers

activists of opposition Movement for the Renaissance of Cameroon to six months in prison for involvement in protests following Oct presidential elections.

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➔ Central African Republic AUGUST 2019

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Amid slow implementation of Feb peace agreement, low-level armed group violence and banditry continued especially in centre. In north west, suspected members of Return, Restitution and Rehabilitation (3R) armed group 5 Aug shot and killed youth in Sarki, Ouham Pende province. In east, suspected fighters from armed group Popular Front for the Central African Renaissance 17 Aug killed three in Bria, Haute-Kotto prefecture. In west, anti-balaka militants 19 Aug reportedly killed two

Fulani civilians in Boda, Lobaye prefecture. Parties to Feb peace agreement 23-24 Aug met in capital Bangui to stake stock of implementation: UN envoy to CAR Mankeur N'Diaye threatened sanctions against those who breached agreement. Leader of rebel group Patriotic Movement for the Central African Republic (MPC) Mahamat al-Khatim 27 Aug resigned from his position as special adviser in charge of special mixed security units in centre-north zone. Russia 14 and 18 Aug handed over weapons and ammunition to army. Kwa Na Kwa (KNK), party of former President Bozizé in exile in Uganda after Seleka rebel coalition ousted him from power in 2013, 12 Aug said it would leave presidential majority to stand as opposition party in 2020 elections with Bozizé as presidential candidate.

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➔ Chad AUGUST 2019

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Intercommunal violence escalated in Ouaddaï and Dar Sila provinces in east leaving several dozen dead and prompting govt to impose state of emergency and close borders with Sudan, Central African Republic (CAR) and Libya, while Boko Haram (BH) continued attacks in west. In Ouaddaï province, clashes between nomadic Arab herders and ethnic Ouaddaï farmers in Hamra and Chakoya early Aug left at least 37 dead. In Dar Sila province, clashes between ethnic Dadjo and Mouro in Arata and Séabané 8-9 Aug left several dozen dead. Govt 19 Aug declared 21-day state of emergency (20 Aug-10 Sept) in Ouaddaï and Dar Sila provinces in east and Tibesti province in north where army continued to confront illegal gold miners; next day announced deployment to three provinces of 5,000 soldiers and closed borders with Sudan, CAR and Libya. Unidentified gunmen 24 Aug attacked Gamba, Mayo-Kebbi East province killing three villagers and abducting one. In south, violence between farmers and herders 26 Aug left eleven dead in Koumogo, Moyen-Chari province. President Déby 26-27 Aug reshuffled security sector. Following presidential decree in July unseating Ouaddaï province's traditional leader for mismanagement of intercommunal violence, Déby 6 Aug signed decree appointing new leader. Police force's attempt to remove deposed leader's family from his residence in Abéché 15 Aug met resistance; hundreds next day demonstrated at palace. In Lake Chad province in west, BH female suicide bomber night of 13-14 Aug detonated explosive vest killing four civilians and one soldier in Kaiga-Kindjiria. In capital N'Djamena, police 11 Aug used tear gas to disperse supporters of opposition movement-turned-party Les Transformateurs. Following meeting with Déby, opposition parties 15 Aug submitted list of representatives to be included in National Framework for Political Dialogue (CNDP), platform comprising ruling majority, opposition and civil society to discuss conduct of elections; Déby next day signed decree appointing CNDP members.

→ Democratic Republic of Congo AUGUST 2019

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President Tshisekedi formed coalition govt with former President Kabila's alliance seven months since taking office, armed group violence persisted in east, and Ebola virus spread to South Kivu province. PM Ilunkamba 26 Aug announced coalition govt with Tshisekedi's Heading for Change alliance filling 23 ministerial posts and Kabila's Common Front for Congo coalition taking 42. Platform of protestant churches and Catholic Church 9 Aug said that almost 2 million people had signed petition urging electoral commission to organise local polls; 16 Aug delivered petition to presidency. In Beni territory, North Kivu province in east, armed group Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) 4 Aug killed five civilians; 6 Aug killed two and kidnapped two dozen. Attack by unidentified gunmen 7 Aug in Mbau, about 20km north of Beni, left six civilians dead, prompting some 5,000 to protest insecurity. ADF killed two civilians and one soldier in Mbau 18 Aug sparking more protests in several cities; security forces' efforts to suppress protests left three demonstrators dead and at least 74 arrested. In Ituri province in north east, army 7 Aug clashed with unidentified gunmen killing at least seven in Djugu territory. Unidentified gunmen 19 Aug ambushed and killed three in Irumu territory. Clashes between army and Ngudjolo militiamen 23 Aug left twenty militiamen and two soldiers dead in Djugu territory. ADF 23 Aug abducted 106 in Irumu territory. In South Kivu, attacks by armed groups in Fizi territory 27-29 Aug left seven civilians dead. During summit of regional bloc Southern African Development Community (SADC) in Tanzanian capital Dar es Salaam, Tshisekedi 17 Aug called on other countries to help reduce insecurity in east and proposed creation of regional coalition to eradicate armed groups in east. Ebola virus spread to third province after Ituri and North Kivu, as authorities 16 Aug confirmed first two cases in South Kivu province, one of which died 14 Aug.

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→ Republic of Congo AUGUST 2019

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NGO Global Witness 6 Aug accused President Sassou-Nguesso's son Denis of embezzling more than \$50mn from treasury.

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→ Rwanda AUGUST 2019

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President Kagame and Ugandan President Museveni signed agreement to normalise bilateral relations. Kagame and Museveni 21 Aug signed deal in Angolan capital Luanda agreeing to respect each other's sovereignty, refrain from destabilising actions, respect rights and freedoms of other's citizens and resume cross-border activities. Uganda 22 Aug blocked access to Rwandan news sites citing national security concerns, prompting Rwanda next day to block Ugandan news sites; Rwanda later that day said govts had agreed to restore access. Following 31 July Ebola-related death in DR Congo near Rwandan border, Rwanda reportedly briefly closed border next day; Rwanda denied closure.

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→ Eritrea AUGUST 2019

Following celebrations marking 50th anniversary of Sawa military training centre and launch of compulsory military service 1-4 Aug, President Isaias early Aug confirmed govt would maintain program.

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→ Ethiopia AUGUST 2019

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Amid ongoing violence, govt expressed determination to hold general elections in May 2020 as scheduled. Parliament 30 July again postponed village and district elections and polls for Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa city councils, saying they would be held alongside 2020 parliamentary and regional elections. PM Abiy 1 Aug said govt would hold general elections in May 2020 as scheduled. Executive Committee of ruling coalition Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) 9 Aug confirmed election timeline, and said coalition's four member parties would consider merging into one and invite five affiliated regional parties to join. Parliament 24 Aug passed new electoral bill, after 57 opposition parties previous day said EPRDF, which controls all seats in parliament, had ignored their amendments; new bill notably raised number of signatures required to register national parties from 1,500 to 10,000 and to register regional parties from 750 to 4,000. Electoral board 29 Aug said it would hold referendum on creation of Sidama federal state 13 Nov, after Sidama activists clashed with police over delay in July. Unidentified gunmen 8 Aug reportedly killed seven civilians in Gumbi Bordede district of Oromia regional state. Police 5 Aug arrested unknown number of people suspected of plotting to free from prison former president of eastern Somali regional state Abdi Mohammed Omer, arrested in Aug 2018 for inciting violence. Police 9 Aug arrested journalist Mesganaw Getachew on terrorism charges. Clashes between herders in south 14 Aug left at least two Ethiopians and one Kenyan dead.

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→ Kenya AUGUST 2019

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Al-Shabaab continued attacks in north and east as tensions persisted between Kenya and Somalia over maritime border dispute and communal violence continued especially in north. Al-Shabaab militants 7 Aug carried out attack on Hulughho village, Garissa county in east destroying communication mast. In Mandera county in north east, Al-Shabaab attack on Fino village 15 Aug left two dead; suspected Al-Shabaab militants 20 Aug destroyed communication mast in Kheira Ali village and clashed with police reservists, one reservist missing. Police 30 Aug shot and killed suspected Al-Shabaab militant in Ngombeni, Kwale county. Parliament 6 Aug tabled motion to push govt to explore options to resolve maritime border dispute with Somalia and protect Kenya's territorial integrity: proposed options included resolving issue bilaterally with Somalia, turning to dispute resolution mechanisms under aegis of African Union (AU) or regional blocs Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and East African Community (EAC) or, as last resort, deploying security forces to border. Somalia 21 Aug rejected AU's offer to mediate between it and Kenya and expressed confidence in International Court of Justice hearing set for 9-13 Sept. Clashes between herders and farmers 12 Aug left two dead in Mariakani, Kilifi county in east. Clashes between herders in southern Ethiopia 14 Aug left at least two Ethiopians and one Kenyan dead. In north, suspected ethnic Borana 25 Aug attacked ethnic Gabra in Forole and Sabareh, Marsabit county near Ethiopian border leaving at least twelve dead. AU 21 Aug endorsed Kenya for non-permanent seat on UN Security Council for 2021-2022.

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Jubaland state's presidential elections heightened tensions within Jubaland and between its administration and federal govt, tensions persisted between federal govt and Kenya, and Al-Shabaab maintained insurgency. In run-up to presidential elections in federal member state Jubaland in south, candidates barred from running 8 Aug formed parallel electoral commission accusing official electoral commission (JIBEC) of favouring incumbent President Madobe. JIBEC 12 Aug appointed assembly tasked with electing president; parallel electoral commission next day appointed its own assembly. Jubaland forces supported by Kenyan soldiers in African Union (AU) mission (AMISOM) 19 Aug blocked Ethiopian military aeroplane from landing in state capital Kismayo. Under pressure from UN envoy James Swan and other internationals, JIBEC briefly reopened candidate registration and delayed vote till 22 Aug. Under tight security, assembly 22 Aug re-elected Madobe. Parallel assembly same day elected Abdirashid Mohamed Hidig. Federal govt rejected both results. Madobe 25 Aug discussed how to move forward with two opposition candidates. Federal govt 29 Aug said flights to and from Kismayo would first need to land in Mogadishu, prompting hundreds to demonstrate against it in Kismayo. Police in Mogadishu 31 Aug arrested Jubaland security minister. Federal govt 21 Aug rejected AU's offer to mediate between it and Kenya over disputed maritime border, expressing confidence in International Court of Justice hearing set for 9-13 Sept. Al-Shabaab continued to clash with security forces in south, especially in Lower Shabelle region. In Mogadishu, security forces 16 Aug killed four militants attempting to kill official; bombing 25 Aug left one dead. In Lower Shabelle, security forces 6 Aug captured Awdheegle town from Al-Shabaab; 11 Aug clashed with militants in Sham, reportedly killing at least seventeen and injuring spokesperson Ali Dhere who allegedly died 16 Aug; 25 Aug fought militants in Sablale, reportedly killing at least eighteen. Al-Shabaab attacks on military bases in Lower and Middle Shabelle 13-21 Aug reportedly left dozens of militants, at least seven soldiers and two civilians dead. Unclaimed airstrikes in Lower Shabelle and Middle Juba 5 and 16 Aug reportedly killed dozens of militants. U.S. airstrike near Qunyo Barrow, Lower Shabelle 20 Aug killed one militant. President Farmajo 22 Aug replaced security chiefs, including heads of army, police and intelligence agency.

