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April 2013 Trends



Deteriorated Situations

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Republic (p.2) Venezuela (p.9)
Iraq (p.10)



Improved Situations

Kosovo (p.7)
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May 2013 Watchlist



Conflict Risk Alerts

Guinea-Bissau (p.4)
Iraq (p.10)



Conflict Resolution Opportunities

Colombia (p.8)

CrisisWatch

- summarises briefly developments during the previous month in some 70 situations of current or potential conflict, listed alphabetically by region, providing references and links to more detailed information sources (all references mentioned are hyperlinked in the electronic version of this bulletin);
- assesses whether the overall situation in each case has, during the previous month, significantly deteriorated, significantly improved, or on balance remained more or less unchanged;
- alerts readers to situations where, in the coming month, there is a particular risk of new or significantly escalated conflict, or a particular conflict resolution opportunity (noting that in some instances there may in fact be both); and

- summarises Crisis Group's reports and briefing papers that have been published in the last month.

CrisisWatch is compiled by Crisis Group's Brussels Research Unit, drawing on multiple sources including the resources of our some 140 staff members across five continents, who already report on some 60 of the situations listed here. Comments and suggestions can be sent to crisiswatch@crisisgroup.org.

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Central Africa

➡ **Burundi** National Assembly and Senate 29 April finished drafting controversial draft media law widely condemned as restrictive by press, UN, opposition and civil society. President Nkurunziza 9-12 April visited Iran, discussed economic support. Nkurunziza 13 April addressed ruling party leaders, warned against factionalism.

- [“L'ONU plaide pour une loi sur la presse aux ‘standards internationaux’”](#), PANA, 25 April 2013.

➡ **Cameroon** Govt 14 April held first-ever senatorial election; ruling party won 56 of 70 seats. Authorities 19 April announced release of French family abducted Feb by Nigerian Islamist sect Boko Haram reportedly in exchange for \$3.15m ransom and release of sect members imprisoned in Cameroon. Insecurity in east continued following early 2013 influx of refugees from CAR. Cameroon gendarmes 2 April launched “police action” in oil-rich Bakassi peninsula, ceded by Nigeria to Cameroon after ICJ ruling in 2002; 11 killed, some 1,800 displaced. Reasons for action unclear; Nigerian vowed to respond to attack.

- [“Nigerian Islamists got \\$3.15 million to free French hostages”](#), Reuters, 26 April 2013.

➡ **Central African Republic** Security significantly deteriorated in Bangui following 24 March coup by rebel group Seleka toppling Bozizé regime as capital experienced bank robberies, killings, and systematic looting of private houses and ministries; at least 130 people reportedly killed by Seleka in Bangui since coup. Regional leaders 3 April met in Chad, called for new transitional body to be established and elections to be held within 18 months. South Africa withdrew troops from CAR. Seleka leader Michel Djotodia elected interim president 13 April by new national transitional council. Regional summit in N’Djamena 18 April recognised Djotodia as transitional head of govt, re-launched Libreville agreement steering committee, and resolved to quadruple regional peacekeeping force in CAR to 2,000 troops. PM Tiangaye late April visited Brussels, Paris and Pretoria in effort to raise funds, end CAR isolation and rebuild diplomatic contacts; South African president Zuma 29 April said South Africa supports transitional govt.

- [“Sommet de la CEEAC sur la Centrafrique: Nicolas Tiangaye conforté, la FOMAC étoffée”](#), RFI, 19 April 2013.

➡ **Chad** Ndjamena 3, 18 April hosted regional summits on CAR; CAR ex-president Bozizé mid-April said arms used by Seleka rebels “transited through Chad with permission of President Déby”. President Déby 15 April announced troop withdrawal from Mali following killing of 3 Chadian soldiers in suicide bombing in Kidal; French Defence Minister Le Drian April 27 met Déby in N’Djamena, said France would support Chad’s request to command UN peacekeeping mission in Mali. President Déby 27 April said Chadian mercenaries have set up training camps in Libya, Libya denied.

- [“President says Libya harbors Chadian mercenaries”](#), Reuters, 27 April 2013.

➡ **Democratic Republic of the Congo** Authorities announced assassination plot against President Kabila foiled 17 April. Talks between M23 and govt remain stalled; M23 rebels 12 April warned of repris-

als if attacked by 3,069-strong UN intervention force expected to deploy late April; UN 25 April appointed Brazilian General dos Santos Cruz head of MONUSCO. Govt 5 April authorised controversial ban on exports of non-processed copper and iron; mineral-rich Katanga province rejected ban. 12 senior army officers suspended 11 April following UN probe into mass rape allegations.

- [“RDC: le M23 se renforce et se prépare à affronter la Monusco”](#), *Jeune Afrique*, 18 April 2013.

➡ **Rwanda** Rwanda 1 April took chair of UNSC; FM Mushikiwabo expressed reservations over UN intervention in DRC, 15 April said Rwanda preferred political over military solution. Opposition leader Victoire Ingabire 16 April began appeal to Supreme Court challenging Oct 2012 genocide denial conviction.

- [“Internal political shifts in Rwanda triggered by returning diaspora politicians”](#), African Arguments, 16 April 2013.

Horn of Africa

➡ **Eritrea** Air Force pilot defected to Saudi Arabia early April during assignment to retrieve presidential jet left in Jizan airport in Oct 2013 by two defecting Eritrean pilots. CAR ex-president Bozizé mid-April accused Eritrean govt of arming Seleka rebels in CAR; govt denied. UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Eritrea 14 April said authorities failed to cooperate, refused her entry into country.

- [“UN Special Rapporteur blocked from entering Eritrea”](#), Sudan Tribune, 14 April 2013.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°200, [Eritrea: Scenarios for Future Transition](#), 28 March 2013.

➡ **Ethiopia** PM Dessalegn late April announced withdrawal of troops from Somalia, expressed concern over pace of Somalia’s transition. Dessalegn 18 April met with EU president, discussed human rights, 20 April denied reports of large-scale govt land-grabbing. Govt 30 April reaffirmed willingness to hold talks with Eritrea on border dispute.

- [“Ethiopian PM denies land-grab allegations”](#), Sudan Tribune, 20 April 2013.

➡ **Kenya** Uhuru Kenyatta inaugurated as president 9 April after winning March elections; Supreme Court 16 April confirmed validity of election. Amani coalition dissolved after several members left to align with ruling Jubilee coalition. Kenyatta’s trial at ICC for role in 2007 post-election violence still scheduled to begin July. Kenyatta 23 April unveiled choices for PM, health, information, finance ministers. 10 killed in gun attack in Garissa town 18 April; at least 10 police officers and chiefs in NE region suspended for alleged involvement in illegal activities, links to criminal entities behind killings in Garissa.

- [“Controversy as Kenya salutes Uhuru Kenyatta as new leader”](#), *Guardian*, 9 April 2013.

➡ **Somalia** Series of Al-Shabaab suicide attacks in Mogadishu 14 April: over 35 killed, dozens injured in attack on Supreme Court compound; car bomb targeting Turkish/AU convoy on road to airport killed 4. Deputy chief prosecutor assassinated 24 April. Journalist shot dead 21 April in Mogadishu. Army 21 April carried out several operations in Bakool region, reportedly seizing Hudur and Garas Weyne towns from Al-Shabaab. AMISOM 3

April announced 241km route from Mogadishu to Baidoa clear for civilian use. President Sheikh 8 April admitted for first time involvement of security forces in violence against civilians. U.S. President Obama 8 April authorised provision of arms to Somalia, following March UNSC partial lifting of arms embargo. Reports of Al-Shabaab leadership struggle continued: founding member Ibrahim al-Afghani in 12 April open letter to al-Qaeda leader Al-Zawahiri said Al-Shabaab facing strong internal discontent, opponents of Al-Shabaab leader Ahmed Abdi Godane often killed or imprisoned. Al-Shabaab 20 April said 127 “govt spies” killed since beginning of 2013.

- [“Somalia’s peace: Running on empty?”](#), Al Jazeera, 16 April 2013.

➡ **Somaliland** President Silanyo and Somalia President Sheikh 14 April met in Turkey, signed communiqué vowing to meet again in 3 months to discuss improving relations. Upper House 15 April extended Lower House term to July 2015 due to failure to enact election law, postponed elections for Upper House due in May 2014 to July 2016; terms already extended in 2010. Clan militia 16 April attacked Ainabo prison freeing clan leaders, police chief and 2 officers reportedly killed in gunfight.

