

# CrisisWatch

A monthly bulletin on current and potential conflicts

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## August 2014 – Trends

### ↓ Deteriorated situations

[Cameroon](#), [Central African Republic](#), [Iraq](#), [Israel-Palestine](#), [Kashmir](#), [Kenya](#),  
[Lebanon](#), [Libya](#), [Pakistan](#), [Syria](#), [Ukraine](#), [Yemen](#)

### ↑ Improved situations

## September 2014 – Watchlist

### 💣\* Conflict risk alerts

[Libya](#), [Pakistan](#), [Yemen](#)

### ☰ Conflict resolution opportunities

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**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.

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**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.

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## Table of Contents

AFRICA .....	3
Central Africa .....	3
Horn of Africa .....	4
Southern Africa .....	6
West Africa .....	7
ASIA.....	10
North East Asia .....	10
South Asia.....	11
South East Asia.....	13
EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA.....	15
Balkans.....	15
Caucasus.....	15
Eastern Europe .....	16
Western Europe/Mediterranean .....	17
Central Asia .....	18
LATIN AMERICA .....	19
MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA .....	21
Eastern Mediterranean .....	21
Gulf.....	22
North Africa.....	23

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# Africa

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## Central Africa

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➔ **Burundi** Ahead of 2015 presidential elections, President Nkurunziza still silent on rumoured intention to run; opposition UPRONA, FRODEBU still divided. As donor countries pledged financial electoral assistance, Netherlands ambassador Jolke Oppeval 1 Aug called for political parties' reunification, political space, non-violence. Burundi and Rwanda authorities 25 Aug launched joint investigation following late Aug discovery of 5 corpses in north-western Lake Rweru; about 40 corpses reported by fishermen since July.

- ["Elections burundaises: Bujumbura questionné par les bailleurs"](#), RFI, 2 Aug. 2014.

⚠ **Cameroon** Nigerian Islamist sect Boko Haram (BH) intensified attacks in Far North: 11 killed, 2 kidnapped 6 Aug in Zigue-Zigague village; 4 killed, 2 kidnapped 7 Aug in Tchakarmani village; 3 killed, 17 kidnapped 18 Aug in Greya village. Clashes between BH militants and Cameroonian Defense Forces reported 24-27 Aug in Fotokol, Achigachia, Kerewa, Mamani and Garkara. Amid revival of violence, authorities 15 Aug announced reorganisation of security apparatus in Far North, establishment of unified operational command, special force against terrorism, emergency development plan.

- ["Le Cameroun réorganise à nouveau son dispositif militaire"](#), RFI, 15 Aug. 2014.

⚠ **Central African Republic** Late July Brazzaville ceasefire agreement not implemented, repeated clashes throughout month: 50 Seleka, 2 MISCA soldiers killed early Aug in clashes in Batangafo; 17 Seleka killed 5 Aug in clashes with Sangaris forces; at least 34 civilians killed by former Seleka 17 Aug in Mbrès; anti-balaka and Seleka 14 Aug clashed in Bangui's PK11 district; 5 civilians killed 19-20 Aug in clashes between gunmen and EUFOR troops in Bangui's PK5 district; 17 Seleka reportedly killed 24 Aug in fighting between rival factions in Bambari. President Samba Panza 10 Aug appointed Mahamat Kamoun, former Seleka leader Michel Djotodia's chief of staff, as new PM. Kamoun 22 Aug announced govt, including 3 former Seleka, 2 anti-balaka; mixed reactions from opposition; Seleka discontented, 31 Aug expelled ministers from group. Seleka communiqué 17 Aug announced new northern state of Dar El Kouti; quickly denied by Seleka leadership. UN SRSG Gaye 19 Aug confirmed 7,600 UN peacekeepers to take over from AU forces in Sept; 65% troops due 15 Sept.

- ["Mahamat Kanoum a formé son gouvernement"](#), *Jeune Afrique*, 22 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Chad** French counterterrorism operation "Barkhane" launched 1 Aug. Border patrols reinforced against increasing Nigerian Islamist sect Boko Haram (BH) threat. 85 Nigerian hostages, abducted by BH early Aug from Doro Baga (Nigeria), rescued 16 Aug by Chadian border patrol. Ethnic clashes between Zaga gold prospectors crossing from Niger and Toubous mid-Aug in Tibesti, 500 prospectors arrested after reported attack; 2,500 more gold prospectors returning from Niger arrested by army in Borkou.

- ["Des soldats tchadiens libèrent 85 otages de Boko Haram"](#), *Jeune Afrique*, 17 Aug. 2014.