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→ Somaliland AUGUST 2019

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Electoral commission 8 Aug postponed parliamentary and municipal elections due 12 Dec, without setting new date. After all three political parties late July agreed to increase number of electoral commission members to resolve political impasse and advance preparations for polls, parliament 17 Aug rejected proposal. Opposition party Waddani next day withdrew from agreement. President Bihi 26 Aug said electoral commission would remain seven-member body until elections, after which members would be increased to nine. During visit to Mina, Saudi Arabia, Bihi 12 Aug informally met senior officials from Somalia federal govt including FM. Puntland President Deni 17 Aug said he would be open to talks with Somaliland on contested Sanaag and Sool regions; 25 Aug offered to host Somalia-Somaliland talks in state capital Garowe. In Sanaag region, clan violence 12 Aug left at least five civilians dead in El Afwein town; Puntland militia 20 Aug attacked convoy of Somaliland officials in Hadaftimo town, unconfirmed number of casualties. In Sool region, armed group supporting creation of Khatumo state 5 Aug attacked police station in regional capital Lasanod; security forces 18 Aug killed at least one person during search for illegal weapons, sparking protests 20-21 Aug, repression of which reportedly left at least three dead. Elders mediating between govt and Colonel Arre, who defected from Somaliland to Puntland in 2018, 11 Aug said Arre had agreed to cease hostilities and start talks with govt; 25 Aug announced suspension of talks between govt and Arre following remark by chief of army that Arre deserved death penalty.

Implementation of Sept 2018 peace agreement continued to stall ahead of Nov deadline to form unity govt. President Kiir and rebel leader Riek Machar failed to agree on conditions for face-to-face negotiations on implementation of peace agreement. Regional bloc Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) 21 Aug convened parties to peace deal – including Machar but not Kiir – in Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa for talks aimed at accelerating implementation, but did not reach breakthrough on points of contention. Main rebel group Sudan People's Liberation Army-In Opposition 31 July-5 Aug clashed with Cie-Wau clan in Maiwut town, Upper Nile state in north resulting in unknown number of civilian casualties and some 10,000 displaced. Fighters suspected to belong to National Salvation Front rebel group 1 Aug clashed with security forces in Kicak village, Imatong state in south leaving at least two civilians dead. Security forces 20-28 Aug clashed with rebel group South Sudan United Front in Wanh-Achien and Raja, Lol state in north west reportedly leaving several soldiers and eleven rebels dead. Kiir in Juba 14 Aug consulted head of Sudanese armed group Justice and Equality Movement on South Sudan's potential role in mediating peace between Sudanese parties. Kiir 17 Aug attended signing of Sudanese transitional govt agreement in Khartoum and announced intention to continue efforts to broker peace between Sudanese govt and armed groups. Kiir 19 Aug reshuffled govt, including FM. Former Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) Sec Gen Pagan Amum 30 Aug unveiled new opposition group Real Sudan People's Liberation Movement (R-SPLM). Holdout opposition groups South Sudan National Democratic Alliance (SSNDA), R-SPLM and South Sudan United Front/Army (SSUF/A) formed alliance in The Hague, Netherlands.

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Ruling military council and opposition coalition signed landmark constitutional declaration to govern power structures for three-year transitional period until elections. Following 17 July political agreement, Transitional Military Council (TMC) and opposition coalition Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) 4 Aug reached constitutional agreement and held formal signing ceremony 17 Aug, prompting thousands to celebrate in capital Khartoum. Agreement outlines military and civilians' share of positions in sovereign council, which will oversee formation of council of ministers and legislative council; FFC to appoint 67% of legislative council, and all positions in council of ministers bar interior and defence ministers, to be appointed by TMC. Rebel alliance Sudan Revolutionary Front same day rejected constitutional declaration. FFC-nominated economist Abdalla Hamdok 21 Aug sworn in as PM of transitional govt, and TMC head General Abdel-Fattah Burhan as chairman of Sovereign Council. TMC 8 Aug annulled death sentence issued in 2014 against leader of rebel group Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North Malik Agar. During countrywide protests 1 Aug against alleged killing of protesters by paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in North Kordofan's capital el-Obeid 29 July, unidentified armed actors killed at least four protesters in Omdurman near Khartoum. TMC 2 Aug said it had arrested seven RSF members for 29 July killings. Court 19 Aug opened corruption trial of ousted President Bashir, 31 Aug indicted him on corruption charges and for illegal possession of foreign funds, and denied request for bail. Hearing adjourned to 7 Sept. U.S. 7 Aug said it was not ready to remove Sudan from list of state sponsors of terrorism; 15 Aug imposed visa ban on former head of National Intelligence and Security Services Salah Gosh, barring him from entering U.S.. Intercommunal clashes in Port Sudan, capital of Red Sea state 21-26 Aug reportedly left 37 dead. Sovereign council 25 Aug dismissed provincial governor and head of security services, deployed troops and declared state of emergency in Port Sudan. Clashes between farmers and herders in North Darfur state left three civilians dead 11 Aug. Amid economic crisis, Sudan received financial and food aid from regional partners: notably, Saudi Arabia 30 July transferred \$250mn as part of aid package

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➔ Tanzania AUGUST 2019

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Authorities continued to use judicial process to silence critical voices. Following arrest of prominent investigative journalist Erick Kabendera late July on pretext of investigating his Tanzanian citizenship, court 5 Aug charged him with money laundering, tax evasion and organised crime; court 30 Aug adjourned his trial until 12 Sept. Police 8 Aug arrested journalist for allegedly cyberbullying his wife, released him on bail next day; 22 Aug jailed another journalist for report on police abuse of prisoners, which authorities deemed false, and released him on bail two days later; 24 Aug arrested journalist reporting on meeting of opposition party Alliance for Change and Transparency (ACT) and three ACT members, two days later released all four on bail. U.S. and UK 9 Aug jointly called on govt to respect press freedom. Govt 25 Aug signed agreement with Burundi to start repatriating in Oct some 200,000 Burundian refugees from Tanzania. UN refugee agency 28 Aug described conditions in Burundi as unfavourable for return.

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➔ Uganda AUGUST 2019

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President Museveni and Rwandan President Kagame signed agreement to normalise relations, as govt continued to crack down on opposition. Museveni and Kagame 21 Aug signed agreement in Angolan capital Luanda committing to improve relations. Uganda 22 Aug blocked access to Rwandan news sites citing national security concerns, Rwanda next day blocked Ugandan news sites; Rwanda later that day said both governments had agreed to restore access. Court 2 Aug sentenced prominent academic to eighteen months' prison for criticising Museveni, she has already served nine months. Musician-turned-opposition leader Bobi Wine 6 Aug appeared in court on treason charge for alleged involvement in stoning of Museveni's motorcade during election rally in 2018; court charged Bobi Wine with intention to "annoy, alarm or ridicule" Museveni.

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➔ Angola AUGUST 2019

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Supreme Court 15 Aug handed fourteen-year prison sentence to former transport minister Augusto da Silva Tomas for corruption. Govt 21 Aug hosted, and jointly mediated with DR Congo, talks between Rwandan President Kagame and Ugandan President Museveni in capital Luanda following months of Rwanda-Uganda tensions; two leaders same day agreed to de-escalate tensions and re-open common border.

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➔ ⚡ Malawi AUGUST 2019

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President Mutharika's May re-election and alleged electoral fraud; tensions and violence could rise in Sept if Constitutional Court rules against opposition's application for results to be overturned. High Court 6 Aug dismissed Attorney General's petition to ban opposition demonstration that NGO Human Rights Defenders Coalition (HRDC) had called for that day; several thousand protested countrywide, demanding resignation of electoral commission chairperson Jane Ansah, whom protesters accuse of mismanaging election. In places protesters clashed with police. Constitutional Court 8 Aug began hearing opposition's case to have election results overturned; 23 Aug adjourned until 3 Sept. Unidentified attackers 15 Aug threw petrol bombs at home of HRDC chairman Timothy Mtambo, who was unharmed. Same day HRDC accused three officials of ruling Democratic Progressive Party of orchestrating attack, officials denied responsibility. Mutharika 21 Aug ordered army and police to prevent protests that HRDC planned to organise at airports and borders 26-30 Aug. In response to petition from Malawi Revenue Authority, High Court 23 Aug banned protesters from blocking airports and border crossings. HRDC said it would abide by ruling, but late Aug warned it would organise protests 5 Sept. Soldiers 28 Aug deployed on streets of capital Lilongwe as Supreme Court of Appeal approved 14-day nationwide ban on protests, preventing protesters from gathering for planned three-day protest 28-30 Aug.

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➤ Mozambique AUGUST 2019

Govt signed peace agreement with former armed opposition group Renamo formally ending hostilities, while in far north suspected Islamist militants continued to kill civilians. After Renamo fighters began to disarm late July, President Nyusi and Renamo leader Ossufo Momade 1 Aug signed agreement to mark official end to hostilities that raged between 1977 and 1992 and rekindled between 2013 and 2016; agreement follows previous deals signed in 1992 and 2015. Leaders 6 Aug signed agreement pledging to keep peace during Oct general elections. Renamo 16 Aug said police and supporters of ruling party Frelimo had since 8 Aug assaulted dozens of Renamo members in Tete, Zambezia, Inhambane and Gaza provinces. Mariano Nhongo, head of Renamo dissident faction Renamo Military Junta, declared himself Renamo leader 19 Aug, said that govt was "on collision course" with his faction if it remained in contact with Renamo leader Momade. Nhongo 28 Aug said elections would not take place and anyone calling for them would be killed. In Cabo Delgado in north, suspected Islamist militants 1 Aug burnt village near Macomia, causing no casualties; Islamic State (ISIS) reportedly claimed attack. Militants 23 Aug killed two near Machava, Nangade district and same day attacked Nangade town, killing three. Militants 27 Aug beheaded two civilians near Quelimane village, Mocimboa da Praia district; same day beheaded four fishermen along Pangane-Macotucu road and one near Simbolongo village in Macomia district. Unidentified assailants 26 Aug killed one in Ulo village, Mocimboa da Praia. Police 24 Aug arrested man in Mocimboa da Praia district for links with insurgents. Unidentified gunmen 26 Aug killed Louis Baziga head of Rwandan diaspora in Mozambique near capital Maputo. Attorney General 9 Aug charged twenty people in connection with govt's attempt to hide \$2bn debt, including son of former President Guebuza, in power when govt made debt deals.

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➔ South Africa AUGUST 2019

In capital Pretoria, taxi drivers 27 Aug clashed with alleged drug dealers resulting in deadly shooting of one taxi driver. Next day taxi drivers led protests in central business district calling on govt to tackle

Amid deepening economic crisis, govt cracked down on protests against corruption and inflation while attacks and abductions of opposition members and activists increased. Govt 15 Aug banned demonstration that main opposition party Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) had called for next day in capital Harare to protest against corruption, unemployment, shortages of power and fuel and inflation. High Court 16 Aug rejected MDC's appeal against ban. Amid confusion over whether MDC had cancelled demonstration, police reportedly assaulted and fired water cannon at MDC supporters in streets and arrested at least 80, drawing widespread international condemnation. Govt 18 Aug banned MDC protest planned for next day in Bulawayo, and 19 Aug deployed hundreds of police and soldiers to enforce ban. Police 22 Aug arrested MDC National Organising Secretary Amos Chibaya for failing to stop 16 Aug protest; court 26 Aug released him on bail. Attacks on activists and opposition members increased with nineteen abductions recorded in Aug. Notably, unidentified attackers 13 Aug assaulted and held overnight rights activist Tatenda Mombeyarara in Chitungwiza and separately MDC member Blessing Kanotunga in Mufakose, and 21 Aug assaulted and held overnight political satirist Samantha Kureya in Harare. Govt 25 Aug denied involvement. Police 23 Aug arrested eight teachers' union officials protesting in Harare for higher pay, their lawyer, and journalist filming arrest; court released them on bail next day. Court 21 Aug charged former VP Mphoko with abuse of office, released him on bail same day. Amid economic deterioration, govt 23 Aug offered to raise public sector wages by 76%, confederation of unions, Civil Service APEX Council, 28 Aug accepted rise after initially rejecting it. Tanzanian President Magufuli, current chairman of regional bloc Southern African Development Community, 18 Aug called on U.S. and EU to lift sanctions on Zimbabwe. U.S. 1 Aug placed retired Major General Anselem Sanyatwe, now ambassador to Tanzania, on sanctions list for his role as commander of security unit that shot civilians in Harare in Aug 2018.

