

CrisisWatch

A monthly bulletin on current and potential conflicts

Published by the International Crisis Group

No. 135

1 November 2014

October 2014 – Trends

↓ Deteriorated situations

[Burkina Faso](#), [Central African Republic](#), [Kashmir](#), [Lebanon](#), [Mexico](#), [Venezuela](#),
[Yemen](#)

↑ Improved situations

November 2014 – Watchlist

💣* Conflict risk alerts

[Burkina Faso](#), [South Sudan](#), [Yemen](#)

☰ Conflict resolution opportunities

CrisisWatch summarises developments during the previous month in some 70 situations of current or potential conflict, listed alphabetically by region, providing references and links to more detailed sources. It assesses whether the overall situation in each case has, during the previous month, significantly deteriorated, significantly improved, or on balance remained more or less unchanged. It identifies situations where, in the coming month, there is a risk of new or significantly escalated conflict, or a conflict resolution opportunity (noting that in some instances there may be both). It also summarises Crisis Group's reports and briefing papers published the previous month.

Arrows and alerts: Up, down and side arrows signify, respectively, improved, deteriorated or unchanged situations. Conflict Risk Alerts (identified with bombs) or Conflict Resolution Opportunities (with doves) are used in addition to arrows: a bomb signifies a risk of escalated violence; a dove an opportunity to advance peace. Both bombs and doves tend to be used where events are moving fast.

Table of Contents

AFRICA	3
Central Africa	3
Horn of Africa	4
Southern Africa	6
West Africa	6
ASIA.....	10
North East Asia	10
South Asia.....	11
South East Asia.....	13
Pacific.....	14
EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA.....	15
Balkans.....	15
Caucasus.....	15
Eastern Europe	17
Western Europe/Mediterranean	17
Central Asia	18
LATIN AMERICA	20
MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA	22
Eastern Mediterranean	22
Gulf.....	23
North Africa.....	25

Africa

Central Africa

➔ **Burundi** Presence of Burundian army in S Kivu (DRC) confirmed 2 Oct by MONUSCO, reportedly fighting National Liberation Forces (FNL) rebels; reports army withdrew 7 Oct. FNL claimed responsibility for 6 Oct attack on Burundian troops in Gihanga, casualty numbers disputed. Provincial electoral commissions lists published 1 Oct; civil society and several political parties alleged members purportedly representing them in fact close to ruling party.

- [“Le président accusé de corruption, la population s’interroge”](#), RFI, 18 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Cameroon** Skirmishes between Boko Haram (BH) and Cameroon army along Nigerian border increased: 28 BH fighters killed 4 Oct in Koubougue; BH 6 Oct fired rockets in Fotokol and Amchide, killed eight; BH 8 Oct killed eleven people in Mayo Tsanaga. Army 13-14 Oct crossed border into Nigeria, shelled BH positions in Gambaru Ngala; army reported 107 BH fighters killed during clashes near Amchide and Limani 15-16 Oct, 39 during clashes in Kolofata and Glawi 24-25 Oct. BH 11 Oct released 27 hostages including deputy PM Amadou Ali’s wife and ten Chinese kidnapped in May; reports hostages released in exchange for ransom, senior BH prisoners. IncurSIONS by CAR armed groups continued on eastern border: three suspected anti-balaka killed 5 Oct; 10 suspected Seleka members killed 7 Oct by army in Garoua Boulai; nine Cameroonians kidnapped 25 Oct near Garoua Boulai.

- [“Cameroon says troops kill 107 Boko Haram militants”](#), Reuters, 17 Oct. 2014.
- For latest briefing, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°101, [Cameroon: Prevention is Better than Cure](#), 4 September 2014.

⚡ **Central African Republic** Violence escalated in Bangui as political tensions increased: grenade attack 7 Oct in Gobongo injured 25; anti-balaka mobilised throughout city and alleged assailant, Muslim from PK5 neighbourhood, killed; three killed in protests following day; MINUSCA soldier killed 9 Oct in ambush in PK11; anti-balaka 13-14 Oct looted Ouhangou neighbourhood, reprisals left several dead. Delegation sent by Congo Brazzaville president to Bangui 18 Oct called for hastening of transition process. Violence also continued outside capital: ten killed in IDP camp in Bambari 1 Oct following murder of three young Muslims; French “Sangaris” forces clashed with ex-Seleka in Dékoa 10 Oct; sporadic clashes along Cameroon border (see [Cameroon](#)). MINUSCA deployment in east continued. Seleka divided between Gula and Fulani factions: Ali Darassa (leader of Fulani fighters) and Al-Khatim 25 Oct created new movement “Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique”; “General Assembly” by other Seleka leaders planned. Samba-Panza increasingly isolated; anti-balaka and Seleka members of govt called for her resignation following disappearance of tranche of Angolan aid; Samba-Panza said embezzlement accusations and 16 Oct National Transitional Council (CNT) investigation into allegations conspiracy to overthrow govt; CNT late Oct dropped investigation. Samba-Panza addressed nation 22 Oct, called for end to impunity, announced creation of new military unit in Bangui.

- [“Violences en Centrafrique: création d’une unité rapide d’intervention”](#), RFI, 22 Oct. 2014.

➔ **DR Congo** Attacks attributed to Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) killed over 80, displaced thousands in N Kivu 2-17 Oct; population 22 Oct attacked MONUSCO base in Beni in protest; suspected ADF attack 30 Oct killed 14; President Kabila late Oct visited region, promised action; suspected ADF lynched 31 Oct in Beni. UN joint human rights (UNJHRO) office 9 Oct published report on M23 human rights violations, called for initiation of judicial enquiries; M23 denounced findings. UNJHRO 15 Oct published report on rights violations included extrajudicial executions by police in Kinshasa anti-gang operations; govt declared head of UNJHRO office “persona non-grata”. SADC met 18-20 Oct for mid-term evaluation, FDLR disarmament process due to end early Jan; no progress since last meeting.

- [“Affaire Scott Campbell: Ban Ki-moon condamne la décision de Kinshasa”](#), Radio Okapi, 22 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Rwanda** First political debate held 14 Oct on potential revision of Rwandan constitution; proposed amendment would allow President Kagame to run for third term.

- [“Rwandan leader's allies seek vote to allow him a third term”](#), AFP, 23 Oct. 2014.

Horn of Africa

➔ **Eritrea** Resistance to Afewerki regime building in Asmara: high cost of living, govt military conscription policy, imposition of 2% tax on remittances from diaspora key grievances. UN late Oct reported spike in Eritreans fleeing to neighbouring Ethiopia. Presence of Ethiopian rebel Tigray People’s Democratic Movement continued in Asmara.

- [“Eritrean resistance steps up pressure on President Isaias Afewerki”](#), Asmarino Independent, 28 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Ethiopia** PM Desalegn 16 Oct accused opposition of being “anti-peace”, said would take action against those who instigate clashes between communities. Journalist Temesgen Desalegn 27 Oct sentenced to three years prison for “provocation”, “dissemination of inaccurate information”; U.S. expressed concern. Late-Oct Amnesty International report said govt “ruthlessly targeted”, tortured Oromos. Govt officials 6 Oct met with Egypt, Sudan counterparts at Nile Basin Development forum, agreed to appoint international firm to study impact of Ethiopian Renaissance Dam project.

- [“Dam rising in Ethiopia stirs hope and tension”](#), *New York Times*, 11 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Kenya** Attacks targeting security officers and county govt officials continued in Mandera County: Governor’s motorcade hit by roadside bomb 15 Oct, one injured; three civilians injured 30 Oct in bomb explosion targeting security officers in Mandera town. Intercommunal violence re-erupted in north: twenty, including seven security officers, killed 29 Oct in clashes between security forces and bandits along Baringo, Turkana counties border. Former lawmaker Guyo Halake, involved in brokering peace between Degodia and Garre clans, killed 22 Oct in Moyale. Kwale Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) chairman Omar Mwamnuadzi arrested 15 Oct along with eleven youths, charged with holding illegal gathering and planning to breach peace; security officials continue to link MRC to June attacks in Mpeketoni, Lamu county, claimed by Al-Shabaab. Five suspected bombers attempting to cross border from Ethiopia killed by Kenyan military mid-Oct; police officer killed 18 Oct by gunmen in Liboi, near So-

malia border. One killed, eight injured in clashes in Kakuma refugee camp 26 Oct. President Uhuru Kenyatta 8 Oct appeared at ICC.

- [“Kenya’s MRC leader Omar Mwamnuadzi charged”](#), BBC, 16 Oct. 2014.
- For latest briefing, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°102, [Kenya: Al-Shabaab – Closer to Home](#), 25 September 2014.