➔ **DR Congo** UN SRSG Kobler 7 Aug proposed benchmarks for Oct evaluation of FDLR disarmament; regional ICGLR summit 14 Aug also set Oct benchmarks, threatened military action against FDLR in case of noncompliance; Rwanda called for quicker military action. ICGLR also called on DRC govt to provide roadmap for M23 repatriation. UNSC 26 Aug called for swift neutralisation of FDLR, stressed MONUSO's mandate allowing unilateral and joint military operations. Constitutional reform debate intensified: opposition parties 4 Aug protested against reform in Kinshasa; Union pour la Nation Congolaise (UNC) MP Jean-Bertrand Ewanga arrested 5 Aug, charged with insulting president; majority coalition's internal debate held 25 Aug, after request by Social Movement for Renewal (MSR); national referendum on constitutional reform closely considered.

- ["Un ultimatum lancé aux FDLR à l'issue du sommet des Grands Lacs"](#), RFI, 15 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Rwanda** FM Louise Mushikiwabo 15 Aug warned against further delay in taking military action against FDLR in DRC; representative at UNSC meeting early Aug expressed same sentiments. Arrest of retired high level army officers General Franck Rusagara, Captain David Kabuye and Colonel Tom Byabagamba confirmed 23 Aug by Ministry of Defence spokesperson. Border demarcation process between DRC and Rwanda revived, expert team 25-30 Aug assessed situation.

- ["Nombreuses réactions après l'ultimatum lancé aux FDLR"](#), RFI, 16 Aug. 2014.

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## Horn of Africa

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➔ **Eritrea** Opposition Red Sea Afar Democratic Organisation (RSADO) 12 Aug vowed to step up military efforts to topple regime, accused govt of ethnic cleansing, called for new constitution and democratic federalism.

- ["Eritrea opposition vows to oust regime, establish federal system"](#), Sudan Tribune, 13 Aug. 2014.

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**New** Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°100, [Eritrea: Ending the Exodus?](#), 8 August 2014. Eritrea's youth exodus has significantly reduced the young nation's human capital. While this has had advantages for the government – allowing the departure of those most dissatisfied and most likely to press for political change – the growing social and political impact of mass migration at home and abroad demands concerted domestic and international action.

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➔ **Ethiopia** Pressure on media continued: Justice Ministry 12 Aug announced charges against six weeklies, including dissemination of false rumours with intent to overthrow govt. Federal court 21 Aug denied bail to nine bloggers and journalists detained under anti-terrorism law. EU Delegation 2 Aug expressed concern over detained bloggers and journalists, political space in upcoming elections. Somali PM Sheikh Ahmed 20 Aug visited Addis to discuss refugee situation. Govt 14 Aug reached agreement with Sudan on joint military force to ensure border security. Tripartite talks with Egypt and Sudan over Renaissance Dam resumed 25 Aug, agreed to additional studies and establishment of Tripartite National Committee to be set up.

- ["EU says concerned over the detained bloggers, election"](#), *Reporter*, 2 Aug. 2014.

↓ **Kenya** Clan violence in northeast intensified: Kenyan Red Cross reported at least 77 killed in clashes between Degodia and Garre in Mandera county late Aug. Lamu county remained tense: 4 kidnapped 20 Aug by gunmen in Bodhai, Lamu East, 3 later released, 1 killed; curfew period extended by one month 21 Aug. President Kenyatta 1 Aug ordered repossession of 500,000 acres of Lamu county land irregularly allocated to 22 private entities. Al-Shabaab militants 9 Aug injured 2 police officers in attack on Fino police station. Unknown armed group 4 Aug attacked Mandera county govt offices. Suspected Al-Shabaab militia 18 Aug attacked Bodhei Police Post in Garissa County, burnt vehicle and 2 houses. 16 governors aligned with Jubilee coalition 21 Aug withdrew support for referendum on devolution.