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Opposition leaders signalled support for former President Bédié, strengthening his challenge to President Ouattara's party in 2020 elections. Following lower house of parliament's approval late July, senate 2 Aug adopted bill to reform composition of electoral commission. Three opposition parties – Bédié's Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire-African Democratic Rally (PDCI-RDA), Vox Populi and Guillaume Soro's Rally for Côte d'Ivoire (RACI) – same day filed petition at Constitutional Council to repeal bill, claiming it does not guarantee commission's independence. Constitutional Council 5 Aug rejected petition. Next day bill enacted into law. Civil society and opposition parties, including PDCI-RDA and Popular Ivorian Front (FPI), party founded by former President Gbagbo, said they would boycott new electoral commission. Following late July meeting between former Presidents Bédié and Gbagbo in Brussels, Bédié 1 Aug said that in coming weeks he intended to form opposition platform to challenge Ouattara's party in 2020 elections. Youth movement Pan-African Congress for Justice and People's Equality (COJEP) 18 Aug elected as president former youth leader Charles Blé Goudé, former Gbagbo ally whom International Criminal Court acquitted of crimes against humanity during civil war. After PDCI-RDA delegation went to The Hague and met Goudé, latter 21 Aug said COJEP would join opposition platform. Human rights NGO Amnesty International 6 Aug said govt crackdown on dissent had led to arrest of fourteen activists in 2019 and called on authorities to end attacks against civil

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➔ Gambia AUGUST 2019

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Justice Minister Abubacarr Tambadou 5 Aug announced release of three former army officers employed as hitmen by former President Jammeh after they confessed to Truth and Reconciliation Commission late July, prompting objections from victims and families; Tambadou argued that release was due to lack of legal proceedings to justify further imprisonment.

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➔ Guinea AUGUST 2019

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Political camps supporting and opposing constitutional change so that President Condé can run for third term continued to mobilise, and authorities cracked down on opposition and civil society. Condé's Party of Unity and Progress and its allies 2 Aug formed Coalition for the Defence of a New Constitution to build support for constitutional change. Opposition alliance Bloc Against Alpha Condé 21 Aug joined opposition movement National Front for the Defence of the Constitution as part of platform dubbed Fight against a Third Mandate. Authorities 2 Aug arrested leader of opposition Liberal Bloc, Faya Millimono, on defamation charges, even though he had retracted his accusation that Justice Minister Fofana was a former rebel, prompting his lawyers to call detention "excessive"; authorities 10 Aug released Millimono but said charges would proceed to court. In capital Conakry, court 19-21 Aug put CEO of LynxFM radio, Souleymane Diallo, and host of its phone-in program, Boubacar Alghassimou Diallo, under judicial monitoring after radio station broadcast accusations of embezzlement against govt official; dozens of journalists 26 Aug protested against "state's harassment of private media" in front of offices of High Authority for Communication.

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➔ Guinea-Bissau AUGUST 2019

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After electoral commission 10 July announced that presidential elections would take place 24 Nov, several candidates came forward. Opposition party Movement for a Democratic Alternative G-15 (MADEM G-15) 9 Aug elected former PM Sissoco Embaló as its candidate. After conducting primaries 23 Aug, African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) same day announced leader Domingos Simões Pereira as its official candidate, who pledged to leave PAIGC if elected. Incumbent President Vaz did not take part in MADEM G-15's primaries and 29 Aug officially announced his independent candidacy for second term. Govt 16 Aug announced process to update electoral rolls and include around 24,000 disenfranchised voters, which MADEM G-15 called "omen for electoral fraud". Opposition Party for Social Renewal (PRS) same day announced court action for injunction of review process due to "lack of legal framework".

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➔ Liberia AUGUST 2019

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in 31 July by-election in Montserrat county triggered clashes that day between supporters of ruling Congress for Democratic Change and opposition coalition, clashes flared again 17 Aug and ruling party supporters assaulted opposition candidate Telia Urey. Justice ministry and police same day launched investigation. UN and regional bloc Economic Community of West African States 19 Aug deplored violence. U.S. and EU member states France, Germany, Ireland, Sweden and UK 20 Aug condemned electoral violence and attacks on opposition candidate.

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➔ Nigeria AUGUST 2019

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Boko Haram (BH) kept up attacks in north east, banditry persisted in north west, standoff continued between govt and Shia Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN), and Biafra separatists threatened more attacks on ethnic Igbo leaders. In north-eastern Borno state, clashes continued between security forces and BH as insurgents attacked civilian and military targets closer to state capital, Maiduguri. Air force 9 Aug said it destroyed major BH base at Izza. Insurgents, mostly from BH faction Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), 10 Aug attacked army base in Gubio, killed four soldiers and at least six civilians, lost eleven fighters; ambushed soldiers in Mogula 17 Aug killing four and in Dikwa area 20 Aug killing five; 22 Aug razed govt buildings in Gubio and Magumeri areas; 30 Aug killed at least three soldiers on Monguno-Maiduguri highway, army said troops killed “countless” insurgents. In north west, Zamfara state govt continued peace talks between bandits and communities, but violence continued. In adjoining Katsina state, bandits 18 Aug attacked four villages in Jibia, Danmusa and Safana areas, killed seventeen civilians; 26-27 Aug sacked Wurma community abducting about 50. In Kaduna state, gunmen 29 Aug attacked Kiri, killing eight. In central Benue state, feud between ethnic Ikurav and Shitile left nine dead 17 Aug. Court 5 Aug approved request by IMN leader Sheikh Zakzaky and wife to travel to India for medical care, but arrangement collapsed after Zakzaky in India 15 Aug protested against Nigerian and Indian govts restricting his movement and denying him access to trusted doctors. Authorities detained Zakzaky and wife on their return 16 Aug. Invoking govt’s 30 July ban on group, federal police 30 Aug ordered special team to dismantle all IMN structures and arrest group’s leaders. Members of separatist group Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in Nuremberg, Germany 17 Aug assaulted Senator Ike Ekweremadu at Igbo community event. IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu 18 Aug offered reward to anyone who provides information that could enable attacks on “treacherous” Igbo leaders.

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➔ Sierra Leone AUGUST 2019

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Tensions continued following electoral violence. Court 8 Aug handed down prison sentences to 23 members of opposition party All People’s Congress (APC) for vandalism during 30 July clashes between APC supporters and those of ruling Sierra Leone People’s Party (SLPP), clashes triggered after electoral commission called off parliamentary by-election in Hamilton, about 20km from capital Freetown, citing irregularities. Authorities 15 Aug arrested APC politician Kashor Cole; 20 Aug arrested former mayor of capital Freetown Herbert Williams, for suspected involvement in Hamilton clashes. Electoral commission 25 Aug cancelled results of 24 Aug rerun in Hamilton after unidentified assailants ransacked polling station on election day. Amid reports of opposition victory, APC 26 Aug called cancellation “highest degree of provocation and injustice” and accused SLPP of orchestrating attack, pointing to complicity of police, who reportedly stood by during ransack and illegally arrested

## ➔ China/Japan AUGUST 2019

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Chinese Premier Li said after 20-22 Aug trilateral meeting in Beijing with Japan and South Korea that cooperation is “important safeguard and catalyst for region” and countries must “defend regional peace and stability”. Washington Post 21 Aug reported Japan building “wall” of defensive installations, including missile bases, on Ryuku archipelago.

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## ➔ Korean Peninsula AUGUST 2019

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Amid North Korea testing projectiles throughout month, U.S. President Trump received letter from North Korean leader Kim Jong-un stating willingness to resume talks, and tensions could now ease following end of U.S.-South Korea military drills. Trump 10 Aug said Kim in letter expressed willingness to meet once exercises ended, raising possibility of U.S.-North Korea talks around UN General Assembly in Sept, though North Korean attendance at assembly currently uncertain. Trump 25 Aug in meeting with Japanese PM Abe signalled his objection to joint military drills between U.S. and South Korea, describing them as “complete waste of money”. North Korea 2, 6, 10, 16 and 24 Aug launched salvos of short range missiles; however South Korea and Trump played down launches. Missiles reportedly fired in response to 5-23 Aug U.S.-South Korea joint military drills and South Korea’s 2020-2024 defence plan, unveiled 14 Aug, which adds over 7% in year-on-year defence spending; plan will see construction of large-deck landing ship capable of hosting up to twenty F-35B fighter aircraft. North Korea failed to respond to South Korea to claim body of man who drowned in Imjin River and floated into South Korean territory 31 July, highlighting breakdown of bilateral ties.

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## ➔ Taiwan Strait AUGUST 2019

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Tensions between Taiwan and China continued as U.S. pushed through arms deal with Taiwan, and President Tsai raised concerns of Chinese activities. U.S. administration 21 Aug formally notified U.S. Congress it was moving ahead with \$8bn sale of 66 F-16 fighter aircraft to Taiwan. In response, Chinese foreign ministry same day threatened imposing sanctions on U.S. companies involved in deal, claiming they “constitute severe interference” and “undermine China’s sovereignty and security interests”. Tsai 10 Aug warned of “Chinese infiltration in Taiwan” including fake news, after a Reuters report claimed Chinese authorities paid Taiwanese media groups for positive coverage. Tsai’s cabinet 15 Aug proposed to parliament over 8% increase in annual military spending, largest yearly increase since 2008. U.S. navy 23 Aug sailed amphibious ship through Taiwan Strait in fourth freedom of navigation operation in 2019. Chinese authorities 27-29 Aug prohibited ships from entering water near Taiwan off coast of China’s Zhejiang Province for 48 hours to hold military exercises; Taiwan defence ministry confirmed U.S. military plane 29 Aug flew over “median line” of strait.

U.S.-Taliban talks in Doha (Qatar) continued to progress, entering possible final round ahead of potential framework agreement in coming month, while insurgent attacks struck Kabul. In Doha, U.S. Special Envoy Zalmay Khalilzad 21 Aug met with Taliban representatives in potentially last round of talks ahead of framework agreement; followed 3-12 Aug round, which reportedly concluded with both sides agreeing near-final text; Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid called discussions “long and useful” without providing details. U.S. President Trump 29 Aug announced U.S. would reduce troops to 8,600 as first step. Insurgent attacks continued, particularly in Kabul, despite lull around Eid holiday 11-14 Aug: Taliban 2 Aug targeted police checkpoint in Daykundi province, killing at least ten policemen; in west Kabul, Taliban car bomb 7 Aug exploded in majority Shia neighbourhood, killing fourteen. Islamic State-Khorasan Province 16 Aug carried out deadliest bombing in Kabul this year, killing at least 80 at Shia Hazara wedding; President Ghani called bombing “barbaric”, Taliban condemned attack. In Jalalabad city, during celebrations of independence anniversary, ten unclaimed explosions 19 Aug injured dozens; U.S. military 21 Aug reported two soldiers killed in combat in Faryab province, increasing U.S. combat-related deaths in 2019 to fourteen – highest since 2014. In Chahardara area, Herat province, Taliban 27 Aug killed fourteen pro-govt militiamen; in western Baghdis province, militants same day attacked army checkpoint, killing eight soldiers. Govt 30 Aug announced at least 28 Taliban killed in clashes with Afghan forces in north-east Takhar province. Taliban 31 Aug staged offensive on provincial capital Kunduz, reportedly killing twenty soldiers and five civilians before security forces repelled militants. UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan 3 Aug said 1,500 civilian casualties in July, highest monthly number since 2017, with over half caused by bombings. Taliban 6 Aug denounced election planned on 28 Sept as “sham” and pledged to disturb process. NGO Amnesty International 28 Aug reported human rights activists under intensifying attack from both authorities and armed groups since 2014.