- [“Somaliland regional parliament extends lower house term”](#), Sabahi, 16 April 2013.

➡ **South Sudan** Talks with Sudan 23-25 April resulted in agreement to open or reopen 10 border corridors, establish Joint Security Committee (JSC) to deal with rebel demands and other disputes; UNSG Ban welcomed direct talks and agreements. Oil production resumed 7 April following March agreement. Clashes in Jonglei continued; a dozen people killed in attack on UNMISS peacekeepers 9 April including 5 UN troops, both SPLA and Yau Yau rebels denied responsibility; UNMISS deployed additional forces to region. SPLA soldier and 3 rebels killed in attack on Pibor town by Yau Yau rebels 30 April. SSLA rebels surrendered 26 April following govt announcement of presidential amnesty. Over 20 killed mid-April in clashes in Eastern Equatoria, including 4 medical staff reportedly killed by security forces.

- [“South Sudan restarts oil production”](#), Al Jazeera, 6 April 2013.

➡ **Sudan** Talks with South Sudan 23-25 April resulted in agreement to open or reopen 10 border corridors (see S Sudan). Govt talks with SPLM-N rebels began 24 April, broke down 26 April as parties unable to agree “declaration of common intent” presented by AU. Rebels 27 April took town of Umm Ruwaba, N Kordofan; govt swiftly retook town, 29 April called on SPLM-N to stop attacks, return to talks. Increased insecurity in Darfur: govt signed peace deal with JEM splinter faction led by Mohammed Bashir 6 April; fighting erupted between JEM and Bashir’s splinter faction 20 April killing JEM-Bashir commander Saleh Mohammed Jerbo, indicted by ICC for war crimes. Central Reserve Police paramilitaries in West Darfur reportedly mutinied 21 April. Govt forces clashed with SLA-Minni Minawi (SLA-MM) in east Darfur early April; 7 soldiers captured by SLA-MM released 21 April. UNAMID peacekeeper killed 17 April in southern Darfur by suspected pro-govt militiaman, govt denied link. President Bashir 1 April agreed to free political prisoners; Human Rights Watch 23 April said though 24 released, over 100 remain detained. Court 25 April sentenced 6 intelligence officers up to 8 years’ prison for role in 2012 coup attempt.

- [“African Union brings Sudan, rebels together for peace talks”](#), Reuters, 25 April 2013.

Southern Africa

➡ **Comoros** Authorities 20-21 April foiled coup attempt, said President Dhoinine narrowly escaped assassination. Security forces arrested dozen suspects including son of former president Abderemane, Chadian/Congolese mercenaries.

- [“Tentative de coup d’Etat déjouée”](#), RFI, 22 April 2013.

➡ **Madagascar** Malagasy Council of Churches (FFKM) 18 April launched national dialogue involving 180 political parties and entities to solve political crisis; UN, AU criticised FFKM mediation for broaching idea of postponing elections on first day of dialogue. Newly-created National Council for Reconciliation 10 April named General Rabotoarison to lead reconciliation efforts. Mouvanca Ravalomanana coalition 14 April announced nomination of former first lady Lalao Ravalomanana as candidate for upcoming presidential elections; President Rajoelina’s Tanora malaGasy Vonona (TGV) party 6 April nominated outsider Edgard Razafindravahy as candidate. Head of gendarmerie said security forces need €2.5 million to ensure peaceful elections.

- [“L’UA farouchement opposée à une remise en cause du processus électoral”](#), RFI, 24 April 2013.

➡ **Malawi** President Banda 3 April said country will refer border dispute with Tanzania over Lake Malawi/Nyasa to ICJ; stated SADC mediation by chairman of Former African Heads of State and Government Forum Joaquim Chissano compromised, accused Executive Secretary John Tesha of leaking Malawian documents to Tanzania. Govt subsequently committed to mediation process with Forum.

- [“Lake Malawi dispute: Mbeki, Mogae join mediation team”](#), *Malawi Today*, 10 April 2013.

➡ **Mozambique** Month saw increased fears of return to civil strife and possible armed conflict as tensions between Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) and Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO)-led govt continued to escalate. RENAMO members 4 April attacked police command post in Muxungué town, Manica, just hours after police raided group’s office with tear gas and arrested 15 leaders; at least 5 dead, including RENAMO commander and police officer. Attacks on South African passenger bus and fuel tanker 6 April left 3 dead; RENAMO denied responsibility.

- [“Political violence rises”](#), Reuters, 5 April 2013.

➡ **Zimbabwe** Battles to succeed President Mugabe within ZANU-PF party intensified, with VP Mujuru and Defence Minister Mnangagwa still seen as main contenders: in swing province Manicaland, local leaders expressed vote of no confidence in Mujuru ally Dydmus Mutasa, while arrest of provincial chair Mike Madiro for alleged fraud and theft sparked rumours he was targeted because of his support for Mnangagwa. EU suspended sanctions against 81 ZANU-PF officials, leaving just 10 on list, citing adoption of new constitution as significant step. Continued concerns over lack of funding for elections scheduled for 29 June, budgeted at \$132m; ZANU-PF mid-month rejected UN needs assessment mission claiming it overstepped mandate by including security-related concerns and requesting meetings with civil society. Heightened tension within unity govt and clampdowns on civil society further exacerbated fears elections will not be credible.

- [“Zimbabwe heading for peaceful 2013 Elections?”](#), SW Radio Africa, 23 April 2013.

West Africa

 **Côte d'Ivoire** Municipal and regional elections held 21 April despite Ivorian Popular Front (FPI) boycott and 36% turnout; independent candidates came first with 34% of local council seats, ahead of RDR (30%) and PDCI (23%), though most independent candidates from RDR ruling party. Countrywide clashes began 22 April, including between supporters of ruling coalition members Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI) and Rally of the Republicans (RDR), particularly in Yamoussoukro, Mankono, Bonon, Lakota, Kouamassi and Adjamé communes of Abidjan. Unidentified gunmen attacked police station in Abidjan 9 April. UN Group of Experts report late April accused former FN rebels of involvement in trafficking of cacao and other resources.

- Rinaldo Depagne, "La Côte d'Ivoire a disparu des radars, pourtant rien n'y est réglé", Rue 89, 16 April 2013.
- "Violences en Côte d'Ivoire: le gouvernement appelle au calme", RFI, 24 April 2013.

 **Guinea** Tensions over proposed date for legislative polls and revision of electoral lists continued: govt, opposition agreed over UNSG Ban's designation of SRSG for West Africa Saïd Djinnit as facilitator. President Condé 13 April announced 30 June poll date, electoral commission resumed operations despite ongoing dialogue. Opposition 18 April marched in Conakry to protest govt's attitude, lack of dialogue and agreement concerning electoral preparations; at least 15 injured in clashes with police, 7 arrested including 2 opposition leaders. Further clashes 25 April left 1 dead. Djinnit 15-17 April visited Conakry, called on parties to stay calm.

- "En Guinée, l'opposition relance les manifestations", RFI, 18 April 2013.

  **Guinea-Bissau** New York prosecutor 18 April unsealed charges against powerful armed forces Chief of Staff António Injai, sparking fears of yet more turmoil or deadlock in ongoing political transition. U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency 3 April arrested former navy chief Bubo na Tchuto and 4 others in waters off Cape Verde, having lured him in fake drug deal. Govt 19 April announced it will demand trials be held in G-B; army 20 April said Injai will turn himself over "if investigation proves his implication". UN SRSG José Ramos-Horta 19 April called on authorities to remain calm.

- "U.S. accuses Bissau military chief in Colombia drugs, weapons plot", Reuters, 18 April 2013.

 **Mali** Suicide attacks in northern towns continued. French/Malian troops 1 April killed 3 alleged jihadis in Timbuktu; 10 April arrested Tarkint mayor Baba Ould Cheikh near Gao for suspected links with Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) and drug trafficking; 6-11 April led Operation Gustav to comb areas near Gao. Suicide attack in Kidal killed 3 Chadian soldiers 12 April; roadside bomb killed French soldier 29 April. EUTM-Mali 2 April started operations in Koulikoro; expected to last 15 months. UNSC 25 April approved deployment of force comprising 11,200 military personnel, 1,440 international police, to take over from 6,000-member African Union mission AFISMA on 1 July, security permitting. French and Chadian troops early-month began drawdown; France said would keep 2,000 forces on the ground by July and 1,000 by year-end; Chad indicated it may redeploy troops as part of UN-led force. MNLA 24 April said group rejects elections and disarming before talks with Bamako.