➔ **Somalia** Joint Somali National Army (SNA)/AMISOM operation 3 Oct liberated Adale, Middle Shabelle; strategic port town and last Al-Shabaab coastal stronghold Barawe, Lower Shabelle, 6 Oct. AMISOM troops also advanced toward Jilib, Middle Juba; Puntland security forces 1 Oct dislodged Al-Shabaab from long-standing stronghold in Galgala mountains. UNSG Ban visited 29 Oct, congratulated forces for advances against Al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab attacks continued across country despite losses including: at least ten killed, fifteen injured in restaurant bombing in Mogadishu 12 Oct; seven killed near Beledweyne, Hiraa region, after SNA and Al-Shabaab clashed 21 Oct. Three-day dialogue in Garowe between Somali Federal Govt (SFG) and Puntland administration resulted in 12-point agreement announced 14 Oct. Political infighting between President Hassan Sheikh and PM Sheikh Ahmed emerged after president 25 Oct rejected PM’s cabinet reshuffle.

- [“African Union and Somali forces claim Shabaab stronghold of Barawe”](#), Reuters, 5 Oct. 2014.

➔ **South Sudan** Warring parties preparing major offensives as hardliners appear determined to settle civil conflict through war: fighting continued throughout month, SPLA-IO 28 Oct launched major attacks on Bentiu prompting govt to threaten withdrawal from peace talks. UNSG Ban 30 Oct condemned renewed violence, urged parties to participate in negotiations, reach agreement on transitional arrangements. SPLM factions had late-Oct signed framework agreement on SPLM reform in Tanzania and accepted joint responsibility for war. Violence among Dinka clans and between civilians and SPLA following a forced disarmament campaign left hundreds dead in Lakes state. National Assembly 8 Oct passed controversial National Security Services bill; allows for arrests without warrants, shields officers from accountability, provides wide powers of surveillance and authority. MPs from ruling and opposition parties staged walkout after request for 72 hours to review revised bill rejected by Speaker of Assembly.

- Crisis Group Conflict Alert, [“Conflict Alert: Looming Military Offensives in South Sudan”](#), 29 October 2014.
- [“Rebel advance imperils peace effort in South Sudan”](#), *Wall Street Journal*, 30 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Sudan** Parallel govt-SPLM-N, govt-Darfur rebel group talks, postponed by AUHIP to 25 Oct, still delayed; govt said talks delayed as negotiators from ruling National Congress Party (NCP) preparing for party’s general convention, others travelling; SPLM-N 27 Oct said AUHIP extended invitation to resume talks 12 Nov. NCP general convention held 20-25 Oct; incumbent President Bashir selected as party’s presidential candidate, new consultative council elected. National Electoral Commission, NCP refused to postpone April 2015 general elections. Bashir chaired second meeting of national dialogue committee 19 Oct, discussed roadmap for national dialogue, Addis Ababa framework agreement, expansion of committee’s mandate. 83 political parties agreed to participate but opposition National Consensus Forces, armed Sudanese Rev-

olutionary Front (SRF) continued demanding for end of war before dialogue. Several opposition parties including National Umma Party signed Teiba Charter calling for overthrow of Bashir regime. Sudan Armed Forces 10 Oct announced plans for major offensive on SRF in S Kordofan. Two UNAMID peacekeepers killed in attack by unidentified assailants in N Darfur.

- [“Sudan’s Bashir wins party backing for vote, set to extend 25 year rule”](#), Reuters, 26 Oct. 2014.

Southern Africa

➔ **Madagascar** Former President Ravalomanana “secretly” returned 12 Oct after five years exile, signalled intent to challenge legitimacy of President Rajaonarimampianina’s administration. AU, SADC condemned return as reckless, reiterated support for Rajaonarimampianina, reconciliation. Govt forces detained Ravalomanana, reportedly for own protection; crackdown on public demonstrations, police 18 Oct used tear gas to disperse pro-Ravalomanana.

- [“Madagascar police disperse pro-Ravalomanana rally with teargas”](#), Reuters, 18 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Mozambique** Elections held 15 Oct, low voter turnout of 51%; ruling Frelimo party announced winner with 57% of vote, decline of almost 18% since 2009 vote; Renamo won 33.8%, significant increase. National Elections Commission divided, approved poll results by 10-7 vote; opposition CNE nominees and some civil society members voted against. Opposition parties rejected results, claimed irregularities, evidence of rigging; Renamo demanded negotiations with view to establishing govt of national unity. EU observer mission confirmed opposition monitors absent from large percentage of polling stations; SADC observer mission said polls “generally free, fair and credible”.

- [“Opposition rejects Mozambique election results”](#), AP, 25 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Zimbabwe** ZANU-PF internal tensions over President Mugabe’s succession heightened ahead of Dec party congress as his wife Grace launched several attacks on contender VP Joice Mujuru, senior ZANU-PF members, military officials.

- [“Zimbabwe First Lady claims VP, generals want to topple Mugabe”](#), StarAfrica, 23 Oct. 2014.
- For latest briefing, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°103, [Zimbabwe: Waiting for the Future](#), 29 September 2014.

West Africa

⚠️ **Burkina Faso** President Compaoré 31 Oct resigned following intense pressure, violent protests over possible prolonging of his 27-year rule through constitutional amendment and intervention of military. Ruling Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP) party 21 Oct announced constitutional amendment bill to prolong presidential term limits after dialogue between govt, opposition failed. Parliament building, city hall, and ruling party HQ set ablaze by protesters 30 Oct; 30 killed dur-

ing protests, govt withdrew bill same day. Army announced creation of interim govt, dissolution of parliament but appears divided over who will rule; army chief General Honoré Traoré, Presidential Guard's second-in-command, Colonel Isaac Zida both claimed to be head of state.

- ["Burkina Faso President resigns, military takes over"](#), *Wall Street Journal*, 31 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Côte d'Ivoire** Trial of Simone Gbagbo, former first lady and leading opposition figure, delayed indefinitely 21 Oct due to logistical problems; charges include threats against the security of the state. Opposition Ivorian Patriotic Front leader Pascal Affi N'Guessan, also accused, said trials politically motivated, will not contribute to national or political reconciliation. Former Young Patriots leader Charles Blé Goudé 2 Oct appeared at International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity. World Health Organisation 10 Oct urged Ivoirian govt to prepare for Ebola outbreak, said will send team to monitor 700km border with Liberia.

- ["Le procès de Simone Gbagbo aura-t-il lieu ?"](#), *Jeune Afrique*, 28 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Guinea** Political, social, and economic impact of Ebola epidemic continued; President Condé 3 Oct suggested delayed elections; suggestion echoed by pro-regime civil society leader Dansa Kourouma and senior member of ruling party Rally of the People of Guinea (RPG) Lansana Komara. Condé 22 Oct reshuffled cabinet, replaced energy and security ministers.

- ["L'Assemblée nationale recommande la mise à contribution de tous les leaderships guinéens"](#), *Guinée News*, 22 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Guinea-Bissau** President Vaz pressed forward with reforms following Sept removal of controversial chief of staff Antonio Injai: former presidential candidate and Injai associate Nuno Nabiam, influential Party for Social Renovation (PRS) figure Artur Sanha removed from civil service during month. Despite internal debate, PRS leadership confirmed alliance with ruling Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC).

- ["Revolta no seio do PRS na Guiné-Bissau"](#), *RFI*, 25 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Liberia** Ebola epidemic continued, with 4,249 confirmed cases as of 15 Oct; World Bank 8 Oct estimated impact on Liberia's economy in 2014 could reach \$66mn. Some 350 of 4,000 promised U.S. troops currently deployed. Govt criticised for turning Ebola crisis into governance crisis following President Sirleaf's call for constitutional revisions to give executive vastly greater power. Justice Minister Christiana Tah 6 Oct resigned citing Sirleaf administration's slow progress on corruption and lack of rule of law, accused her of blocking Justice department's independent investigations.

- ["Liberia's Ebola crisis puts president in harsh light"](#), *New York Times*, 30 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Mali** Inter-Malian peace talks resumed 15 Oct in Algiers; international mediation team 15-17 Oct finalised "mid-term summary", endorsed 18 Oct by "G5+" regional states and submitted to Malian parties for three day discussion 20 Oct; FM Abdoulaye Diop 25 Oct expressed satisfaction with most recent round of talks, Azawad Movements Coalition (alliance of northern rebel groups formed mid-Sept) late-Oct expressed strong disappointment. Armed violence in north continued to threaten peace process: violation of ceasefire reported 16 Oct following clashes between rival Tuareg groups in Tillit, south of Gao. Azawad Movements Coalition 28 Oct announced united

military effort to stem insecurity in north; agreed to abide by May ceasefire. Jihadi attacks on MINUSMA troops continued: nine Nigerian peacekeepers killed in ambush on Menaka-Ansongo road, 3 Oct; three Senegalese peacekeepers injured 25 Oct in Kidal. FM Diop 8 Oct demanded UNSC create rapid intervention force to “efficiently fight terrorist elements”. French Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian 24 Oct announced strengthened military presence in northern Mali; 29 Oct reported heavy fighting between French force Barkhane and AQIM-related group in Kidal region.