- [OP-ED: The U.S. Shouldn't Stumble Out of Afghanistan](#)
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Security forces continued anti-militancy operations while attempt at repatriating Rohingya refugees to Myanmar stalled. Amid regional tensions over Indian govt’s 5 Aug decision to change constitutional status of Kashmir (see Kashmir), Bangladeshi security officials implied events could encourage militancy in Bangladesh; head of paramilitary Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) 9 Aug warned security forces would take “strict legal actions” against those creating unrest. RAB 7 Aug arrested suspected member of banned Hizb ut-Tahrir in Dhaka and next day, police arrested five suspected members of Wolf Pack, faction of militant Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh, in Dhaka alleging they were preparing attack on police officers. UN Committee Against Torture 9 Aug issued its concluding observations on country’s record, expressing concern over allegations of enforced disappearances, custodial deaths and widespread use of torture by security forces; recommended govt to set up independent enquiry into allegations of RAB abuses. As part of repatriation efforts, govt 15 Aug said it was ready to return some 3,450 refugees (approved by Myanmar from list of over 22,000 sent by govt late-July); however no refugees turned up on 22 Aug, day repatriation due to begin, amid Rohingya concerns over security, rights and access to services if they return to Myanmar.

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Clashes between security forces and Maoists continued: in Chhattisgarh state (east), special forces 3 Aug killed seven suspected Maoist rebels in raid on jungle camp in Rajnandgaon district. In Lakhisarai district, Bihar state (north east), militants 20 Aug killed two civilians, including former Maoist leader, suspected of being “police informers”. In Telangana state (centre), police 21 Aug killed one insurgent in gunfight in Bhadradi Kothagudem district.

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🚩 ⚡ Kashmir AUGUST 2019

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Indian govt revoked Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) special constitutional status, arrested J&K politicians and put Muslim-majority region under lockdown, raising tensions with Pakistan and risking new violence along Line of Control (LoC, dividing Pakistan and Indian-administered Kashmir) and within J&K. Fulfilling 2019 electoral promise to ultra-nationalist Hindu constituency, Indian PM Modi 5 Aug revoked Kashmir’s autonomous status under constitutional article 370, including article 35-A which gave permanent residents sole rights to own property within J&K and employment with local government. Lower house of Parliament 6 Aug passed Kashmir Reorganisation Bill dividing J&K into two territories (J&K and Ladakh) and downgrading status from state to Union Territories, J&K having legislature with limited powers, Ladakh having no legislature. Indian govt 2-5 Aug deployed tens of thousands of additional troops in J&K, imposed communication blackout and detained around 300 Kashmiri politicians, including former Kashmiri Chief Ministers Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti. Despite crackdown, 10,000 people 9 Aug protested and clashed with police in Srinagar. In Baramulla district, militant 21 Aug fired on police, killing one officer before being killed. Communication blackout remained throughout J&K end month. BBC 29 Aug published report alleging beatings and torture of civilians by security forces. On day of 5 Aug announcement, Pakistani govt called decision “unlawful and destabilising”, with PM Khan next day raising concerns over possible ethnic cleansing in J&K and India using militant attacks as pretext for “conventional war”; 7 Aug downgraded diplomatic relations with India and suspended bilateral trade. UN Sec-Gen Guterres 8 Aug called on “all parties to refrain” from steps affecting J&K’s status and to exercise “maximum restraint”; UN Security Council 16 Aug held closed door consultative meeting on J&K, first in over 50 years, prompting India’s criticism of “international interference”. In cross-LoC clashes, India 3 Aug claimed to have killed five to seven Pakistani commandos during failed Pakistani incursion; Islamabad 15 Aug said four soldiers died by Indian firing and claimed to have killed five Indian soldiers same day and six 20 Aug.

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➡ Nepal AUGUST 2019

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Concerns over ruling-Nepal Communist Party (NCP)’s restrictions on political space continued amid new bill curtailing autonomy of govt’s media regulatory body. PM Oli-led govt 27 Aug tabled legislation on media body, despite previously committing to revising controversial proposal widely criticised after its registration in parliament in May; concerns remain that journalists could be heavily fined or imprisoned for violating regulations under new law. Activists also criticised govt for allegedly targeting individuals for their political beliefs following arrest of three journalists over last two months for their ties to hardline Communist Party of Nepal. Human rights groups expressed concerns about govt attempting to maintain close scrutiny on critics after three activists received intimidating calls from police 4 Aug. Opposition parties 27 Aug criticised govt for attempting to establish direct PM

with the PML-N vis a vis its former CO chair and former Maoist chairman Fasihullah Khan. PML-N 20 Aug prohibited leaders from criticising party, drawing further criticism of handling of internal disputes.

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→ Pakistan AUGUST 2019

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Political tensions between govt and opposition continued amid arrests of opposition leaders on corruption charges, while militant attacks remained at a high-level. Opposition Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) 1 Aug attempted no confidence vote to oust Senate speaker and govt ally Sadiq Sanjrani but fourteen defections in opposition-dominated Senate led to defeat of motion. Amid PPP and PML-N mutual suspicions that other party caused defeat, Hasil Bizenjo – both parties’ joint candidate for Senate leader – accused Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) chief Lt. General Hamid of engineering defections; local Gujranwala court 2 Aug summoned Bizenjo for accusing ISI of interfering in defections. Authorities stepped up corruption probes on opposition leaders: National Accountability Bureau 7 Aug detained former PML-N finance minister Miftah Ismail and next day arrested former PM Sharif Nawaz’s daughter Mariam Nawaz on corruption charges. Militant attacks continued, mainly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province and Balochistan’s capital Quetta: in KPK’s North Waziristan tribal district, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militants 2 Aug killed four soldiers; in Bajaur tribal district, unclaimed bomb blast 5 Aug killed two soldiers; and in Upper Dir district, TTP 18 Aug killed five civilians in bomb attack. In Quetta, unclaimed explosion 2 Aug targeted Shia Hazaras in market, killing one; unknown group 16 Aug detonated bomb in mosque frequented by Afghan Taliban supreme leader Haibatullah Akhundzada, killing four including his brother; next day, unknown gunman killed another Afghan prayer leader. In Daraban Kalan area in South Waziristan, TTP gunmen 24 Aug killed two in gas station. PM Khan 19 Aug gave three-year extension to Army Chief Bajwa, set to retire 29 Nov, alluding to tensions with India and potential U.S. agreement with Afghan Taliban as justifications; opposition Awami National Party called decision “payback” that risked politicisation of institution.

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→ Sri Lanka AUGUST 2019

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Political manoeuvring continued ahead of Dec presidential elections, amid controversial appointment of army commander accused of war crimes. Former President Mahinda Rajapaksa formally made head of main opposition party Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) 11 Aug and nominated his brother and former defence secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa as SLPP candidate for Dec presidential election. Governing United National Party (UNP) remained divided over choice of candidate between PM Wickremesinghe and UNP deputy leader Sajith Premadasa. Security and political figures continued to testify in public parliamentary hearings into April terror attacks including Wickremesinghe 1 Aug; in testimony, police officials confirmed dangerous lack of coordination and information sharing between police and intelligence agencies. Police continued anti-militant operations, making arrests 3, 15 and 19 Aug of suspected members of banned groups National Towheed Jamaat and Jamathe Millathu Ibraheem, accused of Easter suicide bombings. President Sirisena 18 Aug appointed Lt. Gen. Shavendra Silva – whom a 2015 UN report implicated in human rights violations – as army commander, generating strong international criticism; 19 Aug UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet said she was “deeply troubled” by appointment which “comprises Sri Lanka’s commitment to promote justice and accountability” I.I.S. Embassy in Colombo said appointment

unacceptable” attempts to interfere. Amid concerns over possible politicisation of police investigations, Attorney General 15 Aug ordered police to conclude investigations into series of high-profile political crimes committed under 2005-2015 Rajapaska govt, including killings of journalists.

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## Indonesia AUGUST 2019

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Tensions worsened in Papua amid large-scale demonstrations against the discriminatory treatment of Papuan students that turned violent with clashes between protesters and security forces. Local residents 15 Aug attacked Papuan students in Malang who were protesting without police permission in support of West Papua independence. Next day in Surabaya, ahead of Indonesia’s 17 Aug Independence Day, an angry mob threatened and harassed Papuan students outside their dormitory, after locals claimed they destroyed national flag; police reportedly did not intervene but instead fired tear gas and arrested 43 students 17 Aug over flag issue, released them next day. In response to incidents, protesters 19 Aug began demonstrations in Manokwari, Sorong and Timika (Papua), some turned violent with local parliament building in Manokwari burnt down. Authorities deployed thousands of security personnel to region since 19 Aug; police 21 Aug said they arrested 45 people during protests in Timika, releasing eleven soon after. Information ministry 21 Aug temporarily cut internet access in Papua. Demonstrations 23 Aug turned violent when gunfight broke out between authorities and protesters in Wamena, one protester killed by police. Clashes continued 28 Aug, police reported one soldier and two civilians killed in Deiyai regency, while pro-independence activists claimed six protesters shot dead by police. Next day, protesters in Jayapura reportedly set fire to several govt buildings and damaged businesses. President “Jokowi” Widodo 29 Aug called for calm, while Coordinating Minister for Security affairs General Wiranto said the govt would not entertain demands for referendum on independence. Suspected Islamist militant 17 Aug attacked police officer with sickle in Surabaya, East Java; police shot suspect and took him into custody. Counter-terror unit Densus 88 arrested six suspects with alleged ties to Islamic State-linked Jamaah Ansharut Daulah during 22-24 Aug raids in East Java. Widodo 26 Aug announced plans to move country’s capital from Jakarta to new city on Kalimantan province on Borneo.

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## Myanmar AUGUST 2019

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Fighting significantly escalated in northern Shan State as militant groups combined to attack strategic targets. Joint force of Arakan Army (AA), Ta’ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) and Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) 15 Aug launched raids on several targets in Shan State and fired rockets at Myanmar’s elite defence academy in Mandalay region, killing nine soldiers, three police and three civilians, and destroying bridge on main route from Mandalay to Chinese border at Muse; groups 17 Aug launched series of coordinated attacks around northern Shan State capital Lashio, including firing on vehicle of local philanthropic association travelling to help civilians trapped by fighting, killing one member of group; clashes also around the strategic town of Kutkai. Military 31 Aug extended unilateral ceasefire in Kachin and Shan, originally announced in Dec 2018, until 21 Sept. AA attacks on security forces in Rakhine state continued, including early Aug ambush on military at Bangladesh border, killing deputy battalion commander; AA 20 Aug attack on convoy killed police captain and wounded four officers. Tensions continued over issue of repatriation of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh; though Bangladesh 15 Aug said it was ready to return some 3,450 refugees from 22 Aug – approved by Myanmar from list of over 22,000 sent by Bangladeshi govt late-July – no

earned from domestic and foreign business deals substantially enhances military's ability to carry out "gross violations of human rights with impunity"; Mission also condemned military's use of "sexual and gender-based violence to terrorise and punish ethnic minorities" in report released 22 Aug.

- [BRIEFING: Peace and Electoral Democracy in Myanmar](#)

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## → Philippines AUGUST 2019

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Security forces continued to clash with Abu Sayyaf militants and communist rebels. Suspected Abu Sayyaf militants 12 Aug killed two soldiers and one child during ambush in Mindanao province. Abu Sayyaf militants 19 Aug wounded two police officers during ambush in Sulu. In continued anti-militant operations, police 15 Aug arrested suspected Abu Sayyaf member in Pasay City. President Duterte 8 Aug said he had ordered recruitment and training of up to 10,000 elite special forces to combat threat of terrorism, which he claimed "is getting bigger". Suspected communist New People's Army (NPA) members 15 Aug killed two pro-govt militiamen in Abra province. Military 18 Aug arrested three NPA rebels and seized manufacturing site of explosive devices in Negros Occidental. Duterte 27 Aug in speech urged military to end communist insurgency, "serving notice" there will be

"a little trouble" in coming months. Philippines 9 and 19 Aug filed diplomatic protests with China over maritime disputes (see South China Sea).