- "'Guerrilla' conflict makes Chad quit Mali", *Financial Times*, 15 April 2013.

New Crisis Group Africa Report N°201, *Mali: Security, Dialogue and Meaningful Reform*, 11 April 2013. Mali and its international partners need to seize the moment for national dialogue to forestall renewed political and security crises.

 **Nigeria** Army launched large-scale military assault on militant Islamist Boko Haram (BH) base in Baga, Borno state, 19 April; at least 187 reportedly killed including many civilians; President Jonathan 23 April ordered investigation. Army Chief of Staff 3 April attributed rising BH terrorism to links with international terror groups. 25 killed in clash between security forces and BH militants in Yobe state 26 April. Niger Delta rebel group MEND 14 April threatened to launch attacks on Islamic institutions in response to BH attacks on churches. Govt signed €89m financing agreement with EU.

- "Massacre in Nigeria spurs outcry over military tactics", *New York Times*, 29 April 2013.

 **Senegal** Mediator in Casamance conflict Community of Sant'Egidio 12 April confirmed no arrest warrant exists against MFDC radical leader Salif Sadio, opening way for potential dialogue between govt and MFDC. President Sall reiterated call for Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC) to engage in negotiations with govt, welcomed former rebel leader Ousmane Gnantang Diatta's support. 8 April attack on Thionck-Essyl village led to death of local MFDC commander; 26 April MFDC attack in Sindian saw killing of MFDC fighter reportedly wearing Gambian army fatigues. Senegal 17 April expelled Gambian dissident Kukoi Samba Sanyang.

- "Gestion de la crise casamançaise - Les clés pour une paix définitive", *Sud Quotidien*, 23 April 2013.

Asia

Central Asia

 **Kazakhstan** Almaty 5-7 April hosted fresh round of international talks on Iranian nuclear program. European Parliament adopted resolution criticising Kazakh govt for failure to respect political, media, religious freedoms, called for release of Algha party leader.

- "Negotiators find in Kazakhstan the perfect place to disagree", *New York Times*, 7 April 2013.

 **Kyrgyzstan** Hundreds of opposition El Unu movement supporters rallied in Bishkek 24 April demanding nationalisation of Kumtor gold mine, resignation of govt, release of 3 opposition MPs jailed in March. MP Dastanbek Dzhumabekov 17 April called for investigation into alleged recruitment of Kyrgyz youths in South to fight in Syrian conflict. Editor of Uzbek language newspaper in Osh put under house arrest end-March in connection with missing person case dating from June 2010 unrest; arrest prompted small protest.

- "Stubborn facts on the ground", *Economist*, 20 April 2013.

 **Tajikistan** President Rakhmon met with EU leaders in Brussels 10 April. In annual address to parliament 26 April Rakhmon promised Nov presidential elections will be fair, transparent. Mukhamadal Khayit, leader of opposition Islamic Renaissance Party, beaten 19 April.

- "Can Rahmon keep running?", *Eurasianet*, 23 April 2013.

➡ **Turkmenistan** Govt criticised for systematic repression at UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review.

- "West ramps up accusations of systemic repression in Turkmenistan", Reuters, 22 April 2013.

➡ **Uzbekistan** President's daughter Gulnara Karimova attacked Deputy PM Azimov alleging he had embezzled money. ICRC announced it would stop visiting Uzbek jails in absence of meaningful humanitarian impact, dialogue with authorities. Govt criticised for repression at UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review.

- "Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan shielded by like-minded authoritarians at UN", Eurasianet, 25 April 2013.

North East Asia

➡ **China (internal)** 21 people reportedly killed including 15 police and local officials in clash involving group of local residents in Kashgar, Xinjiang 23 April; circumstances unclear, authorities reported 19 members of "East Turkistan terrorist movement" arrested.

- "China 'arrests more suspects' over Xinjiang clashes", BBC, 29 April 2013.

➡ **China/Japan** Pattern emerging of incremental escalation between two sides, with ever more vessels operating in disputed waters of Diaoyu/Senkaku islands. Japanese nationalist group Ganbare Nippon 23 April sent 10 boats to waters, prompting Chinese State Oceanic Administration to dispatch 8 ships, largest group China has sent, to "monitor" GN flotilla. Japanese PM Abe 23 April said Chinese attempts to land on islands would be met with force. Chinese vessels spotted in disputed waters throughout month, also sent planes near islands. 168 Japanese MPs 23 April visited Yasukuni shrine war memorial, also several ministers, sparking protests by China, ROK.

- Stephanie Kleine-Ahlbrandt, "Navigating Tensions in the East China Sea", Huffington Post, 17 April 2013.
- "Old sore spots flare up in China-Japan disputes", *New York Times*, 23 April 2013.

New Crisis Group Asia Report N°245, *Dangerous Waters: China-Japan Relations on the Rocks*, 8 April 2013. China and Japan must begin talks on crisis prevention and mitigation regarding the disputed waters of the East China Sea to avoid an accidental clash that could lead to a larger conflict.

➡ **North Korea** DPRK Supreme People's Assembly 1 April passed legislation declaring DPRK to be "full-fledged nuclear weapons state". Pyongyang 3 April suspended operations at ROK-DPRK jointly-operated Kaesŏng Industrial Complex (KIC), in continued war rhetoric 5 April notified foreign diplomatic missions in Pyongyang that it "would be difficult to guarantee security after 10 April". Amid celebrations for former leader Kim Il-sung's birthday, DPRK 15 April warned strike on ROK "would start without notice". DPRK General Department of Atomic Energy 2 April announced plan to restart Yŏngbyŏn nuclear reactor. DPRK continued military manoeuvres and exercises, 21 April moved 2 missile launchers to east coast. ROK Unification Ministry 25 April proposed talks with DPRK on KIC, warning refusal would entail "grave measures"; DPRK 26 April refused talks, calling offer "deceptive", leading ROK to withdraw all remaining South Koreans except 7 to "negotiate unpaid wages and fees". U.S. Sec State Kerry 14 April said DPRK denuclearisation necessary as first step towards

"peace talks"; DPRK 18 April declared suspension of UN sanctions, permanent end to U.S.-ROK combined military exercises as condition for reopening of negotiations, 22 April demanded recognition as "nuclear weapons state", ROK President Park 11 April urged DPRK to join inter-Korean dialogue. DPRK 16 April requested food aid from Mongolia.

- "North Korea's growing missile threat", *Foreign Policy*, 22 April 2013.

South Asia

➡ **Afghanistan** April marked deadliest month of 2013: over 50 killed in Taliban attack on Farah city, Farah province 3 April; 7 killed 15 April by roadside bomb in Herat; 7 killed 13 April in roadside bombing in Zabul province; 3 NATO soldiers killed 30 April by roadside bomb in Helmand. Taliban 28 April announced spring offensive. President Karzai 29 April said National Security office received monthly cash payments from U.S. following reports U.S. CIA secretly paid tens of millions of dollars to Karzai over past decade. U.S. diplomat, 4 Americans delivering textbooks to school killed in bomb attack 6 April, Qalat, Zabul province. Up to 11 civilians, including 10 foreigners, abducted 22 April by Taliban in Logar province. 3 policemen killed 28 April in bomb attack in Ghazni province. Talks led by U.S. Sec State Kerry 24 April between Karzai and Pakistan Army chief Kayani in effort to ease bilateral tensions, increase cooperation on promoting reconciliation process with Taliban, produced no substantive results. Elections preparations continued: opposition alliance 9 April boycotted consultative session on appointment of Independent Election Commission (IEC) chief; govt 14 April approved law on structure and authorities of IEC and Electoral Complaints Commission; Wolesi Jirga 22 April approved articles of election law, rejected more proportional voting system.

- "Withdrawing from Afghanistan", *Economist*, 27 April 2013.

➡ **Bangladesh** Violent protests against country's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) continued, combined with increased tensions between ruling Awami League (AL) and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), bringing country to standstill. Several killed in clashes in Dhaka and Chittagong between Jamaat-e-Islami and AL supporters during 11 April demonstration. 3 Hindu temples set on fire in suspected Jamaat attacks in Madaripur and Boalkhali. BNP 23 April organised nationwide strike protesting against arrests of its members, dozens hurt in clashes with police, 2 injured in bomb attacks in Dhaka. Leader of AL youth organisation Chhatra League hacked to death in Rajshahi 14 April. ICT-1 23 April indicted former AL leader Mobarak Hossain for murder, abduction and torture during 1971 independence war.