- ["Pourparlers d'Alger: encore des blocages sur le statut du nord du Mali"](#), RFI, 25 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Niger** Parliamentary session 1 Oct started without head of National Assembly Hama Amadou, exiled in France following warrant for arrest over baby trafficking accusations; Hama requested delay to 7 Oct; majority of opposition boycotted session. Govt spokesperson and Justice Minister Marou Amadou 26 Oct said Hama “no longer president of the National Assembly”; Hama supporters denied his removal. Nine security force members killed 30 Oct in Tillabéry region near Mali border; defence and interior ministries accused “terrorist elements”. Niger 7 Oct hosted regional summit to coordinate efforts to curb Boko Haram insurgency; multinational force of 700 soldiers planned to be operational by late-Nov. French Barkhane operation strengthened its presence in Madama, north-eastern Niger; French forces 10 Oct reportedly destroyed al-Qaeda convoy in northern Niger.

- ["Opposition leader Hama no longer Niger parliament speaker: minister"](#), Reuters, 26 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Nigeria** Fierce clashes early Oct between govt forces and Boko Haram (BH) as military tried to retake Bazza, Michika and Madagali towns in NE Adamawa state; reports some 400 insurgents and up to 70 soldiers killed; hostilities declined mid-month, possibly due to BH attempts to consolidate control over existing territory. BH 2 Oct issued video purportedly of leader Shekau claiming he was still alive, said militants downed Nigerian airforce jet missing since early Sept; 6 Oct beheaded seven in Ngamdu, Borno state. Govt 17 Oct announced ceasefire with BH; many expressed doubts as BH stepped up attacks: 18 Oct seized Abadam, Borno state, killing over 40; same day abducted about 45 girls and women from two villages in Adamawa state; 22 Oct bombed bus station in Bauchi killing 12; 31 Oct killed up to 30 in Gombe; 29 Oct attacked Mubi, second largest town in Adamawa state, killing many and seizing Army's 234 Battalion HQ. Multi National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) killed over 25 BH fighters in Abadam 25 – 26 Oct. Diplomatic efforts to contain BH insurgency increased: President Jonathan 7 Oct met with regional leaders to finalise arrangements for 2,800-strong multinational force. Military authorities 15 Oct arraigned 59 soldiers for mutiny, conspiracy to mutiny. Intercommunal violence in middle belt regions continued: attack by suspected Fulani herdsmen on several villages in Riyom, Plateau state, killed twelve 2 Oct; 21 Oct attack on Kompany village, Nasarawa state, killed fifteen. In Niger Delta: armed gangs 23 Oct abducted six Nigerian oil workers in Bayelsa state; pirates 24 Oct hijacked gunboat, killed three policemen. Ongoing election-related violence: supporters of Rivers state governorship aspirant Nyesom Wike attacked opponents at ruling People's Democratic Party meeting in Abuja 9 Oct; some 50 thugs 16 Oct attacked campaign rally of PDP governorship aspirant Senator Helen Esuene in Akwa Ibom state, seven seriously wounded. Former military ruler Muhammadu Buha-

ri 15 Oct declared intention to contest presidential candidacy for opposition All Progressives Congress (APC).

- [“Kidnapping, bomb blast in Nigeria raise doubts about Boko Haram truce”](#), Al Jazeera, 23 Oct. 2014.

Asia

North East Asia

➔ **China (internal)** Ethnic tensions continued in Xinjiang with several deadly attacks: four Uighurs armed with knives, explosives 12 Oct killed 22 in Maralbeshi county; two Uighurs 10 Oct killed eight, including three police and three govt officials, in Guma county; policewoman with Uighur name killed 13 Oct, reportedly in reprisal for govt-affiliation. Govt crackdown on Uighur minority continued: twelve sentenced to death 13 Oct over July attack on police station in Shache county. Pro-democracy protests continued in Hong Kong: 20 protestors injured 18-19 Oct in clashes with police; govt, protestors held talks 21 Oct, no agreement reached.

- [“22 Killed in farmers’ market attack in Xinjiang’s Kashgar Prefecture”](#), Radio Free Asia, 18 Oct. 2014.

➔ **China/Japan** Efforts to arrange talks between Chinese President Xi, Japanese PM Abe at Nov Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum amid continued historical and territorial disputes: Chinese foreign ministry expressed concern over Abe sending offerings to controversial Yasukuni Shrine 17 Oct; 110 govt legislators, 80 aides prayed at shrine. Xi 30 Oct met former Japanese PM Yasuo Fukuda in Beijing during business delegation visit. Chinese coastguard 18 Oct entered disputed waters near Senkaku/Diaoyu islands.

- [“China protests at Japanese PM’s latest WW2 shrine tribute”](#), *Guardian*, 17 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Korean Peninsula** DPRK leader Kim Jong-Un 14 Oct returned to public view after 40-day disappearance, missing several important national events including 10 Oct anniversary of Korean Workers Party; state media remained silent amid intense speculation about Kim’s health. Satellite images released 1 Oct showed DPRK completed upgrade of Sohae satellite launch station near border with China to facilitate larger projectiles. DPRK 20 Oct said aiming to enhance nuclear capability; U.S. General Curtis Scaparotti 24 Oct suggested DPRK capable of building nuclear warhead. High-ranking DPRK delegation, led by Vice Chairman of National Defence Commission Hwang Pyong So, 4 Oct unexpectedly attended closing ceremony of Asian Games in Inch’ŏn, ROK, part of reported DPRK diplomatic offensive. DPRK, ROK naval ships 7 Oct traded fire in Yellow (West) Sea after DPRK ship violated Northern Limit Line; ROK military 13 Oct pledged deployment of additional armament to islands near border. DPRK 10 Oct fired at activist-launched balloons carrying anti-DPRK leaflets; two rounds fell into ROK border town near demilitarised zone. ROK soldiers 18 Oct fired warning shots at approximately 10 DPRK troops approaching military demarcation line near Ch’ŏrwŏn, no return fire; similar incident reported near Paju 19 Oct leading to exchange of fire.

- [“Two Koreas exchange machinegun fire at border, no casualties”](#), Reuters, 10 Oct. 2014.

South Asia

➔ **Afghanistan** Cohesion of new unity govt remained uncertain following late Sept inauguration of Ashraf Ghani as president, appointment of runner-up Abdullah Abdullah as “chief executive officer”; sides yet to agree on appointments of cabinet members, other key positions. Ghani 1 Oct promised merit-based appointment of governors, mid-Oct promised same for senior military officials. Police 11 Oct arrested seven in connection with 2010 Kabul Bank collapse after Ghani instructed attorney general’s office to reopen investigation; special tribunal formed 29 Oct to review case. Head of Independent Electoral Complaint Commission (IECC) 9 Oct described holding presidential and provincial council elections simultaneously as failure, suggested future rounds should be separate. Independent Election Commission (IEC) 10 Oct confirmed receiving IECC’s decision on final results of provincial polls, said IECC’s ruling needs further clarification. Defence ministry late Oct reported 23% increase in casualties among soldiers, police over past six months, making 2014 deadliest year since U.S.-led invasion. Violence continued across country including: seven killed in twin Taliban suicide bombings in Kabul 1 Oct; Taliban next day claimed control of Registan district, Kandahar province; scores of Taliban, govt forces reported killed in clashes in Sar-e Pul province 13 Oct.

- [“Afghan troop casualties are rising”](#), *Wall Street Journal*, 22 Oct. 2014.

New Crisis Group Asia Report N°260, [Afghanistan’s Political Transition](#), 16 October 2014. Afghanistan’s new president, Ashraf Ghani, inherits a government that is running out of money and losing ground to the insurgency. As foreign troops withdraw, the new government must stay united and move quickly on reforms.

➔ **Bangladesh** Main opposition Bangladesh National Party (BNP) vowed to launch mass demonstrations against govt starting second week of Oct after PM Hasina late Sept ruled out possibility of mid-term election, any dialogue with opposition; BNP struggled to mount significant opposition. Lawyers 16 Oct boycotted courts over late Sept signing of controversial sixteenth constitutional amendment restoring parliament’s authority to impeach Supreme Court judges. Dhaka court again deferred trial of BNP leader Khaleda Zia, hearing adjourned to 9 Nov after Zia refused to attend trial proceedings citing security concerns. Over 100 BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) activists charged mid-month over violence in run-up to Jan 2014 election; senior JeI member Motiur Rahman Nizami sentenced to death 29 Oct over alleged 1971 war crimes.