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## → South China Sea AUGUST 2019

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Chinese incursions into disputed territorial waters and U.S. warship sailing close to Chinese claimed islands led to increased tensions in South China Sea (SCS). Chinese oil exploration survey ship 7 Aug departed from disputed Spratly Islands, in area claimed by Vietnam and where it had been since early July, but 13 Aug returned to disputed waters. Amid ongoing tensions, Vietnam foreign ministry 16 Aug said it contacted China to protest "repeated violations", demanding China withdraw its vessels. U.S. State Department 22 Aug condemned China's "interference against Vietnam's longstanding oil and gas activities". Next day, after meeting between Australia PM Morrison and Vietnam PM Phúc in Hanoi, countries jointly expressed concern about developments in SCS and "disruptive activities in relation to long-standing oil and gas projects". EU 28 Aug condemned "unilateral actions" that resulted in "mounting tensions and a deterioration of the maritime security environment", urging all parties to "exercise self-restraint" and refrain from "militarising the region". Philippines President Duterte 28 Aug visited China, meeting with counterpart Xi and discussing issues related to SCS. Earlier in month, Philippines twice filed diplomatic protest over Chinese incursions into disputed waters; foreign ministry 9 Aug lodged protest with China after spotting two Chinese survey ships in Philippines exclusive economic zone; FM Locsin 19 Aug ordered filing of diplomatic protest over Chinese "trespassing". Next day, Duterte ordered all foreign vessels sailing in Filipino territory to seek permission from authorities, adding non-compliance will be responded to in "unfriendly manner". U.S. Air Force 16 Aug said it will continue freedom of navigation operations in SCS citing "commitment to region". U.S. guided missile destroyer sailed within 12 nautical miles of Chinese artificial islands in Spratly Island chain 28 Aug; Chinese People's Liberation Army called on U.S. to cease "provocative actions".

Month saw several small bomb attacks near and in Bangkok, while insurgent attacks continued in deep south. Coinciding with ASEAN foreign minister's meeting in Bangkok 29 July-3 Aug, six small bombs and six incendiary devices detonated 2 Aug in Bangkok and Nonthaburi, injuring four; two IEDs failed to detonate; seven suspects arrested by 9 Aug, police warrants for seven others still at large issued by 20 Aug. One IED exploded 4 Aug in Nonthaburi, no injuries reported. Political controversy continued following PM Prayuth 16 July omitting sentence from constitutionally required oath that directs cabinet to uphold the constitution. PM Prayuth 8 Aug pledged to take "full responsibility" and said matter of legitimacy of cabinet and constitutionality of govt should be decided by Constitutional Court (CC); Ombudsman's office 27 Aug referred matter to CC. Criminal court 14 Aug exonerated 24 defendants from United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship group, commonly called Red Shirts, including leaders Jatuporn Prompan and Nattawut Saikua, over 2010 protests, declaring it political rather than terrorist activity. During 17 Aug interview with Reuters, alleged Barisan Revolusi Nasional Patani Melayu leader said militant group and govt representatives met for preliminary talks 16 Aug; General Udomchai Thamasarorat, head of govt's peace-dialogue delegation, declined to confirm report. Suspected insurgent detainee Abdulloh Esormusor, who lapsed into coma following interrogation after his arrest 20 July, died 25 Aug. Violence continued in deep south; three bombs exploded in Pattani province 4 Aug, no casualties reported. Unknown gunmen 8 Aug killed former militant leader Abdultore Kaso in Thepha district. Bomb blasts injured seven people across four Yala districts 21 Aug. Suspected insurgents 25 Aug robbed a gold shop in Na Thawi district Songkhla of \$2.5 million in valuables.

## Europe & Central Asia

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Three main nationalist parties representing ethnic political blocs (Bosnian Croat, Bosniak and Bosnian Serb) failed to break political deadlock that has prevented govt formation since Oct 2018 elections. Party leaders 5 Aug agreed to form new cabinet within 30 days. But talks between three leaders in tripartite presidency representing each bloc broke down 20 Aug reportedly over whether or not to activate NATO Membership Action Plan that would prepare for possible membership of alliance; party of Milorad Dodik, Bosnian Serb member of presidency, opposed activation while Croat and Bosniak blocs were in favour. Dodik 27 Aug cancelled extraordinary session of tripartite presidency to discuss appointment of new chairman of Council of Ministers, new deadline for talks set for 5 Sept. Dodik 13 Aug said that unless govt was formed soon, majority Bosnian Serb entity Republika Srpska (RS) would withdraw from several reforms, including formation of joint armed forces, creation of state prosecutor court and joint tax policy. U.S. Deputy Assistant Sec State Matthew Palmer mid-Aug expressed concern over Dodik's comments and urged him to stop "hardline rhetoric".

Following resignation of PM Haradinaj in July, parliament dissolved itself, while Kosovo-Serbia relations remained tense. Parliamentary Speaker Kadri Veseli 2 Aug reportedly rejected President

member states) called on Kosovo and Serbia to renew EU-mediated dialogue “with urgency”, said status quo was “not sustainable”, and urged Kosovo to lift customs tariff on Serbian imports. After meeting with U.S. Sec State Mike Pompeo, Serbian President Vučić 20 Aug said he expected to resume dialogue with Kosovo in Dec. Thaçi late Aug said dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia was “indispensable”.

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➔ Azerbaijan AUGUST 2019

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Supreme Court 7 Aug upheld charges of tax evasion against journalist Khadija Ismayilova, previously imprisoned 2014-2016 on charges of embezzlement and tax evasion; outside Azerbaijan, case was widely perceived as politically motivated and prompted international condemnation.

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➔ Georgia AUGUST 2019

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Tensions rose between Georgia and its breakaway region of South Ossetia as Georgia responded to Russia and de facto South Ossetia’s construction of border fence by building two police stations near Georgian villages close to separation line. Govt 14 Aug said Russian and de facto South Ossetian border guards were again building fence on line between South Ossetia and Georgia-controlled territory, this time in Gugutiantkari village; Russian and de facto border guards have been trying to erect barriers along separation line since 2011. UN, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, U.S., EU, Poland, Lithuania and several other govts condemned fence construction. Georgia 24 and 25 Aug started erecting two police stations near other villages close to separation line. De facto South Ossetia claimed one near village of Chorchana was in territory it controlled, and 28 Aug deployed armoured vehicles to patrol area; Georgia denied building was in South Ossetia. Officials from Georgia, Russia and de facto South Ossetia govt 29 Aug in Ergneti failed to discuss issue at meeting of Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM), structure aimed at defusing tensions in conflict zone. De facto South Ossetia official 29 Aug demanded Georgia dismantle police building near Chorchana, and said that, if it did not, local authorities would “take all ... legal measures to ensure the security” of territory they control. Officials from Georgian interior and foreign ministries and EU Monitoring Mission observers 30 Aug were present in area. De facto officials 30 Aug erected flags on hills near police station and agreed to renew discussions in IPRM format. In Abkhazia’s 25 Aug presidential elections, no candidate won over 50% of votes, threshold required to avoid run-off; two candidates with most votes, incumbent Raul Khajimba, who won 24.83%, and Alkhaz Kvitsiniya, head of Amtskhara opposition party, who won 22.91%, to compete in second round scheduled for 8 Sept. In lead-up to polls, Khajimba met Russian President Putin 6 Aug.

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➔ Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan) AUGUST 2019

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Speech by Armenian PM Pashinyan in Nagorno-Karabakh (NK) capital Stepanakert 5 Aug, including assertion that NK was part of Armenia, angered Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan called speech “aggressive” and

Authorities responded with force to series of weekly unpermitted protests in Moscow that started mid-July after govt banned most independent candidates from running in 8 Sept Moscow city council election; hundreds arrested. Some 50,000 took part in sanctioned protest in Moscow 10 Aug, and some also participated in unsanctioned side-protests. Police reportedly arrested 256 protesters, with police brutality reports fewer than in prior weeks. To avoid arrests, protest leaders 17 Aug organised series of single-person pickets, which require no permit, and called on supporters not to demonstrate. Thousands attended unsanctioned protests in Moscow 31 Aug, police refrained from intervening. President Putin 21 Aug said protests were part of “pre-election tensions”. France and Germany 3 Aug condemned police crackdown on opposition rallies, citing “excessive use of force”. Chechen ex-commander Zelimkhan Khangoshvili, living in exile in Germany, was shot dead 23 Aug in Berlin; German authorities same day arrested Russian national in Berlin. German media 30 Aug reported links between suspect and Russian military intelligence. Putin’s spokesperson 28 Aug rejected any links between killing and Russian state. Federal Security Service raided offices of human rights group Justice Initiative in Moscow 14 Aug and Ingushetia 16 Aug; Human Rights NGO Amnesty International said that, according to police directive, authorities had conducted raids on grounds that group that had played role in organising protests in Moscow 27 July and 3 Aug. Also in North Caucasus region, National Anti-Terrorism Committee in Ingushetia 7 Aug said that Russian security forces had killed man suspected of plotting terror attack when he opened fire to resist arrest. Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) 29 Aug said it had foiled series of planned terrorist attacks targeting law enforcement facilities in Kabardino-Balkaria, arresting one suspect in region.

Combatants violated ceasefire in Donbas in east, while Ukraine and Russia moved closer to landmark prisoner swap and resumption of Normandy Four talks on implementing 2014-2015 Minsk Agreements. In Donbas, despite unprecedented agreement late July to renew ceasefire indefinitely, clashes continued with flare-ups 6 and 29 Aug: nine Ukrainian servicemen and at least nineteen separatist fighters killed, no civilian deaths reported. Number of ceasefire violations recorded by Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe fell to one third of number recorded in July. President Zelensky and Russian President Putin 7 Aug reportedly discussed potential release of Ukrainians imprisoned in Russia on charges connected to hostilities between two countries. Zelensky 13 Aug signed decree simplifying Ukrainian citizenship procedures for Russian victims of political repression and foreigners and stateless persons who have fought against Russian-backed forces in east. After Putin met French President Macron 19 Aug, Putin’s press secretary 22 Aug said that two presidents had discussed prisoner exchanges and Moscow was taking steps in that regard. Ukrainian Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Olena Zerkal 22 Aug suggested Russia was using prisoner exchanges as part of “bargaining” strategy to facilitate its return to G7. German Chancellor Merkel 25 Aug said preparations were underway for summit in Paris of Normandy Four (Russia, Ukraine, Germany and France); Putin’s spokesman said that whether or not meeting takes place would depend on progress in prisoner exchanges. Zelensky told U.S. National Security Advisor John Bolton in 28 Aug

standoff, were due in Kyiv imminently, but negotiations over possible transfer to Russia of Volodymyr Tsemakh, key witness to 2014 downing of flight MH-17, were delaying their return.

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➔ Cyprus AUGUST 2019

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Cypriot President and Turkish Cypriot leader held first talks since Feb, as Turkey's drilling for hydrocarbons off Cypriot coast continued to fuel tension between countries. Cypriot President Anastasiades and Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akıncı met informally 9 Aug; in joint statement, leaders said they were ready to hold tripartite meeting with UN Sec-Gen Guterres in Sept to plan resumption of talks. Cypriot govt 16 Aug said it was not willing to engage with Ankara's "rhetoric of tension". Turkish energy minister Fatih Dönmez, Turkish Cypriot "PM" Tatar and "Minister of Economy and Energy" Hasan Taçoy 6 Aug visited Turkey's Yavuz drilling vessel in Bay of Famagusta off Cyprus's eastern shore to highlight their efforts to protect "rights and interest of Turkey and [Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus]". Dönmez same day said Yavuz and Fatih vessels were continuing to drill in Finike-1 and Karpaz-1 wells, adding that Turkey would deploy third seismic exploration vessel Oruç Reis to eastern Mediterranean by end of Aug. Oruç Reis departed from Istanbul 28 Aug en route to Mersin Taşucu Port on Turkey's southern shore adjacent to Cyprus. U.S. State Department 20 Aug said Yavuz's activities were "unlawful" and called on Turkey to remove it from Cypriot Economic Exclusive Zone. Anastasiades 9 Aug rejected Turkish claim of rights over resources in East Med and any joint committee on natural resources.