- "Bangladesh unrest exposes political divide", Al Jazeera, 7 April 2013.

➡ **Kashmir** Regionwide strike 7 April demanding burial of Kashmiri militants executed in India; 7 injured in city of Baramulla in clashes with police. Unidentified gunmen 8 April killed head of village affiliated with Indian National Conference party in Pulwama district, S Kashmir. Police 18 April arrested high-ranking Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) member, killed militant in gunfight in Sopore, N Kashmir. 4 Indian policemen killed 26 April in suspected LeT attack in Baramulla. Indian govt reported 35% decrease in incidents of terrorist violence in 2012, increase in infiltration attempts from Pakistan. Indian Defence Minister reported Indian army killed 168 militants in J&K in last 2 years.

- "168 militants killed in JK in last 2 years", PTI, 22 April 2013.

➤ **India (non-Kashmir)** Series of clashes between police and Maoist insurgents: Maoists 8 April blew up power plant in Jamui District, Bihar; 7 killed in 12 April gunfight in Gadchiroli, Maharashtra, including insurgents, police, civilians; 9 insurgents, 1 police officer killed during 16 April raid on Maoist hideout in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region forest. Maoists 25 April killed 2 suspected informants in Malkangiri, Odisha; 27 April killed 2 policemen in Chhattisgarh. 3 Maoists killed 29 April in gunfight with police in Latehar, Jharkhand. India protested Chinese army camp which it alleged fell inside Indian border in Ladakh.

- ["Chinese troops camping in 'Indian territory': police"](#), Reuters, 20 April 2013.

➤ **Nepal** Four major parties Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (UCPN (M)), Madhesi Morcha, Nepali Congress (NC) and Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist, UML) informally postponed elections to new Constituent Assembly planned for June to November. Breakaway Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) rejected call for talks with High Level Political Committee (HLPC) comprising 4 major parties that oversees Interim Election Council of Ministers. CPN-M 7 April enforced nationwide strike demanding govt's resignation. Federal Democratic Forum, alliance of Madhesi parties outside Morcha and fringe janajati parties 21 April presented 13-point demands to govt; demanded HLPC disbandment, Interim Election Council Chairman Khil Raj Regmi's resignation as chief justice. Madhesi and janajati parties opposed proposed threshold of 1% of total votes for parties to win proportional representation seats as too high. Integration of ex-Maoist combatants into Nepal Army officially completed 12 April.

- ["Obstacles ahead"](#), *Kathmandu Post*, 24 April 2013.

➤ **Pakistan** Campaigning continued despite several militant attacks on 3 mainstream moderate parties – Awami National Party (ANP), Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) – killing more than 60. Attacks included 19 killed 16 April in bombing of ANP meeting in Peshawar; 4 killed 23 April, 5 killed 25 April by bomb attacks near MQM election offices in Karachi; bombs targeting politicians' offices in Kohat and Peshawar 27 April killed 9. Targeted killings continued throughout month in Karachi. 6 killed, over 30 wounded in suicide bombing in Quetta 23 April; banned Sunni extremist group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi claimed responsibility. Early April disqualification of scores of electoral candidates criticised by professional bodies, trade unions and civil society; most disqualifications overturned. Police 24 April said bomb defused outside house where former president Musharraf under arrest since 20 April for sacking of judges in 2007; court 30 April extended Musharraf's house arrest to 14 May for alleged role in 2007 assassination of former PM Bhutto. High Court 30 April banned Musharraf from public office for life. Caretaker govt 22 April told Supreme Court it would not bring treason charges against Musharraf. Musharraf 12 April admitted his govt agreed to several U.S. drone strikes in first public acknowledgment of consent by former or serving senior official. Military 9 April launched operation to regain control of Tirah valley in Khyber Agency following displacement of over 48,000 by fighting between rival militant groups.

- ["Pakistan's hopeful general election"](#), *Economist*, 27 April 2013.

➤ **Sri Lanka** Anti-Muslim campaign led by militant Buddhists Bodhu Bala Sena (BBS, Buddhist Power Force) continued unchallenged by police. President Rajapaksa 17 April met with Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) ambassadors after OIC expressed concern over rising attacks, anti-Muslim rhetoric. Pressure on Tamil media and politicians increased in run-up to expected Sept northern provincial council elections: offices of Uthayan newspaper attacked twice, injuring staff and damaging equipment. Tamil National Alliance (TNA) 29 April began campaign in Jaffna protesting ongoing military land seizures in north. Commonwealth Lawyers Association, Commonwealth Legal Education Association and Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association 16 April called for Sri Lanka to be suspended from Commonwealth, expressing grave concerns over impeachment of chief justice and other assaults on rule of law. Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group met 26 April, took no action despite strong push from Canada; Canadian FM Baird said govt "appalled" Sri Lanka will be allowed to host Commonwealth heads of govt meeting in Nov.

- ["Canada attacks 'evil' of Sri Lanka hosting Commonwealth summit"](#), *Guardian*, 26 April 2013.

South East Asia

➤ **Indonesia** Lukas Enembe and Klemen Tinal inaugurated governor and vice-governor of Papua 9 April; Enembe pledged to meet with President Yudhoyono, discuss revised version of Special Autonomy statute which will focus on economic development rather than identity politics. In Aceh, GAM-controlled provincial legislature 25 March passed regulation making old rebel flag official provincial flag, setting off new tensions with Jakarta. President called for investigations after members of special forces Kopassus 23 March stormed prison cell in Yogyakarta and shot dead 4 gangsters suspected of murdering their colleague. Head of Muhammadiyah Islamic group said police abuses generating terrorism, giving boost to campaign against police counter-terrorism unit Detachment 88.

- ["Killings stir questions on Indonesia military overhaul"](#), *New York Times*, 10 April 2013.

➤ **Malaysia** Allegations from both ruling Barisan Nasional and opposition of political violence by other side as 5 May election approaches. As violence in Sabah subsided, 19 Filipinos being tried there for crimes ranging from waging war against king to joining terrorist group; over 100 being held under Security Offences Act which permits authorities to hold suspects for 28 days without charge.

- ["Waging war at the Court of the Sultan of Sulu"](#), *Time*, 10 April 2013.

➤ **Myanmar** Deadly intercommunal violence that broke out in March subsided; dozens of people arrested in wake of violence, trials of some have commenced. Former U.S. president Jimmy Carter visited early April, met with govt and opposition, called for end to sanctions, expressed concern over violence. EU lifted most sanctions 22 April citing "remarkable process of reform". Same day BBC aired video allegedly showing images of violence and security forces inability or failure to intervene in March intercommunal violence in Meiktila, and Human Rights Watch published report alleging security forces complicity in what it termed ethnic cleansing of Rohingya Muslims in 2012. Intercommunal violence broke out in Oakkan town near Rangoon 30 April, govt reported situation under control, no casualties. Official commission into 2012 Rakhine state clashes 29 April recommended improved

humanitarian support for Rohingya IDPs, transparent addressing of their citizenship claims, increased security forces. President Thein Sein visited China 5 April for business summit, met with President Xi Jinping. Aung San Suu Kyi visited Japan, met PM Abe, Myanmar community.

- Jim Della-Giacoma, “History lessons”, *Myanmar Times*, 11 April 2013.
- “EU lifts sanctions against Burma”, BBC, 22 April 2013.

➡ **Philippines** MILF peace process made minimal progress in early April talks. Parties unable to conclude wealth-sharing annex as govt negotiators requested further time to clear provisions with cabinet, but unveiled terms of reference for socio-economic assistance program in MILF areas. Next round postponed until after 13 May mid-term legislative, local elections. Meanwhile, MILF-led transition commission held first meeting 3 April. Series of clashes on island province Basilan, beginning 9 April when army intelligence officer killed; govt blamed Malaysian radical Amin Baco alias Abu Jihad. Military and police 15 April raided camp of Isnilon Hapilon and Puruji Indama, leaders of extremist Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in province; 8 ASG killed, army reported Hapilon wounded. Another 2 soldiers killed 28 April by ASG gunmen in Lamitan. Several possibly election-related killings reported, including some perpetrated by communist New People’s Army (NPA). In Mindanao, Gingoog mayor Ruthie Guingona – from prominent political family – injured in 20 April fire at illegal NPA check-point that killed her 2 police escorts; highlighted increased NPA activity in Mindanao in recent months. Chinese ship ran aground on Tubbataha reef 8 April, charged with poaching. Philippine case filed with International Tribunal on Law of the Sea against China over South China Sea claims moved forward with appointment of 5 judges to tribunal.