- [“Bangladesh deploys thousands of police after war crimes death sentence”](#), *Guardian*, 29 Oct. 2014.

➔ **India (non-Kashmir)** Ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) 15 Oct won state elections in Maharashtra and Haryana. Three Maoists lynched by villagers in northern Andhra Pradesh 19 Oct, reportedly in retaliation for Maoist killing of suspected police informant.

- [“Modi’s BJP makes big gains in Indian state polls”](#), *Reuters*, 19 Oct. 2014.

⚠ **Kashmir** Hostilities across Line of Control (LoC) continued, often provoked by Pakistani military to provide cover for cross-border militant movement; at least 20 civilians reported killed. Indian govt 21 Oct warned continued violations would result in

“pain” for Pakistan. Fears hostile Indian rhetoric could further narrow options for Pakistani govt struggling with military to exercise control over India policy: Pakistani army general Raheel Sharif 18 Oct said lasting peace in region depends on “fair and just resolution” of Kashmir issue, reflecting continued military rejection of PM Sharif’s attempts to normalise relations with India through stronger economic ties. Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) Chief Minister Omar Abdullah 4 Oct said upcoming state elections should be delayed until residents have recovered from deadly Sept floods; election commission late Oct announced month-long five-phase election starting 25 Nov. Militant reported killed by security forces 3 Oct in Pulwama district; soldier killed in clash with militants 13 Oct in Kupwara district.

- [“India warns Pakistan of more pain in Kashmir fighting”](#), Reuters, 21 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Nepal** Political parties 17 Oct missed another deadline for reaching consensus on core issues in constitution drafting process, new deadline set for 1 Nov. Opposition United Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists (UCPN-M) held protests against alleged sidelining in drafting process; rejected ruling parties’ proposal to vote on disputed issues, called for consensus decision.

- [“CA gives CPDCC 12 more days to settle disputes”](#), Republica, 22 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Pakistan** Month saw anti-govt demonstrations in Islamabad lose momentum, attendance dwindle; protest leaders Imran Khan of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Tahirul Qadri of Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) mobilised rallies outside capital, including in Karachi, Lahore, smaller cities in Punjab; Qadri 22 Oct ended PAT protest in Islamabad. Demonstrations retained potential to undermine political stability: Supreme Court 15 Oct admitted appeal by PTI member to disqualify PM Sharif for lying to parliament despite lack of constitutional provision for such disqualification, apparently overstepping jurisdiction. PTI held govt responsible for failure to prevent seven deaths in stampede during PTI rally in Punjab’s Multan 10 Oct. Govt 17 Oct reportedly resumed talks with PAT over alleged June police killing of 14 PAT demonstrators in Lahore; Qadri 19 Oct declared settlement only possible if perpetrators hanged; left country 28 Oct after ending Islamabad sit-in, pledged to return mid-Nov. TTP spokesperson Shahidullah Shahid fired after declaring allegiance to Syria and Iraq-based jihadi group Islamic State along with five regional TTP commanders mid-month. Sectarian violence continued: six killed in Shia majority neighbourhood in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s Kohat district 4 Oct; six Hazara Shias killed in Quetta same day; another thirteen reported killed 23 Oct including nine Hazaras. Military continued operations in N Waziristan; mid- to late Oct conducted operations in Khyber Agency, claimed to have killed scores of militants, thousands of civilians fled fighting. U.S. increased drone strikes in S and N Waziristan: conducted nine strikes within one week starting 5 Oct, at least eight reported killed 6 Oct.

- [“Qadri supporters end Islamabad sit-in”](#), BBC, 22 Oct. 2014.

New Crisis Group Asia Report N°262, [Resetting Pakistan’s Relations with Afghanistan](#), 28 October 2014. As Pakistan seeks to consolidate its fragile democracy, it should seize the moment to improve relations with its Afghan neighbour. Its biggest challenge comes from within. The civilian government has to regain control over national security and foreign policy from the military.

➔ **Sri Lanka** Govt 20 Oct announced early presidential election for Jan 2015 in possible sign of President Rajapaksa's concern with waning popularity; Rajapaksa 24 Oct presented populist budget to parliament featuring tax reductions and increased subsidies, public sector jobs, salaries. Election announcement exacerbated strains in ruling United People Freedom Alliance (UPFA); coalition's left wing parties and Sinhala nationalist Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU) expressed opposition to move. JHU 14 Oct presented proposal for constitutional reforms including abolishment of executive presidency, threatened to campaign against Rajapaksa if proposal not implemented prior to election; JHU and UPFA leaders met 27 Oct to discuss proposal. Opposition remained in disarray despite signs of Rajapaksa's vulnerability: no consensus over joint candidate, political platform. Militant Buddhist Bodu Bala Sena (BBS) 5 Oct publicised constitutional reform platform: proposed making Sri Lanka Buddhist state, giving monks formal roles in governance. Military mid-month reimposed requirement that foreign passport holders receive prior permission before travelling to Northern Province; observers suspected restrictions targeted at UN OHCHR war crimes investigators. EU's General Court 16 Oct overturned on procedural grounds EU's 2006 listing of LTTE as terrorist organisation, maintained accompanying assets freeze.

- Alan Keenan, "[Rajapaksa 'politically vulnerable' ahead of early Sri Lanka polls](#)", In Pursuit of Peace, 28 October 2014.
- "[Sri Lanka calls early presidential elections](#)", BBC, 20 Oct. 2014.

South East Asia

➔ **Indonesia** Joko Widodo 17 Oct inaugurated as president; 26 Oct appointed country's first female FM, Retno Marsudi. Two French journalists, detained since August, sentenced to two and a half months in jail 21 Oct for reporting on Papua.

- "[French journalists jailed in Indonesia's Papua](#)", AP, 24 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Myanmar** Govt 1 Oct announced plan not to release sensitive census data on religion until 2016, after 2015 elections. 3,000 prisoners pardoned 7 Oct: small number of political prisoners among released including Rohingya activists. President Thein Sein 31 Oct hosted meeting between govt, military, parliament, political party representatives to discuss transition, national reconciliation; response to Aung San Suu Kyi request for quadripartite talks. Clashes reported early Oct in Shan state including two police wounded in 4 Oct bombing in Taunggyi. Court 25 Oct sentenced seven Rakhine men to seven years in jail over killing of ten Muslim pilgrims in 2012.

- "[Muslim activist released weeks after conviction](#)", *Myanmar Times*, 10 Oct. 2014.

New Crisis Group Asia Report N°261, [Myanmar: The Politics of Rakhine State](#), 22 October 2014. The highly volatile situation in Myanmar's Rakhine State adds dangerously to the country's political and religious tensions. Long-term, incremental solutions are critical for the future of Rakhine State and the country as a whole.

➔ **Philippines** Month saw signs of progress toward passing Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL): National Security Council 21 Oct proposed accelerating passage through Congress, said autonomy for Bangsamoro people would help calm radical ideology in Mindanao. Suspect in 2003 Awang, Maguindanao airport bombing and Feb 2005 Manila

bombing, Ricardo Ayeras, arrested 7 Oct; officials alleged arrest foiled plot to bomb Manila metro. Militant attacks continued throughout month: Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) 2 Oct killed one police, two soldiers in separate attacks in Datu Piang; two New People's Army militants killed 14 Oct in clash with army in Davao Occidental. Suspected Abu Sayyaf militants detonated two bombs in Basilan's Isabella City 17 Oct, no casualties; Abu Sayyaf 17 Oct released two Germans after 6 months captivity, reportedly in exchange for ransom; 13 other hostages remain. Seventeen police officers, among 196 accused of Nov 2009 massacre in Maguindanao, allowed to post bail 15 Oct. National Democratic Front-Philippines Negotiating Panel Chairperson Luis Jalandoni 20 Oct said high-level govt delegation set to discuss possible resumption of peace negotiations after collapse of talks in Feb 2013.

- ["Bangsamoro law will stop extremism in Mindanao"](#), Sun.Star, 21 Oct. 2014.

➔ **South China Sea** Tensions continued over competing claims to disputed territories. China continued land reclamation and construction projects: Chinese state media 7 Oct revealed completion of military airstrip on Woody Island in disputed Paracel Chain; Vietnam 9 Oct condemned move as violation of Vietnamese sovereignty. Chinese, Vietnamese representatives met in Nanning 9-10 Oct, discussed joint maritime development; Vietnamese Defence Minister Phung Quang Thanh 16-17 Oct met Chinese counterpart Chang Wanquan in Beijing, Vietnam said agreement reached on setting up emergency hotline to deal with maritime disputes. Taiwan 15 Oct said Chinese naval chief Wu Shengli visited disputed Paracels late Sept.