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➔ Northern Ireland (UK) AUGUST 2019

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Security incidents continued. Police night of 17-18 Aug responded to report of suspicious object in road near Newtownbutler, County Fermanagh near border with Republic of Ireland, discovering on investigation that it was fake bomb. As police and bomb disposal officers cleared area 19 Aug, bomb in area detonated causing no injuries. Police accused dissident republicans of hoax to lure police and bomb disposal officers. No group claimed responsibility, but police 22 Aug blamed paramilitary group Continuity Irish Republican Army. Police 25 Aug arrested two in connection with bombing. Shooting at petrol station in Waringstown, County Down 19 Aug left suspected loyalist militant dead; 24 Aug police arrested two and next day charged them with murder. Unidentified assailants 21 Aug shot man in legs in Belfast in what police called paramilitary style attack.

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➔ Turkey AUGUST 2019

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Govt kept up military operations against Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and intensified crackdown on people affiliated with Kurdish movement. In south east, govt launched operations against PKK in Şırnak, Hakkari and Van provinces 19 Aug and in Mardin, Şırnak and Batman provinces 28 Aug. Turkish media 8 Aug reported that security forces had "neutralised" two PKK militants allegedly

mayors of majority Kurdish provinces Diyarbakır, Mardin and Van on grounds that they were affiliated with terrorist organisations and replaced them with state-appointed trustees; same day detained 418 people affiliated with Kurdish movement in 29 provinces. Authorities 22 Aug detained seventeen in Ankara and 27 in Izmir during protests over removal of Kurdish mayors. Batman province governor's office removed four elected neighbourhood heads from their posts "due to investigations into them and trials they face on terrorism charges". In north-western Syria, as regime forces threatened to take Turkish observation post in northern Hama province, Turkey 19 Aug sent military convoy to support rebels; Syrian regime carried out airstrikes targeting convoy, killing three Syrian civilians (see Syria). U.S. and Turkey 7 Aug said they had reached agreement on general framework for way forward in north-eastern Syria, despite continued disagreement over depth of proposed safe zone along Turkey-Syria border and composition of troops that would man it. Turkey and U.S. defence officials 12 Aug started to establish joint operation centre in Şanlıurfa to coordinate safe zone preparations. In Istanbul, authorities 1 Aug said they had transferred to refugee camps 12,474 irregular migrants for deportation and 2,630 unregistered Syrians 12-31 July; interior minister 20 Aug extended to 30 Oct deadline for refugees to leave Istanbul and return to places where they registered. Authorities 8 Aug detained suspected Syrian suicide bomber in Şanlıurfa's central square; 6-15 Aug arrested 48 suspected Islamic State (ISIS)-linked individuals in Hatay, Konya, Izmir and Adana's Yüreğir district.

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➔ Kazakhstan AUGUST 2019

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Anti-govt protests eased. Dozens of activists marched in Almaty 30 Aug demanding democratic reforms, police refrained from interfering. Summit of C5+1 (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and U.S.) held in capital Nur-Sultan 20-23 Aug.

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🚩 Kyrgyzstan AUGUST 2019

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Tensions between President Jeenbekov and former President Atambayev led to deadly raid on Atambayev's home and street protests. Special forces 7 Aug broke into Atambayev's compound in Koi Tash village outside capital Bishkek intending to detain former president, who had refused three summons for questioning. But hundreds of his supporters took up arms and successfully resisted operation, shooting one member of special forces who later died; about 100 people reportedly injured in fighting. Security forces 8 Aug tried again to arrest Atambayev, who gave himself up. Hundreds of Atambayev's supporters same day marched in capital Bishkek to protest his arrest leading to skirmishes between protesters and security forces, 40 people detained. In addition to previous charges, authorities 13 Aug added plotting coup and 20 Aug extended Atambayev's pre-trial detention until 26 Oct. Clashes between residents of Solton-Sary in centre and Chinese workers of Chinese mining company 5 Aug over company's alleged environmental damage left twenty workers injured; company suspended operations at gold mine.

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➔ Turkmenistan AUGUST 2019

## Latin America & Caribbean

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### 🇨🇴 Colombia AUGUST 2019

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Amid high levels of violence, three former senior commanders of Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) announced return to armed struggle. Group, including former chief FARC negotiator in peace process Iván Márquez, announced via video released 29 Aug their return to armed combat, highest ranking figures of ex-guerrillas to have reneged on 2016 peace accord; Márquez claimed video recorded in Inírida region of eastern Colombia, close to Venezuela border, but intelligence reports suggested group may be based in Venezuela. Other demobilised leaders of guerrillas distanced themselves from schism. In Pacific region, fighting continued to spread, particularly affecting indigenous communities with Public Ombudsman 8 Aug announcing seventeen armed groups fighting for control of region; unidentified attackers 10 Aug killed indigenous leaders Kedvin Mestizo Coicue and Eugenio Tenorio in Caloto municipality, Cauca (south west). Levels of violence against social leaders and activists remained high, including early Aug killings of community leaders José Eduardo Tumbó, also in Caloto, and of Enrique Güejia and Gersain Yatacué, coordinators of the indigenous guard in municipality of Toribío; indigenous communities in northern Cauca 11 Aug declared state of emergency. UN Office on Drugs and Crime 2 Aug released report detailing govt had reduced amount of land occupied by illicit crops by 2,000 hectares in 2018 after five years of reported increases, but stating that cocaine production increased in same period. U.S. 8 Aug certified Colombia as cooperating with counter-narcotic measures and said govt “leading efforts to restart a Colombian-led aerial eradication program”. Formal timeframe of existence of 24 reintegration camps for ex-FARC members ended 15 Aug; Colombian Agency for Reincorporation 6 Aug announced govt will continue providing security and financial support for additional year in order to support over 3,000 ex-combatants still in these zones. Amid regional concern over fallout of Venezuela crisis, govt 5 Aug passed degree granting citizenship to Venezuelan children born in Colombia after Aug 2015, giving 24,000 stateless children Colombian nationality.

- [REPORT: Calming the Restless Pacific: Violence and Crime on Colombia’s Coast](#)

### 🇻🇪 Venezuela AUGUST 2019

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Political crisis continued as U.S. announced latest round of sanctions and govt suspended dialogue with opposition. U.S. 5 Aug announced new sanctions against govt, freezing all Venezuelan state assets in U.S. and threatening secondary sanctions against those doing business with President Maduro’s govt; in response, govt accused U.S. of “economic terrorism” and 7 Aug suspended involvement in Norwegian-mediated talks with opposition in Barbados, though did not break off talks completely; U.S. National Security Advisor John Bolton 6 Aug accused Maduro of using negotiations to buy time, saying it was “time for action”. UN Human Rights Chief Bachelet 8 Aug expressed concern that “extremely broad” sanctions fail to contain measures to mitigate impact “on most vulnerable sectors of population”. Numerous media including Associated Press 18 Aug reported that Diosdado Cabello, head of govt-controlled National Constituent Assembly (ANC) had begun talking with U.S. through intermediary; U.S. President Trump and Maduro 20 Aug both confirmed secret Venezuela-U.S. dialogue underway. Govt continued suppression of opposition. ANC 12 Aug lifted parliamentary

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→ Guatemala AUGUST 2019

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Alejandro Giammattei won second round of presidential election. In run-off vote 11 Aug, Giammattei of Vamos party won 58% of vote, beating 42% for Sandra Torres of Unidad Nacional de la Esperanza (UNE), turnout 42%; Giammattei will assume office Jan 2020. Giammattei 11 Aug reiterated he will not renew International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) whose mandate ends 3 Sept, instead creating new anti-corruption commission. Attorney General 13 Aug announced creation of 60-person technical unit to assist new anti-corruption body “Special Attorney against Impunity”, with CICIG spokesman raising concerns that unit does not contain any CICIG members. Following July U.S.-Guatemala “Safe Third Country” agreement requiring migrants who pass through country to first seek asylum there instead of U.S., Constitutional Court (CC) received official copy of accord from govt 9 Aug, in order for CC to make final decision on previous provisional ruling which blocked signing of agreement without congressional approval; Giammattei 13 Aug stated country had neither resources nor security to act as safe third country and reaffirmed deal must have U.S. and Guatemalan congressional approval. Minister of Interior Enrique Degenhart 22 Aug signed security cooperation agreement with U.S. on sharing biometric information of foreigners in or passing through Guatemala.

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→ Honduras AUGUST 2019

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Civil unrest continued during month amid allegations that President Hernández used narco-trafficking proceeds in 2013 presidential campaign. U.S. Federal Court document 2 Aug cited Hernández as part of group of high-level officials who used illicit money to consolidate political power, accusing Hernández of receiving \$1.5mn for campaign financing for 2013 presidential election from individuals involved in drug trafficking; president’s office 3 Aug denied accusations. Allegations spurred public anger; university students 5 Aug used rocks and burning tyres to establish roadblock on Supaya Boulevard in capital Tegucigalpa, demanding Hernández’s resignation and clashing with anti-riot police. Protests grew in Tegucigalpa 6 Aug and 7 Aug spread to other cities. Police officers 6 Aug fired tear gas into bus filled with university students in San Pedro Sula, leaving several injured. In continued electoral reform efforts, Congress 15 Aug approved final bill outlining process for election of members of newly-created National Electoral Council to oversee electoral cycles and Electoral Justice Tribunal to settle election-related disputes; 22 Aug appointed members of special commission in charge of process. Amid regional focus on migration and after late July U.S.-Guatemala “Safe Third Country” agreement requiring migrants who pass through Guatemala to first seek asylum there instead of U.S., acting U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Kevin McAleenan 1 Aug stated U.S. will pursue similar agreement with Honduras. Hernández 26 Aug travelled to Washington to discuss migration issues, among other matters.

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→ El Salvador AUGUST 2019

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an departments and foresees provision of technical and technological equipment to security forces, govt insisted plan had helped reduce homicides though some security experts said assessment was premature; national police reported 131 murders in Aug, lowest rate since 2000; since Bukele's 1 Jun swearing in, daily murder average dropped from nine to around four. Bukele 8 Aug pledged to fight corruption and promised to create International Commission against Impunity in El Salvador (CICIES) before 1 Sept; civil society welcomed initiative but warned it was being undertaken in secretive way without consultation; Organization of American States Sec Gen Almagro and VP Ulloa 30 Aug announced creation of technical mission to establish CICIES. Amid regional focus on migration and following late July U.S.-Guatemala "Safe Third Country" agreement requiring migrants who pass through Guatemala to first seek asylum there instead of U.S., acting U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Kevin McAleenan 1 Aug stated U.S. will pursue similar agreement with El Salvador. Police 3 Aug detained two people, including secretary in parliament, in Anguiatú on Guatemala border, on charges of human trafficking.

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#### ➔ Nicaragua AUGUST 2019

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Political situation remained tense amid end of govt-opposition negotiations, while govt continued repressive measures. Following opposition body Civic Alliance's repeated calls for resumption of talks and President Ortega's 30 July letter notifying dialogue's international guarantors of his decision to end negotiations, govt repression remained at high level; opposition Blue and White National Unity 14 Aug stated 134 political prisoners arrested since June still detained and alleged police unlawfully detaining on average four civilians daily. Permanent Human Rights Commission 7 Aug filed complaint to govt over unconstitutionality of Amnesty Law for crimes related to 2018 uprisings. International pressure continued with actors calling on govt to resume dialogue; U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Bachelet and Spain's foreign ministry 2 Aug released statements regretting govt's decision to end talks. U.S. National Security Advisor John Bolton 6 Aug threatened imposition of blockade while U.S. Nicaragua ambassador 14 Aug called on govt to resume talks, warning of possible Organization of American States measures. Amid economic deterioration, govt delegation 8 Aug began visit to allies including Cuba, Russia and Iran, signing bilateral trade agreement with Iran 13 Aug.