- “Reds raking it in from election extortion – army”, *Philippine Star*, 29 April 2013.

➡ **Thailand** Constitutional Court 3 April accepted petition to rule on legality of bills to amend 2007 Constitution, but declined to issue injunction to halt deliberation of bills in National Assembly. Hearings at ICJ to interpret 1962 judgment concerning disputed territory around Preah Vihear Temple ended 17 April; judge requested Thailand and Cambodia submit written arguments defining “vicinity” of temple. Insurgents stepped up attacks in southernmost provinces following first meeting of dialogue process between Bangkok and insurgent representatives 28 March. 22 officials killed 28 Feb–22 April. Yala deputy governor Issara Thongthawat and one other official killed by IED in Than To District 5 April, highest-ranking official killed in conflict. Hassan Taib and Abdul Karim Khalib of Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) released video 27 April issuing 5 demands as conditions for dialogue, including dropping all charges against suspected insurgents, stated armed struggle will continue. In 29 April talks in Malaysia, BRN pressed demands while Bangkok gave BRN one month to curb attacks.

- “BRN gets one-month deadline to curb attacks”, *Bangkok Post*, 30 April 2013.

➡ **Timor-Leste** Govt continued to face difficulty in evicting hundreds of supporters of dissident group CPD-RDTL from encampments on south coast where it plans to develop oil and gas industry installations.

- “Xanana pede ao CPD-RDTL para não mentir o povo”, *Noticias*, 15 April 2013.

Europe

Balkans

➡ **Bosnia** Following visit to Bosnia 18 April, EU foreign policy chief Ashton said she was disappointed by lack of progress on political reform, political parties’ focus on party and ethnic interests; echoed concern expressed by EU Enlargement Commissioner Füle over continued failure to implement 2009 European Court of Human Rights Sejdić-Finci ruling. President of Bosniak-Croat Federation Živko Budimir and 18 other officials arrested as part of corruption investigation.

- “Ashton ‘disappointed’ by Bosnia’s political logjam”, *Balkan Insight*, 18 April 2013.

➡ **Kosovo** Kosovo and Serbia reached breakthrough deal at 10th session of EU-mediated dialogue in Brussels 19 April: agreement recognises authority of Pristina over whole territory of Kosovo and grants local autonomy based on provisions of Ahtisaari Plan. Also creates new post of police commander for northern Kosovo, to be Serb appointed by Pristina on nomination of local authorities, and chamber of Court of Appeal in North Mitrovica with majority of Serb judges. Northern Serbs rejected deal, considering their options. Despite protests against deal in Pristina and Belgrade and northern Mitrovica, Kosovo Parliament 21 April voted 89-5 in favour of deal, Serbia’s govt approved it 22 April, Serbian parliament 26 April. Followed 8th and 9th round of dialogue earlier in month at which Belgrade rejected terms which it claimed did not provide basic rights, security for Serbs.

- Sabine Freizer, “Security on the Line in Kosovo-Serbia”, *Today’s Zaman*, 10 April 2013.
- “A breakthrough at last”, *Economist*, 20 April 2013.

➡ **Macedonia** Ruling VMRO DPMNE won majority of mayoral seats in 7 April 2nd round of local elections, consolidating first round gains; court ordered re-run in several municipalities due to allegations of irregularities. European Commission progress report 16 April said country had made progress in almost all EU-related areas. UN mediator in name dispute between Greece and Macedonia offered fresh compromise proposal.

- “Analysts: Macedonia name dispute with Greece must end”, *SE Times*, 19 April 2013.

➡ **Serbia** European Commission 22 April said it would recommend start date for EU accession talks with Serbia following breakthrough deal normalising relations between Belgrade and Pristina (see Kosovo).

- “EU Commission: ‘Start Serbia membership talks’”, BBC, 22 April 2013.

Caucasus

➡ **Armenia** As president Sargsyan sworn in for 2nd term 9 April, defeated candidate Raffi Hovannisian, who continues to contest result of Feb presidential poll, held “alternative inauguration” drawing several thousand supporters.

- “Sarkisian sworn in for new term, but protest targets his legitimacy”, *RFE/RL*, 9 April 2013.

➡ **Azerbaijan** Opposition Azerbaijani Popular Front Party activist arrested and sentenced to 10 days' jail for taking part in unapproved anti-govt protest in Baku. FM Mammadyarov visited Israel in latest sign of closer relations between secular Shiite Baku and Tel Aviv.

- "Azerbaijani foreign minister makes first-ever to visit Israel", RFE/RL, 22 April 2013.

➡ **North Caucasus (Russia)** Following increase in tensions between Chechnya and Ingushetia, first armed clash took place 18 April as around 300 Chechen police plus MPs, local govt heads, TV crew arrived in Ingush village Arshty, claimed they came to conduct security operation against warlord Doku Umarov. Ingush chief executive Yevkurov called incursion a provocation, claimed group aimed to organise demonstration in support of Arshty joining Chechnya, notified Moscow and ordered strengthening of border with Chechnya. After President Putin signed law allowing NC republic parliaments to elect republic leaders rather than conduct popular elections, Dagestan parliament voted to eliminate direct elections for republic head. Major security operation conducted in Dagestan's mountain village Gimry 11-21 April; most of almost 5,000 residents fled, 3 militants reported killed, few dozen houses reportedly partially destroyed. Also in Dagestan, authorities reported 2 militants killed in security operation in Sogratl, Gunibsky district 25 April; 3 suspect militants killed in Khivsky district 27 April; militant and supporter killed in Chontaul, Kizilyurt district 28 April. In Chechnya 2 soldiers killed in IED explosion in Shatoy district 28 April. In Ingushetia, 1 security forces member killed in IED explosion near Galashki village 3 April; 4 suspected militants, one security officer killed in special operation in Dalakovo village 8 April. North Caucasus insurgency formally denied involvement in 15 April Boston bombings, after it emerged that suspects are ethnic Chechen brothers.

- "Islamists in Russia", *Economist*, 27 April 2013.

➡ **Georgia** Russian FM Lavrov in media interview 11 April welcomed pragmatism on part of Georgian PM Ivanishvili, said Moscow ready to expand ties with Tbilisi, but its recognition of independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia is irreversible. Several thousand supporters of President Saakashvili rallied in Tbilisi 19 April. 27 April by-elections to fill 3 vacant parliamentary seats all won by Georgian Dream candidates.

- "Ivanishvili on probe into Lopota Gorge clash", *Civil.ge*, 27 April 2013.

New Crisis Group Europe Report N°224, *Abkhazia: The Long Road to Reconciliation*, 10 April 2013. More than two decades after the Soviet Union's collapse, the three-sided conflict involving breakaway Abkhazia, Georgia and Russia is far from a solution. All should concentrate on achievable goals, including intensified dialogue on security and humanitarian issues.

➡ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** Baku reported Azerbaijan army officer shot dead near border with Armenia by Armenian forces in ceasefire violation late 8 April, amid continued cease-fire violations alleged by both sides. OSCE mediators reported possible meeting between FMs of the 2 countries to take place May. Tensions continue over Armenian statements about possible reopening of airport in Nagorno-Karabakh, with air link to Yerevan.

- "Baku ready to hold talks on Karabakh with Yerevan", *Hurriyet*, 1 May 2013.

Western Europe/Mediterranean

➡ **Cyprus** Turkish FM Ahmet Davutoğlu 7 April criticised Greek Cypriots for not re-starting reunification talks, Republic of Cyprus govt spokesman said current conditions not good. UNSG special envoy Alexander Downer 24 April said sides must take into account Greek Cypriot economic difficulties, added leaders likely to meet for talks in May. International bailout for Cyprus approved 12 April, involving €10 billion in loans and up to €13.5 billion contribution by Cyprus, rescuing country from bankruptcy and departure from Eurozone. Turkish energy minister 8 April said can cooperate with Greek Cypriots and Israel in joint energy projects "so long as the political atmosphere allows it".

- "Divided they fall", *Economist*, 27 April 2013.