- ["China's airstrip in Paracels heightens Vietnam tensions"](#), Bloomberg, 10 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Thailand** Military junta continued to suppress dissent and move toward creating new constitution; membership of National Reform Council (NRC), responsible for proposing constitutional reform, announced 6 Oct, dominated by junta loyalists, opponents of former PM Thaksin Shinawatra. NRC 27 Oct voted down proposal to allot five seats on 36-member constitution drafting committee to non-NRC members. Govt 1 Oct approved economic stimulus package worth 364bn baht; 16 Oct yielded to demands from rubber farmers after threats to defy martial law and organise rallies, agreed to 8.5bn in subsidies. Prayuth Chan-ocha 9-10 Oct made first foreign visits as PM to Myanmar, 16-17 Oct visited Milan for Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). Southern insurgency continued: gunmen 2 Oct killed village headman in Pattani; one police killed by IED in Nong Chik district 3 Oct, Muslim villager killed in Mayo district same day.

- ["Outcry builds for NLA asset probe"](#), Bangkok Post, 7 Oct. 2014.

Pacific

➔ **Fiji** Australian FM Julie Bishop 31 Oct commenced two day visit to Fiji, same day announced Australian govt lifted all sanctions; U.S. Ambassador to Fiji Frankie Reed announced U.S. also lifted sanctions late-Oct.

- ["U.S. and Australia lift Fiji Sanctions"](#), AP, 31 Oct. 2014.

Europe and Central Asia

Balkans

➔ **Bosnia** General and presidential elections held 12 Oct in Republika Srpska and Federal entity. Electoral Commission 13 Oct announced preliminary presidential vote results: Bakir *Izetbegović* from Party of Democratic Action (SDA) elected Bosniak member of tripartite presidency; Dragan *Čović* of Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) elected Croat member; Mladen *Ivanić* of Party for Democratic Progress (PDP) elected Serb member. Initial results showed SDA with 28% majority in Federation entity. In Republika Srpska the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) won 33%, main rival Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) won approx 27% of vote; parties considering possible coalition partners.

- ["Bosniak party mulls options after Bosnia election win"](#), Balkan Insight, 15 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Kosovo** Political crisis over nomination of Assembly speaker continued, Assembly postponed early Oct following failure of ruling Democratic Party of Kosovo and opposition coalition to reach agreement. Court of Appeal 1 Oct rejected detention of 11 terrorism suspects including Imam of Pristina Grand Mosque; supporters say cleric arrested for political reasons. Calls for investigation following allegations of corruption in EU rule of law mission.

- ["Political deadlock continues in Kosovo"](#), b92, 7 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Serbia** EU late Oct ended sanctions on former Yugoslav President Milosevic, his family, other former Serbian officials. Albanian PM visited Belgrade 22 Oct for talks on situation of ethnic Albanians in Serbia areas bordering Kosovo, Macedonia.

- ["EU drops sanctions on Milosevic, family, associates"](#), RFE/RL, 28 Oct. 2014.

Caucasus

➔ **Armenia** President Sarkisian 10 Oct signed agreement to join Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) on 1 Jan 2015. Thousands same day rallied in Yerevan in anti-govt protests. Tens of thousands 24 Oct continued protests in Yerevan, called for early elections; early vote dismissed 27 Oct by PM Abrahamian. President Sarkisian 17 Oct delayed decision on constitutional reform citing need for additional discussion with political groups. CoE Commissioner for Human Rights Nils Muižnieks 9 Oct said efforts needed on gender equality, independence of judiciary. Large Russian military drills held 13-19 Oct at Kamkhud, Alagyaz training grounds; head of Russian air force 15 Oct said Russia will expand capacity of Erebuni airbase.

- ["Armenia signs up to Russian-led economic union"](#), RFE/RL, 10 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Azerbaijan** Rights crackdown continued: libel charges filed against journalist Khadija Ismayilova, prevented from leaving country 11 Oct; pretrial detention of rights activist Leyla Yunus extended 24 Oct to 28 Feb, lawyer 29 Oct reportedly barred from representing her, U.S. State Dept 16 Oct expressed concern over her health; journalist

Khalid Garayev 30 Oct sentenced to 25 day detention on vulgarity charge. Rasul Jafarov, rights activist detained since 2 Aug reportedly requested presidential pardon 16 Oct. U.S. State Dept 11 Oct said closure of NGO IREX in Azerbaijan would hurt democracy promotion efforts. CoE Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland 14 Oct called on authorities to release Ilgar Mammadov, detained since March 2013 for organising unrest. CoE Commissioner for Human Rights Nils Muižnieks 24 Oct urged govt to stop targeting human rights defenders. Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) 15 Oct expressed deep concern over rights record, demanded early review of membership status by Jan 2015. Four opposition activists pardoned and released by President Aliyev; welcomed by EU as “positive first step”. Thousands of National Council of Democratic Forces opposition supporters rallied in Baku 12 Oct demanded govt resignation, end to repression of human rights defenders, closer integration with EU. Cooperation plan signed 13 Oct between Russian and Azerbaijani defence ministries.

- [“Azerbaijan cracks down while chairing Council of Europe”](#), BBC News, 12 Oct. 2014.

➡ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** Two reportedly killed in clashes along front line 1, 9 Oct. Body of Armenian citizen Karen Petrosyan handed over by Azerbaijan authorities 10 Oct after ICRC mediation. Trial of two Azerbaijani citizens charged with murder, espionage, illegal border crossing, weapons possession began 27 Oct in NK. German FM Frank-Walter Steinmeier 23 Oct visited Baku, called for end to NK conflict. French President Hollande 27 Oct hosted talks in Paris between President Sarkisian and President Aliyev; Armenian FM Nalbandian 28 Oct said talks constructive, leaders discussed issues related to NK conflict including confidence building measures.

- [“Azerbaijan moderates stance at Paris Karabakh talks”](#), RFE/RL, 30 Oct. 2014.

➡ **Georgia** PM Garibashvili 16 Oct said govt attempts to improve bilateral relations with Moscow only achieved progress in economic sector, political relations not yet normalised. Draft law on integration between Abkhazia and Russia published 13 Oct; would give Russia complete control over key govt functions including military, security, borders, foreign policy. Greeted with rare criticism by Abkhaz politicians. Prosecutor’s office 28 Oct said five current and former senior military officials arrested for misuse of state funds. Former Defence Minister Bacho Akhalaia sentenced to 7.5 years imprisonment for torture; U.S. 23 Oct reiterated concern over prosecution of ex-Georgian officials.

- [“Tbilisi concerned over Kremlin-proposed Abkhazia pact”](#), RFE/RL, 15 Oct. 2014.

➡ **North Caucasus (Russia)** Five police killed, 12 injured in suicide bombing in Grozny, Chechnya, during the celebration of city day 5 Oct; alleged organiser of attack killed 18 Oct, relatives of alleged bomber and scores of young men reportedly detained. Continued violence in Dagestan including: seven militants killed 2 Oct in Vremenny village, Untsukul district; village isolated by security forces since 18 Sept, human rights groups report mass violations. Three suspected militants killed by police near Khedba village 8 Oct; three suspect militants killed in Derbent 16 Oct. Salafi leader kidnapped in Makhachkala 8 Oct, later appeared in police station prompting protests. Security operation launched 5 Oct in Baksansk district, Kabardino-Balkaria; three militants and police officer killed. Major protest rally demanding investigation into killing of local man in city hospital held 5 Oct in Mineralnye Vody, Stavropol Kray; several detained,

city mayor resigned. Parliament of Kabardino-Balkaria 9 Oct appointed Yury Kokov republican head.

- [“Three alleged militants killed in Russia’s North Caucasus”](#). RFE/RL, 24 Oct. 2014.

Eastern Europe

➔ **Belarus** President Lukashenka early Oct said ready to send peacekeeping forces to neighbouring Ukraine if necessary.

- [“Lukashenka ready to send Belarusian peacekeeping forces to Ukraine”](#), RFE/RL, 3 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Ukraine** Parliamentary elections held 26 Oct: pro-EU parties won significant majority. President Poroshenko’s bloc ended slightly behind PM Yatsenyuk’s bloc, third reformist group also did well. Poroshenko’s relatively poor showing seen as rebuke for failure to push ahead with reforms, connect with country. Govt mid-Oct passed initial package of anti-corruption laws, Lustration Law. Constant ceasefire violations in east since Sept ceasefire agreement: continued shelling, skirmishes around Donetsk airport, artillery strikes on outskirts of Donetsk city; armed clashes reported in parts of Donetsk and Luhansk. Ukraine, Russia and EU 30 Oct signed deal on resumption of Russian natural gas shipments to Ukraine, EU acted as guarantor for Kiev.