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#### ➔ Haiti AUGUST 2019

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Political tensions remained high amid opposition attempts to impeach President Moïse. Parliament 2 Aug announced 7 Aug session to review impeachment motion against Moïse on accusations of treason over his alleged involvement in embezzlement of PetroCaribe (alliance giving Caribbean states access to cheap Venezuelan oil) funds; Chamber of Deputies president Gary Bodeau called off session citing lack of respect for parliamentary rules and 12 Aug called off further session over security concerns; in 21-22 Aug vote, 53 of 61 MPs voted down impeachment measure, with 58 members abstaining. Local media 11 Aug reported PM Michel ready to present his govt plan to Chamber of Deputies in first round of ratification process, though some in opposition continued to insist on Moïse's resignation before any ratification. Public unrest continued with demonstrators late July until early Aug protesting against Washington's support for Moïse outside U.S. embassy in Port-au-Prince; embassy security 6 Aug reported gunfire in immediate vicinity of staff housing compound. Amid gang-related violence, national police 8 Aug announced 656 new officers.

Amid incidents of mass violence, record high homicide rate caused alarm, with 2019 on course to surpass 2018 as deadliest year on record. Officials announced Jan-July saw 20,135 murders (95.8 per day), higher than 19,335 for same period last year. Mass killings continued; in Veracruz (east), armed gunmen 28 Aug attacked and set fire to bar in town of Coatzacoalcos, killing 28; state governor Cuitláhuac García said massacre was retaliation after bar refused to let criminal group sell drugs. In Michoacán (centre), armed groups including Jalisco Cartel New Generation (CJNG), Viagras and Knights Templar continued to compete over criminal markets including extortion of avocado industry; CJNG claimed responsibility for nineteen bodies found in Uruapan 8 Aug; in response, govt increased deployment of National Guard, controversial main instrument of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO)'s security plan, in region. Violence against women remained a concern following allegations that four policemen 3 Aug raped teenage girl and a policeman sexually assaulted another girl days later, both in Mexico City; Mexico City's mayor 14 Aug announced six police officers had been suspended as part of investigations; hundreds of protesters 13 and 16 Aug demonstrated against police inaction in tackling violence against women, damaging bus station and police station in latter demonstration. AMLO 19 Aug asked protesters to refrain from violence; said there would be no repression of demonstrations. Targeted killings of journalists continued including 2 Aug killing of Edgar Alberto Nava López in Zihuataneho, Guerrero (south) and Jorge Celestino Ruiz in Actopan, Veracruz (Gulf coast). Govt 4 Aug called for extradition of culprit of 3 Aug attack that left 22 dead, including eight Mexicans in El Paso, Texas; xenophobia against Latinos and Mexicans in particular motivated violent attack according to U.S. police reports.

## Middle East & North Africa

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### ➔ Israel/Palestine AUGUST 2019

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Clashes erupted at Jerusalem's Holy Esplanade between Muslim worshippers and Israeli police and fighting along Israel-Gaza fence area left at least nine Palestinian militants dead. In Jerusalem, tens of thousands of Muslims gathered to pray at Holy Esplanade on first day of Muslim holiday Eid al-Adha 11 Aug, which coincided with Jewish holiday Tisha B'Av. After rumours spread that police would allow Jews entry in violation of status quo, clashes broke out between Muslims and police leaving at least 61 Palestinians and four police officers injured. Later that day, police authorised Jews to enter, allowing some 1,700 Jews to be on site. Jordan, custodian of Jerusalem's sacred sites, condemned Israel's 11 Aug decision to allow Jews access on that day; Jordanian MPs 19 Aug recommended that govt expel Israel's ambassador and reconsider Israel-Jordan peace treaty. Israeli police 15 Aug shot dead Palestinian youth who stabbed policeman near Holy Esplanade. In Gaza, Israeli forces 1-17 Aug killed at least nine Palestinian militants who approached fence. Militants fired rocket into Israel 16 Aug, Israel intercepted it and same day struck Hamas targets in Gaza. Next day militants fired three rockets into Israel, two intercepted, one landed in Sderot. Two suicide bombings 27 Aug at police checkpoints in Gaza city left three officers dead; Hamas declared state of emergency throughout Gaza. In West Bank, Israel 5-6 Aug approved construction of 2,304 houses for Israelis in Area C. Following deadly stabbing 7 Aug of Israeli soldier near Migdal Oz settlement, Israeli security forces in Beit Kahel village 10 Aug arrested two Palestinians suspected of attack; Israel blamed Hamas. Suspected Palestinian bombing 23 Aug killed Israeli near Dolev settlement. Iranian-backed Iraqi paramilitary group accused Israel of conducting airstrikes on their assets in Iraq (see Iraq). Israeli airstrikes 24 Aug hit Iranian forces near Syrian capital, Damascus, leaving five dead (see Syria). Suspected Israeli drone strikes

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→ Jordan AUGUST 2019

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Govt, as custodian of Jerusalem's holy sites, condemned Israel's 11 Aug decision to allow Jews access to Holy Esplanade on first day of Muslim holiday Eid al-Adha, which coincided with Jewish holiday Tisha B'Av. Jordanian FM 18 Aug summoned Israel's ambassador demanding end to Israeli violations at Holy Esplanade and next day MPs recommended expelling Israeli ambassador and reconsidering Israel-Jordan peace treaty. Following govt decision to impose anti-smuggling measures, demonstrators 23-24 Aug clashed with security forces in Ramtha on border with Syria.

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🚨 ⚡ Lebanon AUGUST 2019

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President Aoun called suspected Israeli drone strikes on Iran-allied militias in Lebanon a declaration of war, raising risk of escalation in Sept. In capital Beirut, two Israeli drones 25 Aug attacked Hizbollah stronghold, one crashed and other exploded and damaged its media centre; attack reportedly targeted and destroyed equipment related to Hizbollah's precision-guided missiles program. Israel 26 Aug conducted drone attack on military posts of Iran-backed armed group Popular Front for Liberation of Palestine-General Command near Qusaya in east, no reported casualties. President Aoun 26 Aug called Beirut attack "declaration of war" and PM Hariri called it "blatant violation of Lebanese sovereignty". Hizbollah leader Nasrallah same day condemned "aggression", pledging to down any Israeli aircraft that entered Lebanese airspace and retaliate for future Israeli killings of Hizbollah members in Syria. Political deadlock over deadly shoot-out in June involving supporters of two rival Druze parties thawed mid-Aug. Leaders of rival parties met and reconciled 9 Aug; cabinet next day convened for first time in six weeks. Following talks in Washington with U.S. Sec State Pompeo, Hariri 15 Aug expressed his commitment to U.S.-led negotiation process to resolve Israel-Lebanon land and maritime border dispute.

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🚨 Syria AUGUST 2019

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Fighting intensified in north west as govt forces made advances into rebel-held Idlib province and targeted Turkish military convoy, while Turkey and U.S. made progress in negotiating creation of safe zone along Turkey-Syria border. Govt declared conditional ceasefire in north west 1 Aug, but resumed bombing 5 Aug citing refusal of jihadist militants to withdraw from de-escalation zone. As pro-govt forces advanced in northern Hama province, clashes 14 Aug left fourteen pro-govt fighters and 27 rebels dead. Opposition fighters same day shot down govt warplane. Pro-govt airstrikes 16-17 Aug killed twenty civilians in Deir al-Sharqi village in Idlib province. After heavy fighting, in which at least 59 rebels and 28 pro-govt fighters killed, rebels 20-21 Aug retreated from Khan Shaykhun and neighbouring Kafr Zita and Lataminah. Turkey, facing loss of observation post in Morek, northern Hama province, 19 Aug sent military convoy to support rebel forces; govt and Russia carried out airstrikes targeting convoy, killing three Syrian civilians. Turkey same day said attacks violated Sept 2018 Sochi Agreement and threatened to use right to self-defence. At Syria-Turkey border crossings

U.S. delegation in Turkish capital Ankara 7 Aug said it had agreed with Turkey to form joint operation centre in Turkey to oversee creation of safe zone and carry out joint patrols there. Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) 27 Aug said they had begun withdrawal from safe zone. Islamic State (ISIS) continued attacks in north east: car bombing in al-Qahtaniya 7 Aug killed five civilians; another in Qamishli 18 Aug killed policeman. Israel 24 Aug said it had conducted airstrikes in Aqraba, south of Damascus, preventing Iranian drone strike on Israel.

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➔ Bahrain AUGUST 2019

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FM al-Khalifa 17 Aug attended signing of Sudanese transitional govt agreement in Sudanese capital, Khartoum. Govt 19 Aug said it would join U.S.-led maritime security initiative for Middle Eastern waterways.

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➔ Iran AUGUST 2019

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Iran-U.S. tensions remained high over maritime security and Iran's continued threat to further breach in Sept 2015 nuclear accord if European parties do not mitigate economic impact of U.S. sanctions. Iran 4 Aug said it had detained Iraqi tanker in Persian Gulf 31 July, accusing it of smuggling fuel. UK, Bahrain and Australia joined U.S.-led maritime security initiative for Middle East; Israel 6 Aug reportedly indicated it was supporting with intelligence. FM Zarif 12 Aug said naval build-up in Persian Gulf would increase "risk of combustion". Gibraltar 15 Aug re-released Iranian tanker it had detained since early July on suspicion of transporting oil to Syria; U.S. 16 Aug issued warrant for tanker's seizure, which Gibraltar reject-ed 18 Aug. Iran 26 Aug said it had dispatched one destroyer and one aircraft carrier to Gulf of Aden. Iran continued to threaten that it would further breach 2015 nuclear deal on 6 Sept if agreement's European parties failed to mitigate economic impact of U.S. sanctions. Former German ambassador to Iran who was due to head mechanism to facilitate trade with Iran bypassing U.S. sanctions (INSTEX) 8 Aug withdrew from post. After Iran breached deal's cap on low enriched uranium stockpile in July, Iranian nuclear official 13 Aug said its stockpile was "growing rapidly". Israeli media 5 Aug reported that Iran increased its financial assistance to Hamas to \$30mn per month. Delegation of Yemen's Huthi movement in Teh-ran 11-17 Aug met FM Zarif, Supreme Leader Khamenei and Western ambassa-dors. Huthis 17 Aug announced appointment of ambassador to Iran. FM Zarif held discussions with French officials in Paris 23 Aug and returned to France 25 Aug for further consultations with E3 (France, Germany and UK) on sidelines of G-7 summit in Biarritz, France. President Rouhani 27 Aug said U.S. should lift sanc-tions as condition for talks. Kurdish militants 27 Aug killed member of paramili-tary force in Piranshahr in north west; Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) next day said it had killed two militants responsible. U.S. 28-30 Aug imposed several further sanctions on Iran, including on Iranian tanker released from Gi-braltar.