➡ **Turkey** Parliament 9 April approved ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP)'s proposal to establish commission to monitor peace process between govt and Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK); opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) and Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) refused to vote. 3 pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) deputies visited PKK's jailed leader Abdullah Öcalan 3 and 14 April, said Öcalan believed process entered "promising stage". PKK military leader in northern Iraq Karayilan 25 April announced PKK will start withdrawal from Turkey 8 May, no casualties recorded in April. Govt 3 April announced list of "wise people" tasked with explaining peace efforts to public. MHP 20 April staged first big demonstration against govt's PKK deal in western province Izmir. Much-anticipated 4th judicial reform package approved 11 April, changing definition of terrorism to exclude printing statements and attending unauthorised demonstrations but thousands of non-violent defendants in Kurdistan Communities Union case fall outside package's scope. Amid gradual thaw in relations with Tel Aviv, Israeli delegation visited to discuss compensation for relatives of 9 Turks killed on *Mavi Marmara* in 2010. European Parliament 18 April approved resolution on Turkey's 2012 EU progress report calling on the Council to open negotiations on chapter 22 (regional policy), lift blocks on chapters 23 (judiciary and fundamental rights), 24 (justice, freedom and security). Govt disaster agency reported number of Syrian refugees in Turkish camps surpassed 191,000, officials estimate around 250,000 more in Turkish cities.

- "Militants will start withdrawing from Turkey on May 8, PKK says", *Hurriyet*, 25 April 2013.

New Crisis Group Europe Report N°225, *Blurring the Borders: Syrian Spillover Risks for Turkey*, 30 April 2013. As the humanitarian crisis reaches catastrophic proportions, Syria needs to open its borders to external aid, while Turkey and its international partners need more long-term planning to meet growing refugee needs and avoid instability spilling over the border.

Latin America

➡ **Colombia** President Santos 9 April said hoped talks with ELN will begin "sooner rather than later," amid increasing speculation that official announcement of negotiations with Colombia's second guerrilla group will come in May. Peace talks with FARC set to resume 17 April postponed until 23 April for scheduling and logistical reasons; FARC negotiating team joined

by 4 new members, including influential Pablo Catatumbo, commander of Alfonso Cano bloc. Sides have yet to announce agreement on any of 5 major agenda items. UN and National University held public forums in Bogotá on potential political participation of FARC 28-30 April; all major political parties participated except supporters of former president Uribe. FARC, ELN 1 April announced cooperation in Arauca dept and elsewhere in east to fight extractive projects, multinational companies. Amid rumours of possible splits within organisation, FARC's Southern Bloc 9 April said it would comply with possible peace agreement "to the letter". Killing of prominent land restitution activist Ever Antonio Cordero in Córdoba 9 April prompted widespread condemnation, underscored worries about escalating violence against civil society leaders. Death of "Emerald King" Víctor Carranza 4 April prompted concerns of violent conflict over access to emerald resources.

- "Colombia, FARC start new round of talks in Cuba", Reuters, 23 April 2013.

➡ **Ecuador** Security forces 10 April exchanged fire with unknown illegal armed group on Colombian border, second such attack by groups in Sucumbíos province in less than a month.

- "Ecuador advierte a irregulares colombianos que les responderá 'con todo el poder'", AFP, 13 April 2013.

➡ **Guatemala** Competing judicial decisions in trial of former dictator Ríos Montt on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity generated uncertainty over whether court would be allowed to reach a verdict; Constitutional Court to decide whether trial can continue. Group of prominent conservatives 16 April published letter in full-page newspaper ad calling charges against Ríos Montt "fabrication", said trial is betrayal of 1996 peace accords that could lead to new outbreak of political violence. President Pérez Molina next day said he "not only supported but subscribed" to letter.

- "Ríos Montt genocide trial up in air as Guatemalan judges squabble", Reuters, 20 April 2013.

➡ **Mexico** Violence continued unabated, including 2 bar shootings in Guadalajara city 31 March leaving 6 dead; 9 peasants found decapitated in Tamaulipas state 31 March; 7 bodies found in Cancún 14 April. Undersecretary of Prevention and Citizen Participation announced further details on public security strategy: said 250 high-crime zones with populations of 60,000-100,000 will be part of social development initiative. Number of vigilante groups continues to grow in response to cartel violence; some reported to have joined forces with radical members of teachers' union in Guerrero state who 24 April attacked offices of 4 major political parties to protest education reform. Govt reported drug-related killings Dec-April fell 14% compared to same period last year. At least 13 killed in fight between rival inmates at San Luis Potosí jail.

- Javier Ciurlizza, "El Desafío de los 100 Días de Peña", *Proceso*, 2 April 2013.
- "Mexico's new security policy: the smokescreen", Huffington Post, 15 April 2013.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Latin America Report N°48, *Peña Nieto's Challenge: Criminal Cartels and Rule of Law in Mexico*, 19 March 2013.

➡ **Venezuela** Following March death of President Chávez, closely fought elections on 14 April triggered political crisis. Result much closer than most opinion polls had predicted, with VP Maduro defeating opposition Democratic Unity (MUD) candidate Hen-

rique Capriles by less than 2 percentage points and fewer than 230,000 votes; opposition refused to accept result. Maduro's narrow victory, along with acute political polarisation and controversy surrounding govt use of state resources to support Maduro's campaign, prompted one electoral body (CNE) member to call for 100% audit of paper ballots (just over 50% already audited on election day) to verify electronic results. Call echoed by Capriles, but CNE majority rejected proposal. Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) meeting in Lima 18 April reportedly persuaded govt to allow audit of an additional 18,000 ballot boxes; CNE said 12,000 of those 18,000 would be randomly selected, process will take 30 days. Some CNE members insisted electronic result is irreversible, any challenge would have to be made before Supreme Court, whose president also declared there could be no change since electoral law rules out manual recount. MUD insisted it has sufficient evidence of irregularities to call result into question. Maduro blamed Capriles for violent incidents in days following election, including 8 deaths he said result of opposition "campaign of violence".

- Javier Ciurlizza, "Tiempo de Prudencia, Diálogo y Conciliación", *El Universal*, 16 April 2013.
- "Nicolas Maduro sworn in as new Venezuelan president", BBC, 19 April 2013.

MENA

Eastern Mediterranean

➡ **Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories** Political uncertainty in West Bank after Palestinian PM Fayyad 13 April resigned following months of tensions with PA President Abbas. Khaled Meshal re-elected as Hamas political bureau chief 2 April. Visiting U.S. Sec State Kerry 8 April pledged to come up with proposal to revive peace process. Jordan and Palestine 31 March signed agreement on Holy Sites in Jerusalem, reaffirming Jordan's responsibility for administering them; followed Qatar's announcement of \$1bn fund for East Jerusalem. U.S. and Russia 23 April negotiated compromise between Israel and Palestinians in UNESCO, allowing cultural agency to renew involvement in Jerusalem's Old City in exchange for postponement of 5 resolutions critical of Israel. Israeli airstrike in Gaza 30 April killed Haitham Mishal, militant allegedly involved in 17 April rocket attack on Eilat. Continued clashes between Palestinian protesters and Israeli soldiers over Israeli treatment of detainees; 2 Palestinian prisoners ended hunger strike after Israel agreed to release them early. Israeli Defence Minister 22 April confirmed Israel's Jan airstrike in Syria targeted weapons convoy allegedly headed to Lebanon. Israeli army 25 April shot down drone off coast of Haifa, suspects Hizbollah; Hizbollah denied. Israel and Turkey 22 April discussed compensation deal for families of 2010 flotilla victims (see Turkey). PM Netanyahu denounced nuclear talks with Iran as delaying tactic on part of Tehran.

- Nathan Thrall, "Palestine After Fayyad: The Choice Between Cooperation and Conflict", *Foreign Affairs*, 18 April 2013.
- "John Kerry says need for action in Israeli-Palestinian conflict is urgent", *Los Angeles Times*, 17 April 2013.