- [“Violence imperils Kenya port project”](#), *Wall Street Journal*, 19 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Somalia** Al-Shabaab attacks continued: MP Aden Madeer killed 1 Aug in Mogadishu; clashes between SFG and Al-Shabaab in Bardale district 5 Aug killed at least 20; 12 killed in Al-Shabaab attack on high security prison 31 Aug in Mogadishu; at least 18 killed in 8 Aug attack on Somali army and AMISOM bases near Bullo Burte, Bay Region. President Hassan Sheikh 5 Aug announced new and imminent AMISOM/SFG military offensive against Al-Shabaab-controlled ports, including Barawe. AMISOM forces 14 Aug seized 3 villages in Hiran region, 20 Aug seized village in Gedo region, 25 Aug seized town in Bakol region, 30 Aug seized town in Lower Shabelle region. Military court 21 Aug sentenced 7 Al-Shabaab members to death for killing detained govt soldier. 13 killed 15 Aug in SFG/AMISOM raid to disarm Mogadishu militia loyal to former Wadajir district commissioner Ahmed Adow “Dai”. Forces of Marehan clan-warlord Barre Hirale and Jubaland militias clashed 5 Aug in Gobweyn, 10km from Kismayo; Hirale has vowed to capture Kismayo, decided 27 Aug to join Jubaland peace process. Shabelle Media Network, Sky FM shut down by govt 15 Aug, 3 journalists face trial. Puntland 19 Aug agreed to engage in mediation with SFG after autonomous region’s president Gas reacted angrily to 30 July agreement to merge Galmudug, Human and Heeb and Ahlu Sunna Wal Jamma administrations under one interim “central state administration”; participation conditional on presence of international stakeholders. At least 1 killed 25 Aug after security forces opened fire on demonstrators protesting scheduled visit to Baidoa in Baay Region by Somali PM and UN Special Envoy to Somalia Nicholas Kay.

- [“Somali warlord Ahmed Dai ‘on the run’ after disarmament raid”](#), BBC, 15 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Somaliland** Opposition parties UCID and Wadani 11 Aug called for reconstitution of NEC and establishment of transitional govt before end of 2014 to ensure credible June 2015 elections. Ruling Peace, Unity and Development Party (also known as Kulmiye) Chairman 13 Aug said Somaliland ready to hold elections in 2015. Former Somalia PM Ali Khalif Glaydh elected new president of self-declared Khatumo state 14 Aug. UN envoy Nicholas Kay 20 Aug announced UNSOM will open branch office in Hargeisa. Security forces 26 Aug captured Sahdheer village in disputed Sool region, disrupted inauguration ceremony of newly elected president of self-declared Khatumo State. UN, U.S., EU representatives 29 Aug called for withdrawal of militias from Sahdheer.

- [“Somaliland Electoral Commission under fire as opposition warns against postponing poll”](#), Sabahi, 19 Aug. 2014.

➔ **South Sudan** Warring parties missed 10 Aug deadline for formation of transitional govt; AU, UNSC, IGAD renewed threats of punitive action against spoilers. IGAD 25 Aug announced new ceasefire deal and protocol for formation of transitional unity govt, including provisions on opposition PM, transitional justice, finance management and humanitarian concerns; threatened sanctions if govt not formed within 45 days. SPLM-IO 28 Aug refused to sign deal, said unhappy with PM provisions. Violence continued including killing of several aid workers; fresh fighting erupted 15 Aug in Unity and Jonglei states; further clashes outside Malakal town 21 Aug. UN helicopter 26 Aug crashed near Bentiu, killing 3; both sides traded accusations. UNDPKO deputy head 6 Aug said humanitarian aid operations in South Sudan largest in world; UN aid chief 28 Aug warned of famine if violence continues.

- ["South Sudan crisis: Riek Machar rebels reject deal"](#), BBC, 28 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Sudan** Political opposition National Umma Party (NUP) and armed opposition Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) 8 Aug signed "Paris Declaration", pledging to unilateral SRF 2-month ceasefire, efforts to end war, genuine dialogue towards transitional govt and democracy; opposition parties welcomed declaration. Ruling National Congress Party (NCP) 18 Aug rejected declaration; 6 Aug maintained commitment to April 2015 elections. National Dialogue Committee 9 Aug announced framework agreement, 31 Aug announced 6 subcommittees, possible release of political prisoners; talks to convene early Sept; opposition SRF, National consensus Forces (NCF), NUP still boycotting. Govt forces 5-7 Aug raided South Darfur IDP camps; Sudan Liberation Army-Abdelwahid faction (SLA-AW) 13 Aug attacked Jebel Marra govt bases. Rezeigat and Ma'aliya tribes late Aug clashed over land, cattle in East Darfur, UN reported over 300 killed. UNAMID 11 Aug announced launch of investigations into allegations UNAMID covered-up crimes by govt-backed militias in Darfur.

- ["NUP, SRF call on Sudanese opposition to unify to restore peace and democracy"](#), Sudan Tribune, 8 Aug. 2014.