- [“Exit polls in Ukraine’s parliamentary elections show win for pro-Western blocs”](#), *Washington Post*, 26 Oct. 2014.

Western Europe/Mediterranean

➔ **Cyprus** After Italian-South Korean SAIPEM consortium began drilling for hydrocarbons off Cyprus coast, Turkey deployed warship to shadow activities; Cypriot FM Ionannis Kasoulides 6 Oct warned Turkish action would halt peace talks. Cypriot president Nicos Anastasiades 7 Oct announced unity talks suspended indefinitely in response to Turkey sending seismic survey ships to search for gas in disputed waters; Cypriot National Defence Minister Christoforos Fokaides 20 Oct said Turkish ship Barbaros entered Cypriot EEZ; EU 24 Oct urged Turkey to show restraint; tripartite meeting between Cyprus, Greece and Egypt 29 Oct called for end to Turkish gas survey in Cypriot waters. Turkish National Security Council 31 Oct decided to keep Barbaros in disputed waters.

- [“Gas stand-off strangling peace talks hopes”](#), Cyprus Mail, 26 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Turkey** Month saw govt-PKK peace process threatened by most violent street protests in decades, worst army-PKK clashes since March 2013 ceasefire: tensions followed advances by Islamic State (IS; formerly ISIL) militants toward Syrian Kurdish border town of Kobani (see [Syria](#)); Turkish troops prohibited PKK fighters from crossing border to aid fellow Kurds, fuelling violent clashes between protesters, police and Islamic groups in south-eastern Kurdish majority areas and major cities; at least 35 killed, military intervened to quell violence. PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan 2 Oct warned govt-PKK peace process would be derailed if IS took Kobani; parliament same day voted to expand authority to intervene militarily in Syria and Iraq, allow foreign troops to

operate on Turkish soil; later ruled out any unilateral military involvement. Turkey 29 Oct allowed ten Iraqi Kurdish peshmerga fighters to cross Turkish border into Syria; further contingent of 150 peshmerga troops to reinforce Kurds in Kobani; Syrian regime denounced move as violation of sovereignty. Several deadly clashes between PKK, army including: two police killed 9 Oct in Kurdish town of Bingöl; army air-strikes 13 Oct hit PKK positions near Hakkari following three days of PKK rocket fire; three PKK militants killed in clash with army near Kars after setting fire to power plant; three soldiers killed 25 Oct in Yüksekova by masked gunmen; body of executed pro-govt Kurdish militiaman found in Bitlis next day. President Erdogan 31 Oct said Kurdish peace talks to continue despite unrest. Turkey 16 Oct failed to win non-permanent UNSC seat, seen by observers as sign of growing international isolation.

- Hugh Pope, [“Border Patrol: Turkey Tries a New Tack on Its Southern Frontier”](#), In Pursuit of Peace, 3 October 2014.
- Hugh Pope, [“Why Syria’s Disaster Threatens a War in Turkey”](#), *Guardian*, 10 October 2014.
- [“Turkish forces hit PKK outposts as Syrian war fuels tensions”](#), *Financial Times*, 14 Oct. 2014.

Central Asia

➔ **Kazakhstan** Man sentenced in Almaty for allegedly propagating terrorism and religious extremism. President Nazarbayev 9 Oct signed Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with EU. Govt 15 Oct outlawed Islamic group Takfir wal-Hijra.

- [“EU, Kazakhstan forge closer ties as Nazarbaev visits”](#), RFE/RL, 9 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Kyrgyzstan** Amid rolling blackouts in Osh, Interior Minister Melis Turganbaev 2 Oct deployed armed public order units to Osh region. Five arrested 15 Oct during protest in Bishkek against energy price hikes. Authorities launched investigation following further reports Kyrgyz citizens fighting in Syria. President Atambayev 17 Oct suggested constitutional change to allow judicial reform prompting fears of additional changes. Respublika party 20 Oct merged with Ata Jurt nationalist party.

- [“Activists protesting energy price hikes detained in Bishkek”](#), RFE/RL, 15 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Tajikistan** Govt early Oct blocked websites, disabled SMS-messaging, deployed armoured vehicles to city gates ahead of planned opposition protest in Dushanbe 10 Oct; Supreme Court 9 Oct declared organiser “Group-24” extremist group. Interior Ministry spokesperson 18 Oct announced 13 Islamists returning from Syria detained for planned terror attack. High-ranking border officer arrested 22 Oct on drug trafficking accusations.

- [“What’s behind government’s heavy-handed protest response?”](#), Eurasianet, 14 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Turkmenistan** Authorities continued digging 5-meter trenches along Afghan border, installing barbed wires, fences. President Berdymukhammedov 23 Oct met with Uzbekistan counterpart, discussed Afghanistan security implications.

- [“Turkmenistan’s new afghan border policy”](#), RFE/RL, 10 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Uzbekistan** Russian news agency RIA Novosti 6 Oct claimed evidence Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan militant group working with Iraq's Islamic State.

- [“Does IS pose a threat to Central Asia?”](#), RFE/RL, 9 Oct. 2014.

Latin America

➡ **Colombia** Further negotiations on transitional justice and preliminaries on bilateral ceasefire opened 24 Oct; FARC 26 Oct proposed creation of “national census of victims” of armed conflict. Prior, FARC had reshuffled its delegation; newcomers include secretariat members Pastor Alape and Carlos Antonio Lozada. ELN 21 Oct released kidnapped local politician from Norte de Santander with message to govt to expedite talks after ELN commander Pablito 15 Oct said exploratory talks made little progress. ELN’s Central Command 20 Oct suggested negotiations would be held separately from FARC-govt talks. Ex-high commissioner for peace Frank Pearl withdrawn from Havana to focus on bringing ELN into process. Tensions between President Santos and ex-President Uribe continued: Uribe accused of hypocrisy over opposition to current negotiations after journalist 4 Oct published article documenting Uribe administration’s attempts to establish negotiations with FARC and ELN. Inspector General Ordóñez 23 Oct called for broad dialogue on peace process between govt, FARC and Uribe’s supporters. Santos agreed with Ordóñez’s three minimum conditions for viable peace: that FARC dissolves as criminal organisation after signing peace treaty, accepts its responsibility for numerous crimes, it attends to rights of victims. National Peace Council 8 Oct held first session since disbanded in 2002, composed of representatives from civil society organisations, indigenous peoples, Catholic Church, govt.

- Javier Ciurlizza, [“Justicia debida y paz anhelada en Colombia”](#), El Colombiano, 11 October 2014.
- [“Revelan que gobierno de Alvaro Uribe usó recursos públicos para acercarse a las FARC”](#), El Nuevo Herald, 12 Oct. 2014.

➡ **Guatemala** Constitutional Court 9 Oct suspended Supreme and Appellate Court judge swearing-in ceremonies to consider legal challenges to process; 18 Oct opened 8-day period for groups questioning selection process to present evidence of irregularities. Appellate court judge Claudia Escobar resigned 5 Oct, denounced political interference in judicial selection process, provided evidence of bribery attempt against ruling Patriot Party congressman Gudy Rivera; Rivera denied accusations, threatened legal action. Supreme Court 29 Oct filed injunction against President Molina and Finance Minister Dorval Carias over financial mismanagement including lack of funds in state institutions, inability to pay civil service salaries. Molina 15 Oct said Guatemala may ease punishments for minor narcotics-related offenses, exploring regulated production of marijuana and opium poppies for medical use.

- [“Magistrada renuncia a elección y denuncia anomalías en proceso de postulación”](#), Prensa Libre, 5 Oct. 2014.

⚡ **Mexico** Federal authorities 19 Oct took over policing in thirteen municipalities in Guerrero and Mexico states. In Guerrero, federal forces, local police continued to search mountains for 43 students who disappeared 26 Sept from Iguala town after being arrested by police allegedly in league with organised crime; authorities discovered 11 mass graves with 38 bodies, identification ongoing. 36 local police, dozens others including members of criminal group Guerreros Unidos arrested; Guerrero governor resigned, authorities 22 Oct issued arrest warrants for Iguala mayor, wife and police chief. Case sparked protests, condemnation by human rights organisations, accusa-

tions govt response too slow: thousands 17 Oct demonstrated peacefully in Acapulco; protesters 22 Oct set fire to Iguala's city hall. Six killed, four arrested in clash between army and civilians in Luvianos State 30 Oct. Govt 1 Oct announced Héctor Beltrán Leyva, reported leader of Beltrán Leyva cartel, arrested; Vicente Carrillo Fuentes, "The Viceroy", reported leader of Juárez cartel, arrested 9 Oct. Nineteen suspected cartel gunmen killed 21 Oct by police in Tamaulipas state. Two gunmen 11 Oct killed local activist Atilano Román Tirado in Sinaloa state; physician who tweeted updates about criminal violence kidnapped and killed 15 Oct in Tamaulipas state.