➡ **Lebanon** Lebanon further drawn into Syria conflict as Hizbollah fighters reportedly leading operation against Syrian rebel forces in western city Al-Qusayr near border with Lebanon; Syrian rebels fired rockets into border villages during month, killing 2. March 14 coalition and Progressive Socialist Party Druze leader Walid

Jumblatt denounced Hizbollah's involvement in Syria conflict; Hizbollah denies its members are fighting, claims they are protecting Lebanese against Syrian rebel attacks, 30 April said Syria's "real friends" in region will not let it fall. Syrian jihadi group Jabhat al-Nusra 24 April threatened to attack Beirut if President Suleiman does not stop Hizbollah involvement. Suleiman condemned Salafist Sheikhs Assir and al-Rafehi's calls to send jihad fighters to help Syrian opposition; Free Syrian Army also rejected clerics' call. EU 23 April agreed to provide \$38.9m to help almost 450,000 Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Parliament 6 April designated moderate March 14 figure Tammam Salam new PM; Salam holding consultations over distribution of ministerial portfolios. Parliamentary subcommittee discussing new electoral law suspended 24 April amid deadlock.

- "Clashes escalate on Syria-Lebanon border", Al Jazeera, 24 April 2013.

 **Syria** Opposition further consolidated foothold in south with seizure of military base near Daraa 3 April, while regime forces mounted successful counter-attacks in Damascus, Homs, 14 April broke 6-month rebel siege of Wadi al-Deif and Hamidiya military compounds outside Maarat al-Numan in north. Fighting intensified in western city Al-Qusayr; Hizbollah fighters from Lebanon reported to be leading Al-Qusayr operation against rebels. Army 11 April launched retaliatory attacks on Sanamein and Ghabagheb villages in Deraa province, accused of harbouring deserters; dozens of civilians reported killed. Regime PM al-Halki survived bomb attack on his convoy in Damascus in which 6 died 29 April. 13 killed by car bomb in central Damascus 30 April. Reports emerged 22 April of several hundred civilians killed in alleged regime massacre SW of Damascus. Rebel armed group Jabhat al-Nusra 10 April refuted reports it had merged with al-Qaeda in Iraq but pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda central. UN set to investigate mounting allegations that regime is using chemical weapons. Rebels 22 April abducted 2 Aleppo archbishops. Opposition Syrian National Coalition (NC) PM Hitto 6 April begun talks to form interim govt; NC 22 April named George Sabra as interim leader. President Assad 16 April offered reduced prison sentences for some detained rebels. UN/Arab League envoy Brahimi 19 April deplored lack of cooperation from regime, urged UNSC action; denied rumours he plans to resign. 5 top UN humanitarian officials issued plea for international aid. U.S. 21 April said will double non-lethal aid for rebels to \$250m; EU 22 April eased oil embargo for opposition, remains divided on arms ban.

- Peter Harling and Sarah Birke, "The Syrian Heartbreak", *Middle East Research and Information Project*, 16 April 2013.
- "Syrian regime accused of new massacre", *Guardian*, 22 April 2013.

Gulf

 **Bahrain** Ongoing National Dialogue overshadowed by growing street agitation in run-up to 21 April Formula 1 grand prix. Atmosphere in Dialogue sessions deteriorated as participants accused each other of stalling, traded personal attacks. MP Latifa al-Ghaoud accused opposition of leaking updates, receiving instructions from U.S.. Ahead of F1 race Human Rights Watch reported govt carried out house raids and round-ups in rebel villages near race circuit. Opposition called for mass demonstrations 12-20 April. Al-Wifaq sought to use protests to draw attention to its peaceful demands; Coalition of the Youth of the 14 February Revolution called for cancelling race, threatened further violence. Group claimed responsibility for burning 4 stolen cars, one in high-

security financial district 15 April, hours after information minister claimed situation "very reassuring"; group's first use of such tactics.

- "Bahrain protests to be stepped up before grand prix, says rights group", *Guardian*, 17 April 2013.

 **Iran** P5+1 nuclear talks in Kazakhstan 5-6 April failed to achieve breakthrough, parties agreed to disband meeting, reconsider positions. U.S. Sec State Kerry said talks on nuclear program "cannot last forever". President Ahmadinejad 9 April unveiled 2 new uranium mining facilities declaring "mastery over the entire nuclear fuel cycle". Iranian ambassador to IAEA Ali Asghar Soltanieh 23 April said Iran would be "reliable partner" in Middle East if Western countries took "more cooperative approach" in nuclear talks. Former nuclear negotiator Hassan Rowhani, considered pragmatist, 11 April announced he will run for president in June elections. 6.1 magnitude earthquake hit SE 9 April, Gulf Cooperation Council called for inspections to nearby Bushehr nuclear plant, Iran media reported plant unaffected. Israeli Minister of Strategic and Intelligence Affairs 18 April said international community should issue deadline, timetable or military threat for Iran. U.S. Sec Defence 21 April signed arms deal with Israel, said agreement sends "clear signal to Iran that military action remains an option". U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee 17 April passed bill supporting possible Israeli strike on Iran.

- Ali Vaez, "Fault Lines, Not Red Lines", *Foreign Policy*, 10 April 2013.
- "Ahmadinejad's ally could pose new challenge to Iran's ruling clergy", *Washington Post*, 23 April 2013.

  **Iraq** Standoff between Sunni protesters and govt intensified in last week of April, increasing fears that political crisis could evolve into conflict between govt forces and protesters' armed factions. Over 50 killed in army raid on Sunni protest camp in Hawija near Kirkuk 23 April; raid followed killing of Iraqi army officer in clashes with protesters 19 April. Hawija incident prompted retaliation against govt forces with clashes in Sulaiman Bek city, Mosul, scores killed across country; also pushed protesters to organise militarily, claiming need to defend against security forces. Tensions increased in Sunni-dominated Anbar province 29 April as 5 members of security forces killed, army gave protesters 24 hours to hand over those responsible. Reports emerged that U.S. Sec State Kerry during late-March visit to Baghdad pressured Iraqi leaders to halt flow of Iranian weapons to Syria, find formula for domestic stability. Kurdistan Regional Govt president Barzani sent delegation to Baghdad 3 April to discuss issues that led to withdrawal of Kurdish ministers/MPs from Baghdad; no agreement reached. Following Kerry's visit govt stated it was ready to negotiate with representatives of Sunni protesters, but no negotiations took place. Govt made selective concessions to some groups, further dividing protesters; Cabinet 8 April approved amendment to de-Baathification legislation known as Justice and Accountability Law, which could appease protesters affiliated with former regime granting them pensions, access to employment. Security continued to deteriorate in run-up to 20 April provincial elections in majority of governorates (not Anbar, Ninewa and Kirkuk), with frequent attacks on candidates, dozens killed in over 20 attacks March-April. Partial results suggest PM Maliki's State of Law coalition confirmed its solid power base in south.

- Crisis Group Alert, *Iraq after Hawija: Recovery or Relapse?*, 26 April 2013.
- Joost Hiltermann, "Iraq: What Remains", *Middle East Research and Information Project*, 16 April 2013.
- "Iraq PM Maliki warns of 'plague of sectarianism'", BBC, 27 April 2013.

➤ **Jordan** As number of Syrian refugees in Jordan reached 450,000, police and refugees clashed in Zaatari camp 20 April over poor conditions. U.S. Sec Defence 17 April announced U.S. sending 200 army planners to Jordan to help prevent spillover of Syrian crisis. Authorities 13 April arrested 8 Jordanians attempting to join Syrian rebel fighters. 4 killed in clashes between students at university in southern city Maan.

- "U.S. sends army planners to Amman but wary of Syria intervention", Reuters, 17 April 2013.

➤ **Kuwait** Sentencing of key opposition leader and former MP Mussallam al-Barrak to 5 years' prison 15 April for insulting emir breathed new life into flagging protest movement. Human Rights Watch 16 April urged govt to drop charges against Barrak. Barrak refused to turn himself in; thousands of protesters clashed with police 18 April after raid on Barrak's house in failed 4th attempt to arrest him. Appeal court 22 April decided to release Barrak on bail, adjourned hearing to 13 May.

- "Kuwait should set an example on dissent", *Financial Times*, 22 April 2013.

➤ **Saudi Arabia** Tensions following 20 March statement by 37 Shiite leaders accusing govt of using arrest of 18 people on spying charges to stir sectarian tension, detract attention from other issues particularly Sunni demand for reform. Further reports of protests in eastern city Qatif 4 April, Qassim Province 27 April, over political prisoners. Prosecutor 27 March demanded death penalty by crucifixion for Nimr al-Nimr, radical Shiite cleric arrested July 2012 on charges including instigating unrest, "waging war on God".

- "Saudi Shias fear new unrest after 'spy' arrests", Reuters, 10 April 2013.