- [BRIEFING: Iraq: Evading the Gathering Storm](#)

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➔ Iraq AUGUST 2019

Islamic State (ISIS). Following suspected Israeli airstrikes on assets of Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in Iraq late July, PM Mahdi 16 Aug banned all unauthorised military flights. Explosion and large fire in missile depot of Iran-backed paramilitary Popular Mobilisation Units (PMU) in central Baghdad 12 Aug killed one person, prompting interior minister to order investigation. Explosion of unknown cause also damaged weapons depot of PMU militia Kataib Hezbollah in al-Balad base in Salah al-Din province 20 Aug. In al-Qaim near Syrian border, suspected Israeli drone strike 25 Aug killed at least two Kataib Hezbollah fighters; parliamentary bloc Fatah Alliance 26 Aug held U.S. responsible for suspected Israeli attack, which it called “declaration of war” against Iraq, and demanded withdrawal of U.S. troops; U.S. State Department same day denied responsibility and said it would cooperate with investigations. Security forces continued operations against ISIS. In Kirkuk province, Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS) 4 Aug launched New Dawn operation, deploying troops and warplanes to Hawija, al-Rashad and al-Abassi and reportedly killing several militants. In Diyala province, military 7 Aug said it had killed four ISIS militants as part of ongoing operation Will of Victory. In Anbar province, CTS 14 Aug killed ten militants. U.S. soldier 10 Aug died in gunfight with suspected ISIS militants in Nineveh province. In Daquq, south of Kirkuk city, suspected ISIS mortar fire 12 Aug killed two policemen.

- [BRIEFING: Iraq: Evading the Gathering Storm](#)

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#### ➔ Kuwait AUGUST 2019

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Iranian FM Zarif met Crown Prince al-Sabah and FM al-Sabah in Kuwait City 18 Aug and advocated for regional dialogue forum and non-aggression pact between Iran and Kuwait.

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#### ➔ Qatar AUGUST 2019

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Qatar 4 Aug held 15th joint coast guard meeting with Iran in Iranian capital, Tehran. Iranian FM Zarif met Emir al-Thani and FM al-Thani in Doha 12 Aug and advocated for regional dialogue forum and non-aggression pact between Iran and Qatar. FM al-Thani 17 Aug attended signing of Sudanese transitional govt agreement in Sudanese capital, Khartoum. FM al-Thani 19 Aug met Somalia PM Khayre in Somalia capital, Mogadishu and announced Qatari firm signed investment deal to construct port in Hobyo. Govt 20 Aug hosted talks in Doha between U.S. and Taliban.

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#### ➔ Saudi Arabia AUGUST 2019

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Govt sought to end hostilities between its allies in Yemen after United Arab Emirates (UAE)-backed southern separatists took Aden from Hadi govt, both nominally part of Saudi-led coalition opposed to Yemen’s Huthis; fighting raised tensions between UAE and Saudi Arabia, which remains opposed to Yemen’s partition. In Yemen, UAE-backed southern secessionists Southern Transitional Council (STC) 7-10 Aug seized control of provisional capital Aden and expelled pro-govt forces, including armed

Yemen". Saudi Arabia same day called for emergency summit on Yemen's southern conflict in Jeddah. Saudi and UAE FMs 26 Aug issued joint statement reaffirming coalition's support to Hadi govt while condemning "defamation" of UAE. Huthis continued to launch attacks into Saudi territory: drones 9 Aug targeted Abha airport, inflicting no major damage; 17 Aug hit and started fire at Shaybah oil field near UAE border, prompting coalition to carry out apparently retaliatory airstrikes around Sanaa same day and around Saada 20 Aug. FM Jubeir and Minister of State for African Affairs Ahmed Qattan 17 Aug attended signing of Sudan's transitional govt agreement in Sudanese capital Khartoum; Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman next day called Ethiopian PM Abiy and AU Chairperson Moussa Faki to congratulate them for successful mediation. Authorities 16 Aug said they had identified 3.67mn people in Saudi Arabia lacking proper documentation, mostly Ethiopians and Yemenis, and would soon deport nearly 1 million.

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 **Yemen** AUGUST 2019

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Southern separatists aligned with United Arab Emirates (UAE) seized city of Aden from govt forces 10 Aug and moved to consolidate control across south, raising risk that violence escalates in Sept between opposed factions in south. Fighting triggered by Huthi missile strike in Aden in south 1 Aug that killed Munir al-Mashali, commander of UAE-trained Security Belt force and prominent figure in separatist Southern Transitional Council (STC), and 29 other officers; STC alleged that members of Saudi-backed Islamist Islah faction facilitated strike. After reports emerged 7 Aug that President Hadi's guards had fired at people attending al-Mashali's funeral in Aden, STC launched offensive on city same day. STC 10 Aug said it had taken control of city, which govt confirmed. Fighting left at least 40 dead. Separatists sought to consolidate control elsewhere in south: in Abyan governorate, pro-STC Security Belt fighters 19 Aug seized military base in Zinjibar and 20 Aug captured al-Kawad military camp. Govt launched counterattacks, regaining bases in Shebwa governorate and control of Zinjibar. Govt forces 28 Aug moved on Aden, prompting clashes in eastern part. Saudi Arabia, which opposes Yemen's partition, 12 Aug called for talks in Saudi city of Jeddah. STC 15 Aug said it would attend talks, but would not cede Aden unless Islah and northerners were removed from powerful positions in govt. Govt 20 Aug refused to participate in dialogue with STC unless latter retreated from Aden. UAE same day rejected govt's accusations that it had supported separatists' capture of Aden. Govt 29 Aug accused UAE of airstrike that killed 30 govt troops between Abyan and Aden; UAE same day claimed responsibility for airstrikes but said they targeted "terrorist militias". Huthis drones 9 Aug targeted Abha airport in Saudi Arabia; airstrike 17 Aug started fire at Shaybah oil field near UAE border, prompting coalition airstrikes around Sanaa same day and around Saada 20 Aug. Huthis claimed to have made advances in north near Saudi border, including attack on coalition soldiers in Kitaf, Saada.

- [BRIEFING: After Aden: Navigating Yemen's New Political Landscape](#)

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 **United Arab Emirates** AUGUST 2019

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Yemen's southern separatists, trained and equipped by United Arab Emirates (UAE), seized southern city of Aden from Saudi-backed Hadi govt forces, pitting UAE interests against those of Saudi Arabia, which opposes Yemen's partition. In Yemen, UAE-backed Southern Transitional Council (STC) 7-10 Aug seized control of provisional capital Aden and expelled pro-govt forces allied to Riyadh, including armed groups closely associated with Islamist Islah party (see Yemen). High-level delegations from

alignment with Riyadh but did not join Saudi Arabia's calls for OIC to leave Yemen. Abu Dhabi 20 Aug rejected Yemeni govt's accusations that it was supporting secessionists and held Yemeni President Hadi partially responsible for clashes. Saudi and UAE FMs 26 Aug issued joint statement reaffirming coalition's support to Hadi govt while condemning "defamation" of UAE; Abu Dhabi 28 Aug denied Hadi govt's allegations of torture in secret prisons. Minister of State al-Sultan al-Jaber 17 Aug attended signing of Sudan's Transitional Government agreement in Sudanese capital Khartoum.

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➔ Algeria AUGUST 2019

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Govt took steps to initiate dialogue with civil society and prepare for presidential elections as weekly protests demanding radical political change carried on and military continued to pursue high-profile critics in courts. In capital Algiers and other cities, thousands of protesters continued to gather for weekly demonstrations, demanding departure of Interim President Ben Salah and PM Bedoui and end to de facto rule of army chief of staff Gaïd Salah. Following Ben Salah's late July appointment of panel led by former parliament speaker Karim Younes to organise dialogue between govt and civil society, Younes proposed measures to ease tensions, including freeing prisoners and allowing demonstrators free access to Algiers. Gaïd Salah late July refused to allow measures. In response Younes 1 Aug tendered resignation from panel, but withdrew it same day. Younes 4 Aug announced creation of several commissions to focus on different issues and 17 Aug appointed "committee of wise men" to prepare national dialogue that should lay groundwork for presidential elections, despite some opposition groups' preference for electing constituent assembly. Secular and Islamist opposition figures 3 Aug refused to participate in panel discussions, accusing govt of attempting to circumvent popular demands. Student protesters stormed panel's press conference 18 Aug, demanding Ben Salah's resignation. Military court 6 Aug issued international arrest warrant for former army chief of staff and defence minister Khaled Nezzar who had criticised Gaïd Salah on grounds of "conspiracy and breach against public order". Authorities stepped up repression: Committee to Protect Journalists 14 Aug reported that authorities had blocked five local news websites. Authorities 19 Aug detained and deported senior staff member of NGO Human Rights Watch Ahmed Benchemsi, accusing him of "serving foreign agendas aiming at infiltrating popular protests".

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➔ Egypt AUGUST 2019

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Security forces responded to deadly car bombing in Cairo by stepping up raids on suspected Islamist militants, and Islamic State (ISIS) militants maintained insurgency in North Sinai. In Cairo, car bombing killed 22 people outside National Cancer Institute 5 Aug; govt blamed Hasm, organisation allegedly linked to Muslim Brotherhood, but Hasm denied responsibility. Security forces 8 Aug carried out raids on suspected terrorist hideouts in town of Atsa, Fayoum province, about 100km south west of Cairo, and East Shorouk, about 50km north east of Cairo, killing seventeen alleged militants. In North Sinai, ISIS militants 4 Aug kidnapped young man in Bir al-Abd and 6 Aug published video which appeared to show execution of two civilians in Rafah, whom they accused of being agents for military.

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➔ Libya AUGUST 2019

Deadly stalemate persisted 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), and fighting escalated in south between militias allied to GNA and LNA. Fighting in and around Tripoli led to no substantial change in territorial control amid humanitarian crisis with over 100,000 displaced, many sheltering in schools. LNA airstrike 2 Aug reportedly killed three GNA fighters in al-Saddadah south east of Tripoli. LNA 15 Aug reportedly shelled Tripoli's Mitiga airport, killing one guard, and 15-16 Aug bombed Zuwara airport west of Tripoli which it said housed Turkish drones. LNA drone mid-Aug reportedly struck field hospital in al-Aziziya south of Tripoli, drawing UN's condemnation. After brief lull in fighting 11-12 Aug during Muslim holiday Eid al-Adha, LNA resumed attacks 13 Aug. GNA 21 Aug reportedly retook Sebea district south of Tripoli. Seventeen LNA fighters 23 Aug reportedly surrendered to GNA south of Tripoli. In south, clashes escalated in Murzuq, by late Aug leaving at least 100 people dead and 3,000 displaced. After clashes between unidentified armed groups 4 Aug left four dead, suspected LNA airstrike same day killed at least 43 in Murzuq; locals claim that LNA denied killing civilians and said airstrike targeted "Chadian opposition fighters". GNA-allied militia known as South Protection Force 18 Aug said it had expelled LNA forces from Murzuq. LNA next day reportedly sent reinforcements to maintain control of nearby Sharara oilfield. In Misrata, about 200km east of Tripoli, LNA 6 Aug hit cargo plane landing at air college and 17 Aug bombed GNA air base; GNA next day said it had downed LNA drone. In Benghazi in east, car bomb 10 Aug killed five, including three UN staffers, prompting UN Sec-Gen Guterres to call for internal investigation.

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➔ Mauritania AUGUST 2019

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In first peaceful transition since independence, newly-elected President Mohamed Ould Ghazouani took office 1 Aug.

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➔ Tunisia AUGUST 2019

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Following death of President Essebsi 25 July, preparations accelerated for presidential elections 15 Sept and legislative elections 6 Oct. Electoral commission 14 Aug approved 26 of 91 candidacies submitted for 15 Sept early presidential elections, including front-runners businessman Nabil Karoui, PM Chahed, Defence Minister Abdelkarim Zbidi, former President Marzouki, and Islamist party An-Nahda's VP Abdelfattah Mourou. PM Chahed 22 Aug said he had delegated his powers to Public Service Minister Morjane to focus on his campaign and ensure fair elections. Police 23 Aug arrested Karoui on charges of money laundering and tax evasion and banned his TV channel Nessma TV from reporting on elections; Karoui's party next day claimed PM Chahed orchestrated arrest. Electoral commission 24 Aug said Karoui's candidacy remained valid despite arrest. Interim President Ennaceur 2 Aug prolonged nationwide state of emergency for one additional month and 30 Aug extended it until 31 Dec. Govt 3 Aug said security forces had killed two suspected jihadists in Gafsa in south.

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← *Previous Issue*

August 2019 ▼