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## Southern Africa

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➔ **Lesotho** PM Thabane accused army and deputy PM Metsing of coup attempt after reported gunfire, army seizure of key govt buildings and police HQ in Maseru 30 Aug; Thabane fled to S Africa; army spokesman 30 Aug denied coup. Rumours further fuelled by reported attempted assassination of Lt. Gen. Maaparankoe Mahao, recently appointed by Thabane. South African president Zuma 31 Aug invited Thabane, Metsing for talks with SADC ministers.

- ["Lesotho leaders hold emergency talks after army tries coup"](#), Bloomberg, 1 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Madagascar** Tensions continued over former President Ravalomanana's desire to return from exile and President Rajaonarimampianina's refusal. After arrests of journalists late July, civil society organisations early Aug warned of new cyberlaw prohibiting insult and defamation of state representative. 15 killed in mid-Aug clashes between armed cattle rustlers and security forces in southern Amboasary district.

- ["Tension entre l'ancien et le nouveau président"](#), RFI, 12 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Mozambique** Govt, RENAMO 24 Aug signed ceasefire; paving way for amnesty for RENAMO militants and integration into security forces; RENAMO leader Dlhakama expected to leave Gorongosa hideout to meet President Guebuza 5 Sept. Campaign for mid-Oct presidential elections started 31 Aug.

- [“Accord de cessez-le-feu entre la Renamo et le gouvernement”](#), RFI, 25 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Zimbabwe** Amid ruling Zanu-PF internal crisis, First Lady Grace Mugabe confirmed as party’s Womens’ League leader 15 Aug, joined politburo, could succeed husband in 2018. Southern African Development Community (SADC) leaders 17 Aug met in Victoria Falls, appointed Mugabe as new chairman. Amid economic downturn, Mugabe 25-31 Aug visited China, 31 Aug said secured economic support from Beijing.

- [“Mugabe makes state visit to China”](#), SkyNews, 25 Aug. 2014.

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## West Africa

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➔ **Burkina Faso** Amid continued tensions over possible referendum to amend constitution and remove 2-term rule, President Compaoré 7 Aug said “no strong institutions without strong men”; opposition parties 23 Aug marched in Ouagadougou against referendum. Federation of African Journalists 17 Aug warned of threat to press freedom. Amid regional Ebola outbreak, govt early-Aug reinforced epidemic surveillance, border control; mid-Aug postponed AU summit.

- [“Manifestation d’ampleur contre un potentiel référendum”](#), *Jeune Afrique*, 24 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Côte d’Ivoire** Govt, opposition 5 Aug reached agreement on new Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), 17 members sworn in 11 Aug. President Ouattara 6 Aug issued presidential pardons for 3,000 prisoners convicted of minor crimes; opposition FPI 18 Aug called for release of 500 remaining political prisoners. FPI committee 14 Aug reached agreement on party leadership; 30 Aug suspended internal meeting after continued tensions over party’s participation in IEC. Ouattara 7 Aug announced special fund to support victims of political violence and work of Commission for Truth, Dialogue and Reconciliation.

- [“Les 17 membres de la CEI ont prêté serment”](#), FPI, 12 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Guinea** Electoral Commission (CENI) 18 Aug selected French company to help select operator to review electoral roll ahead of local elections; opposition criticised lack of political consultation, 28 Aug called for commission’s dissolution. Coordination of Extra-Parliamentary Opposition (COEP) 5 Aug announced end of cooperation with parliamentary opposition citing refusal to discuss common political platform and code of conduct. Human Rights NGOs 4 Aug called for release of 5 military officers held without trial since July 2011 for attack on President Condé’s home; 5 Aug deplored lack of progress in investigations into 2012 killing of civilians in Zogota by security forces. Govt 13 Aug declared state of emergency following Ebola outbreak, tightened border control.

- [“Elections en Guinée : L’opposition condamne les démarches de la CENI...”](#), *Africaguinee*, 21 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Guinea-Bissau** New regime continued reforms, encouraging international re-engagement: all internal checkpoints but one lifted 11 Aug; President Vaz 18 Aug called for multi-ethnic presidential guard. Conference for national reconciliation to be held in 2015. Database of country's 13,000 civil servants stolen 22 Aug as govt prepares cuts to civil service.

- ["Une conférence de réconciliation nationale prévue début 2015"](#), StarAfrica, 25 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Liberia** Violence erupted in Monrovia following Ebola outbreak: armed men 16 Aug raided West Point slum clinic, released patients; authorities 19 Aug imposed lock-down on slum, triggering riots; 1 killed, 4 wounded in reported police gunfire; lock-down lifted 30 Aug. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf 6 Aug declared state of emergency; 26 Aug dismissed ministers and govt officials refusing to return home to fight epidemic. Postponement of Oct senatorial elections under consideration.