- ["Oficial: 11 fosas y 38 cadáveres hallados en Guerrero"](#), Aristegui Noticias, 25 Oct. 2014.

↓ **Venezuela** MP for ruling PSUV party Robert Serra and assistant murdered 1 Oct; President Maduro accused national opposition parties then group of Colombian paramilitaries of killing Serra; media reported criminal gang perpetrators; several arrested. Police and pro-govt "colectivos" militia Shield of the Revolution clashed in Caracas 8 Oct after detectives from judicial police (CICPC) raided building run by militia; 5 militiamen killed; former policeman and leader of group of "5 th of March" colectivo José Odreman shot dead. Interior Justice Minister Rodríguez Torres, accused by collectives of ordering Odreman's assassination, dismissed 24 Oct; colectivos subsequently called for National Assembly president's dismissal, threatened regime. Maduro 28 Oct announced creation of Presidential Commission for transformation of police, additional measures to transform armed forces. Economy further deteriorated with rapid fall in oil prices raising possibility of default on country's external debt. Process of appointing Supreme Court judges and electoral authority board members moved forward with formation of nominations committees 30 Sept, 14 Oct, complaints they are dominated by members of ruling PSUV.

- ["Venezuela: Maduro da nombres de supuestos autores materiales del homicidio de Robert Serra"](#), BBC Mundo, 15 Oct. 2014.
- For latest briefing, see Crisis Group Latin America Briefing N°31, [Venezuela: Dangerous Inertia](#), 23 September 2014.

Middle East & North Africa

Eastern Mediterranean

➔ **Israel-Palestine** Month saw several clashes between Israeli police, Palestinian protesters seeking to prevent entry of religious Jews to Jerusalem's Holy Esplanade following escalation during July-Aug fighting in Gaza; Jerusalem mayor late Oct said monthly incidents of public disorder rose from 200 before Gaza conflict to 5,000 during and after. Israeli authorities 30 Oct closed Holy Esplanade to all visitors following police killing of Palestinian; Palestinian President Abbas said move "tantamount to declaration of war", authorities lifted closure later same day, retained tight security. Closure followed increase in tensions during early to mid-Oct Jewish holiday of Sukkoth; strict entry limitations for Muslims in reaction to violent protests, unprecedentedly strong call from Abbas and Hamas leader Khaled Meshal to defend al-Aqsa mosque. Norwegian sponsors of 12 Oct donor conference on Gaza reconstruction announced pledge of \$5.4bn over three years; roughly half for PA, apparently including regular PA aid. Israel took initial steps toward easing restrictions on Gaza including limited easing of movement by Gazans to Israel and W Bank, permitting entry of some reconstruction materials directed to Gaza warehouses pending implementation of monitoring mechanisms. Egyptian govt late Oct postponed indirect Israeli-Palestinian talks in Cairo following declaration of state of emergency in Sinai (see [Egypt](#)). Several deadly incidents reported in Jerusalem, W Bank including two Israeli citizens, Palestinian driver killed in vehicular attack on pedestrians in E Jerusalem 23 Oct; Palestinian boy shot dead by Israeli forces during clash with residents in W Bank village of Silwad next day.

- Nathan Thrall, "[Israeli Fears of Palestinian Recognition are Unwarranted](#)", *New York Times*, 16 October 2014.
- "[Clashes erupt as Israeli police kill Palestinian suspected of shooting Jewish far-rightist](#)", Reuters, 30 Oct. 2014.

New Crisis Group Middle East Briefing Report N°42, [Toward a Lasting Ceasefire in Gaza](#), 23 October 2014. To achieve a durable ceasefire, not only must Israel significantly change its policy toward Gaza, but, no less importantly, Hamas and the Palestine Liberation Organisation must take further steps to implement their reconciliation agreement in order to enable reconstruction and stabilise daily life in the Strip.

New Crisis Group Middle East Report N°156, [Bringing back the Palestinian Refugee Question](#), 9 October 2014. With Palestinians increasingly doubtful that the refugee question can be resolved within a two-state framework, the Palestinian leadership should seek to reinvigorate refugee communities as well as to reclaim its representation of them. When diplomacy emerges from its hiatus, the leadership will be able to negotiate and implement a peace agreement only if it wins refugees' support or at least acquiescence.

⚡ **Lebanon** Continued fighting between Syrian rebels and Hizbollah, Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) in north-eastern border areas: Jabhat al-Nusra (JN) attacks on Hizbollah strongholds geographically expanded war of attrition between parties, dozens reported killed 5 Oct in Shiite town of Britel. Clashes between LAF and Sunni mili-

tants in Tripoli intensified, including scores reported killed late Oct; fighting expanded to towns in Akkar and Dinniyeh region, LAF carried out raids, arrested tens of alleged “terrorists” in north, Saida and Beirut. Political factions repeatedly declared support for army despite numerous reports of indiscriminate crackdown on Islamist militants and Syrian refugees. Social affairs minister Rashid Derbas 20 Oct warned govt will soon adopt policy halting further refugee inflows from Syria.

- [“Guns fall silent in Lebanon's Tripoli as army moves in”](#), Reuters, 27 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Syria** U.S.-led airstrikes expanded despite continued lack of coherent strategy; over 500 jihadis, dozens of civilians reported killed since late Sept. U.S. mid-month increased air support for Kurdish forces, anti-regime rebels defending Kurdish city of Kobani after media uproar over attempts by Islamic State (IS; formerly ISIL) militants to capture city; U.S. failed to strike IS fighters heading to Kobani in preceding days, downplayed battle’s importance. U.S. escalated pressure on Turkey to increase cooperation with anti-IS coalition; Turkey resisted, citing need for U.S. to address continued rule of President Assad. Turkey renewed calls for no-fly zone in northern Syria, blocked fighters and weapons from crossing border to assist Kurdish forces in Kobani before allowing up to 200 Kurdish peshmerga fighters equipped with heavy weapons to travel from northern Iraq to Kobani late month. U.S. commitment of resources toward moderate rebels remained limited despite rhetoric; rebels complained of inability to launch offensives against IS without increased U.S. support for fight against regime. Regime bombardment of anti-IS rebels continued in support of advances in Aleppo and Damascus suburbs; dozens reported killed in bombing of IDP camp in Idlib province 29 Oct. Regime 23 Oct recaptured central town of Morek in Hama province. Clashes between regime and IS fighters continued including scores reported killed in IS attack on regime-held gas field east of Homs 28 Oct. More than 40 children reported killed in twin suicide bombings targeting primary school in regime-controlled Homs city 1 Oct.

- Peter Harling, [“What lies behind the ‘Islamic State’ threat”](#), In Pursuit of Peace, 2 October 2014.
- [“U.S.-led air strikes killed 521 fighters, 32 civilians in Syria: monitor”](#), Reuters, 23 Oct. 2014.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°155, [Rigged Cars and Barrel Bombs: Aleppo and the State of the Syrian War](#), 9 September 2014.

Gulf

➔ **Bahrain** Several opposition groups, including main opposition al-Wefaq, 11 Oct announced boycott of Nov parliamentary elections. Court 28 Oct suspended al-Wefaq’s activities for three months; authorities said implementation awaiting completion of group’s general conference where alleged violations could be addressed; al-Wefaq spokesman said conference to be held within two months. Crackdown on anti-govt activists continued, including prominent activist Nabeel Rajab arrested 1 Oct for allegedly insulting state institutions.

- [“Bahraini opposition group suspended for three months”](#), Reuters, 29 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Iran** Nuclear talks between Iran and P5+1 continued in Vienna 15-17 Oct, including trilateral meeting between U.S. Sec State Kerry, Iranian FM Zarif and EU HR/VP Ashton; little progress reported despite impending 24 Nov deadline for reaching comprehensive agreement. IAEA and Iran 7-8 Oct held technical meetings in Tehran; IAEA suggested little progress made, Iran refused to issue visa for U.S. member of IAEA team. Two workers killed in 5 Oct explosion at Parchin military complex; site suspected of housing military nuclear research, raising suspicions of covert action. Several deadly incidents reported in Sistan and Balochistan province including three police, one border guard killed by suspected Sunni militants in 9 Oct bomb blast near eastern city of Saravan; two border guards reported killed in shootout along Pakistani border 16 Oct.