➤ **Yemen** In far-reaching military shake-up President Hadi mid-April removed Ahmed Ali Saleh, son of former president Saleh and commander of Republican Guards, and Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar, commander of First Armoured Division, appointed leaders for 7 regional commands; several formerly powerful commanders also exiled to military-attaché positions outside country, including 2 nephews of Saleh. National dialogue continued without major setbacks. Court 27 April ordered investigation into March 2011 massacre, including role of Saleh and aides. Separatist sentiment in South high: unrest continued in major southern cities including Aden, Mukallah. Sporadic attacks against state security personnel continued: security officer killed 13 April in Hadhramawt province; intelligence officer shot dead 19 April in Mukallah; military intelligence chief assassinated 27 April in Hadrmout. 5 soldiers, 2 militants killed 27 April in attack on military checkpoint in Radda. 2 suspected U.S. drone strikes 17 April killed at least 5 suspected militants; drone strike 21 April killed 2 militants in Wadi Abida, Marib province. Saboteurs 8, 30 April sabotaged main oil pipeline in Marib province. Court 25 April sentenced 11 al-Qaeda militants to up to 10 years' prison.

- "Yemen's military earthquake", Al-Monitor, 15 April 2013.

New Crisis Group Middle East Report N°139, *Yemen's Military-Security Reform: Seeds of New Conflict?*, 4 April 2013. Yemen must take further steps to reform its security forces, or longstanding divisions could undermine its political transition.

North Africa

➤ **Algeria** Mobilisation of special forces in south amid major spillover from Mali conflict; security forces 31 March deployed thousands of special forces, ground troops, helicopters to Bechar, Adrar, Tindouf, Ghardaïa, Laghouat and al-Bayadh; same day arrested high-ranking AQIM member suspected of planning suicide attacks on Ghardaïa. Tensions over economic situation in south continued: thousands of jobless youths demonstrated in Tamanrasset, Ghardaïa. President Bouteflika 9 April appointed commission of experts to revise constitution, promised during Jan 2011 upheaval. Govt 22 April refuted allegations Ansar Dine seeking refuge on Algerian territory. Bouteflika hospitalised in Paris 28 April following "mild stroke". 3 guards killed in terrorist attack in Tipaza 28 April, 70km from Algiers.

- "Le géant qui a peur de son ombre", *Jeune Afrique*, 22 April 2013.

➤ **Egypt** Amid ongoing violent clashes between protesters and police, anti-govt protesters 12 April attempted assault on Muslim Brotherhood (MB) HQ in Alexandria and presidential palace in Cairo. Pro-MB and other Islamists 19 April staged protest demanding judicial purge to remove judges linked to Mubarak regime; Justice Minister Ahmed Mekki resigned 21 April pre-empting removal in forthcoming cabinet reshuffle, presidential legal adviser quit 23 April. President Morsi 10 April dropped charges against journalists for "insulting" him in March, including TV satirist Bassem Youssef. Sectarian violence between Copts and Muslims early April left 7 dead in Abbasaya and Al-Khasous north of Cairo. Reports of violence in Sinai mid-April prompted govt to increase security; Salafi militants in Sinai 17 April fired rockets on Eilat in Israel, no casualties. Security forces reported they dismantled Israeli spy network in northern Sinai. IMF loan negotiations ended 16 April without agreement; Libya, Qatar and Turkey offered financial assistance, Iraq, Libya and Qatar low-cost energy.

- "Egypt Justice Minister Mekky quits 'over cleansing call'", BBC, 21 April 2013.

➤ **Libya** Car bomb exploded outside French embassy in Tripoli 22 April, injuring 5 and sparking fears of further attacks in capital. Confrontations between govt and armed groups continued: gunmen 1 April stormed Tripoli's main Jadaida Prison, day after over 100 brigade members stormed Justice Ministry following order to transfer all detention centres staffed by brigades to govt control. Principal advisor to PM Zeidan, abducted 31 March by armed men, released 9 April; National Congress 9 April passed law criminalising abductions and torture in effort to hold armed groups accountable. Gunmen late April surrounded foreign and justice ministries, attempt to storm interior ministry failed; said will lift blockade when govt adopts Political Isolation Bill banning Qadhafi-era officials from holding govt positions. PM Zeidan 17 April announced plans to create separate "National Guard" manned exclusively by members of revolutionary brigades as part of efforts to integrate armed groups into state security forces. Authorities 13 April said 20 arrested following attack on police compound in Sabha, south. Police convoy ambushed by gunmen in Tripoli suburb 18 April, 1 killed. National Congress 10 April voted to hold national elections for Constituent Assembly.

- "Why Libya's militias are up in arms", BBC, 1 May 2013.

New Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°140, *Trial by Error: Justice in Post-Qadhafi Libya*, 17 April 2013. Unless Libya breaks the cycle of violence and urgently reforms its justice system, there is a real risk of an increase in assassinations, urban violence and communal conflicts.

➤ **Mauritania** Following meeting with President Abdel Aziz, French FM 15 April announced Mauritania will contribute troops to UN force in Mali, possibly 1,800 soldiers. National Pact for Development and Democracy, Movement for Refoundation and Democratic Renewal parties 21 April left presidential coalition CPM to join opposition. Chairman of opposition coalition Coordination of Democratic Opposition (COD) Mohamed Jamil Mansour 5 April said COD rejects any electoral process which is not result of national consensus, reiterated demand that Abdel Aziz cede power. Opposition MPs 23 April established commission to investigate allegations of drug trafficking and illegal business deals involving Abdel Aziz

▪ [“La Mauritanie prête à envoyer des hommes au Mali”](#), RFI, 19 April 2013.

➤ **Morocco** Socio-economic discontent continued following 31 March mass anti-govt protest; spokesperson for Islamist association Al-Adl Wal-Ihsan 23 April claimed country run by “shadow govt”, warned social and economic conditions could cause “explosion” among disaffected youth. Violent clashes between students and security forces in Fez mid-April resulted in death of 1 student. French President Hollande visited 4 April, hailed govt’s autonomy initiative for Western Sahara as “serious and credible” basis for solution. Interior minister visited Algeria to discuss regional security and border issue; Algerian interior minister visited Rabat, said border issue could be resolved soon.

▪ [“Morocco opposition Islamists warn of ‘explosion’”](#), AFP, 23 April 2013.

➤ **Tunisia** Political tensions eased somewhat as 3-day “national dialogue” talks between ruling An-Nahda and centrist opposition forces 18 April produced deal on 29 Dec 2013 election date; talks boycotted by main trade union UGTT and left-wing parties. An-

Nahda Shura Council 29 April agreed on mixed parliamentary/presidential political system. Fears remain of increased political, economically-motivated violence ahead of polls amid frustrations over price increases, declining standards of living. Several days of violence mid-April in northern city Bizerte after soccer team barred from national championship, with riots taking on economic, anti-govt tone. Thousands protested in eastern city Sfax 21 April against An-Nahda govt, rising prices, alliance with Qatar. National Constituent Assembly (NCA) 23 April completed constitution draft. Some NCA members submitted motion to impeach President Marzouki 16 April, expected to survive challenge. Military court sentenced ousted president Ben Ali to life imprisonment in absentia. Govt and IMF finalised agreement on \$1.75b loan. Govt released names of 5 suspects in Feb assassination of Chokri Belaid. Hundreds of Salafi youths reportedly arrested in crackdown on recruiting centres training them to fight with Syrian rebels.

▪ [“Tunisian government has no hidden agendas, says new prime minister”](#), *Guardian*, 2 April 2013.

➤ **Western Sahara** Polisario Front 17 April issued statement denying jihadis from Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) have entered Sahrawi refugee camps. Human Rights Watch 17 April called on UNSC to task UN with monitoring rights violations in Western Sahara and in refugee camps around Tindouf, Algeria; following U.S. demand that MINURSO mandate be expanded to carry out “monitoring and reporting of human rights”, Morocco called off military exercises with U.S., engaged in intense lobbying against UN mission’s rights mandate at UNSC; 23 April MINURSO resolution now encourages “enhanced efforts and progress on human rights”.

▪ [“U.N. failure boosts Western Sahara conflict risk: Polisario”](#), Reuters, 22 April 2013.

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“Crisis Group reports on the South China Sea have provided the most thorough analysis available in the public domain of the complex range of factors impacting on conflicting territorial claims in what has now become one of the most strategically significant regions in the world.”

Kevin Rudd, 26th Prime Minister of Australia, February 2013