- ["U.N. nuclear chief suggests progress slow in Iran investigation"](#), Reuters, 20 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Iraq** Islamic State (IS; formerly ISIL) militants advanced in western province Anbar including around provincial capital Ramadi, mid-month seized town of Heet displacing up to 180,000 people according to UN. Provincial officials appealed for urgent military assistance, warned of potential fall of province; hundreds reported killed, including more than 200 anti-IS Sunni tribesmen executed late Oct. U.S.-led aerial campaign against IS continued: Kurdish forces reportedly gained ground against IS in north under cover of airstrikes, including seizing town of Zumar 25 Oct; govt forces, Shiite militias same day seized town of Jurf al-Sakhar near Baghdad, hundreds of casualties reported. Month saw increasing criticism of new PM Haider al-Abadi's policies: Abadi early Oct established National Defence Guard, tasked with fighting IS using locally stationed Sunni recruits, adding another layer to malfunctioning security apparatus; move opposed by political factions advocating reliance on Shiite militias. Abadi's efforts to rebuild army criticised as insufficient following late Sept disbandment of office of Commander in Chief of Armed Forces, dominated by high-ranking loyalists of former PM Maliki; critics warned firing Maliki-loyalists insufficient, new meritocratic appointment-mechanism required. Abadi 18 Oct appointed State of Law coalition MP Salem al-Ghabban as interior minister, Sunni MP from Mosul Khaled al-Obeidi as defence minister, signalling U.S.-Iran compromise. Hundreds reported killed in suicide bombings, other deadly attacks targeting mainly Shiite neighbourhoods in and around Baghdad throughout month.

- ["Iraqi city falls to ISIL as army withdraws"](#), Al Jazeera, 14 Oct. 2014.

⚠️ **Yemen** Huthi fighters continued to advance following mid-Sept seizure of Sanaa, bringing country's political transition to brink of collapse despite nominal political process established through late Sept UN-brokered peace and power-sharing agreement. Huthis consolidated power in north, took control of large parts of Red Sea Coast including strategic port of Hodeidah 14 Oct; met with little resistance, at times facilitation, from govt and local population. Huthi expansion into central provinces met with resistance from supporters of Sunni Islamist party Islah, Ansar al-Sharia affiliates and al-Qaeda (AQAP); hundreds reported killed including over 250 in Baydah province. AQAP 9 Oct killed at least 47 in suicide attack targeting Huthi gathering in Sanaa. Huthis continued working with military and police to secure Sanaa, raided homes and offices of political enemies; supporters acted as shadow govt overseeing decisions of cabinet ministers. President Hadi 26 Oct criticized Huthi expansion, called for withdrawal from newly acquired territories including Sanaa. Hadi 13 Oct appointed

broadly accepted candidate for PM, country's UN representative Khalid Bahah, following criticism of previous nominee by Huthis and General People's Congress; new cabinet yet to be formed. Huthis 31 Oct held tribal gathering in Sanaa, gave Hadi 10-day deadline to form govt. Southern separatists renewed call for independence, tens of thousands demonstrated in Aden and Mukullah 14 Oct; movement's representatives gave govt until 30 Nov to remove all employees and security forces from south, demanded international oil companies halt exports until revenues redirected to new southern state.

- ["Al Qaeda militants push back Shi'ite rebels' advance on central Yemen stronghold"](#), Reuters, 25 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Saudi Arabia** Prominent Shiite cleric Nimr al-Nimr sentenced to death 15 Oct on protest-related charges; two other Shiite protesters sentenced to death 21 Oct.

- ["Saudi sentences two more to death for Shiite protests"](#), AFP, 22 Oct. 2014.

North Africa

➔ **Algeria** Army 10 Oct claimed to have killed five militants in retaliation for Sept beheading of French tourist. Three police killed by militants 16 Oct in Zemmoura, Relizane province. Hundreds of riot control police mid-Oct demonstrated in Algiers, southern town Ghardaia against poor working conditions in defiance of anti-protest law; protests followed several police injuries sustained during violent clashes between Arabs, Berbers in Ghardaia.

- ["Algeria claims five jihadists killed in hunt for French tourist's killer"](#), RFI, 11 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Egypt** Scores killed in clashes between army and militants in Sinai, including 31 soldiers 24 Oct: govt declared three-month state of emergency in north and central Sinai, closed border with Gaza and evacuated 1,100 residents along border to create buffer zone; 26 Oct postponed indirect talks between Israel, Palestinian factions, scheduled to begin in Cairo late month, in reaction to attacks. Gaza reconstruction conference 12–13 Oct, co-hosted in Cairo by Egypt and Norway, trumpeted as sign of Egypt's return to world stage in local media following similar reporting around President Sisi's late Sept attendance of UNGA and meeting with U.S. President Obama. Renewed protests on university campuses across country beginning 11 Oct: several clashes between students and police including 149 students arrested over first three days of protests; student died following clashes at Alexandria University, eleven injured in bomb blast outside Cairo University 22 Oct. Twelve reported injured in bomb blast near Cairo courthouse 14 Oct; several bombings in northern city Tanta during Sufi religious festival 16 Oct, no casualties.

- ["Egypt, after Sinai attacks, postpones talks on Gaza's future"](#), Reuters, 26 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Libya** Military and political crisis continued despite repeated UN calls for cease-fire: anti-Islamist militia coalition led by Zintan-based groups, rebranded as "tribal army", attacked western Jebel Nefusa towns allied to Islamist leaning coalition Libya Dawn, at least 21 reported killed. Fighting continued in Benghazi: groups allied to general Khalifa Haftar clashed with Islamist rivals, including 22 reported killed 15 Oct during Haftar's seizure of Ansar al-Sharia base; at least 130 reported killed across city

over following ten days. Tobruk-based internationally recognised parliament, House of Representatives (HoR), 19 Oct formally aligned with Haftar: HoR spokesman Farraj Hasshem described Haftar's "Operation Dignity" against Islamists as Libyan army operation despite reports most Haftar fighters young tribesmen with no military background, allegations of abuses including summary executions of captive Islamists and their families. UNSG Ban 11 Oct visited Tripoli, urged peace talks; condemned both Haftar and Ansar al-Sharia. Prime minister of Islamist-supported parallel govt in Tripoli, Omar al-Hasi, 21 Oct held first public diplomatic meeting with Turkish envoy. Egyptian airstrikes reportedly struck Islamist forces in Benghazi 15 Oct, Egypt denied involvement; HoR member Tareq al-Garrouchi alleged planes were Egyptian, pilots Libyan.

- ["Libya parliament allies with renegade general, struggles to assert authority"](#), Reuters, 20 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Mauritania** Security forces 12 Oct arrested four with suspected links to Islamic State (IS; formerly ISIL) in town of Zouérate. Govt reportedly closed border with Mali late Oct to block spread of Ebola.

- ["Mauritania uncovers ISIS cell"](#), Magharebia, 15 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Morocco** Several suspected Islamic State (IS; formerly ISIL) sympathisers arrested throughout month, including two in Casablanca 15 Oct. Govt accused Algerian border forces of shooting at Moroccan civilians 18 Oct; Algerian govt denied charge. Govt 25 Oct revealed new national anti-terror plan coordinating police, gendarmerie, army, and auxiliary forces.

- ["Morocco cracks down on ISIS"](#), Magharebia, 17 Oct. 2014.

➔ **Tunisia** Secular party Nida Tounes won 27 Oct parliamentary elections with 39% of votes, Islamist An-Nahda party second with 32%; drawn-out process of forming coalition majority expected as Nida Tounes considers national unity govt with An-Nahda or narrower secular coalition. Days preceding elections remained calm despite fears of attacks by militants, deepening divisions in secular political camp; An-Nahda party remained unified, reiterated determination not to field candidate for late Nov presidential election. Govt 23 Oct decided to close Libya border crossings of Ras Jedir, Dhehiba during polls as part of tightened security measures against spillover from Libya crisis; 70,000 security forces deployed during same period. Several suspected militants arrested including 30 in Oued Ellil town late Oct; six suspected militants, one police killed during police raid in Oued Ellil 24 Oct.

- ["Border posts of Ras Jedir and Dhehiba to be closed on 24, 25 and 26 October"](#), Tunis Afrique Presse, 24 Oct. 2014.

New Crisis Group Middle East and North Africa Briefing N°41, [Tunisia's Border \(II\): Terrorism and Regional Polarisation](#), 20 October 2014. The growing link between cartels and armed jihadi militants along Tunisia's borders with Algeria and Libya, combined with heightened ideological polarisation, could form an explosive mix ahead of Tunisia's legislative and presidential elections.