- ["Clashes erupt as Liberia sets an Ebola quarantine"](#), *New York Times*, 20 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Mali** Pro-Azawad groups late Aug met in Ouagadougou to harmonise positions ahead of 1 Sept negotiations in Algiers; MNLA, MAA 28 Aug agreed to end hostilities, keep Azawad part of Mali, support secular govt. New pro-unity Self-Defence Group of Imrad Touareg and Allies (GATIA) created mid-Aug, requested seat in negotiations; move opposed by other Tuareg organisations. New MAA splinter group, Popular Movement for the Salvation of Azawad (MPSA), announced 15 Aug. Amid shifting alliances, 2 MAA factions 9 Aug clashed around Lerneb; tensions between MNLA and MAA reported early Aug. French army 1 Aug officially launched Operation "Bharkane" in Sahel; 10 Aug launched airstrike on extremist groups around Essakane; arrested suspected jihadis near Timbuktu; rockets fired near Gao Barkhane base 12 Aug. Jihadi Ansar Dine leader Iyad Ag Ghali 5 Aug expressed support for AQIM in Youtube video, threatened attacks on French "crusaders". 2 MINUSMA peacekeepers killed, 4 wounded in jihadi suicide attack on Ber camp 16 Aug.

- ["Mali rebel factions agree to end hostilities ahead of September talks"](#), Reuters, 29 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Niger** 3 opposition National Movement for the Development of Society (MNSD) figures arrested 2 Aug after holding unauthorised meeting in Zinder; 2 quickly released, 1 detained for "spreading false information". Minister of Agriculture Abdou Labo arrested and charged 23 Aug for complicity in baby trafficking; opposition figure and head of National Assembly Hama Amadou 27 Aug fled to Burkina Faso and later France after wife's arrest and lifting of parliamentary immunity, said probe politically motivated. President Issoufou 2 Aug announced deal with Chad's govt to export Niger's oil through Chadian pipeline.

- ["Niger politician flees baby-trafficking probe"](#), Al Jazeera, 28 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Nigeria** Clashes between Nigerian military and Boko Haram (BH) continued in northeast. BH 5 Aug invaded Gwoza, killing 100, burned govt buildings, churches; 10 Aug attacked Doro Baga, killing 20, abducting some 100; late Aug attacked Adamawa towns; 28 Aug took Gamboru Ngala. Military 8 Aug reported recapture of 4 towns; 14 Aug reported over 50 insurgents, 30 soldiers killed in battles around Pilka, Kirawa, Gwoza. 480 soldiers outgunned by BH 24 Aug crossed into Cameroon; authorities 25 Aug claimed "tactical manoeuvre". BH leader Abubakar Shekau 24 Aug declared crea-

tion of Islamic caliphate in Gwoza; late Aug extended to Adamawa. UNOCHA 5 Aug reported 650,000 displaced in northeast, 200,000 increase since May. Govt 1 Aug declared N58.79bn (\$456mn) raised for Victims Support Fund. At least 23 dead in 10 Aug Fulani attack on Zamfara State; 23 killed in rival cult violence in Rivers state early Aug; over 50 killed in communal violence in Nasarawa state late Aug. Amid regional Ebola outbreak, health ministry 6 Aug declared national emergency. 3 years after landmark UN report called for \$1bn pollution cleanup in Ogoniland, NGO report 4 Aug criticized govt and Shell's inaction.

- ["Nigeria rejects Boko Haram 'caliphate' claim"](#), Al Jazeera, 25 Aug. 2014.

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# Asia

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## North East Asia

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➔ **China (internal)** Govt anti-corruption drive continued: investigation into former Politburo Standing Committee member Zhou Yongkang gained unanimous support from all provincial party committees by 18 Aug. Multinational anti-terror drill held 24 Aug by Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Authorities 12 Aug reported 25 sentenced to prison for terrorist activities; govt 23 Aug said 8 executed over 2013 Tiananmen Square attack.

- [“China’s anti-corruption campaign is not all it seems”](#), *Financial Times*, 4 Aug. 2014.

➔ **China/Japan** Tensions continued despite diplomatic efforts: Chinese FM Wang Yi 9 Aug met Japanese counterpart Fumio Kishida at ASEAN Regional Forum in Myanmar, discussed measures to improve bilateral ties reportedly including meeting between Chinese President Xi and Japanese PM Abe. Former Japanese PM Yasuo Fukuda 27 Aug confirmed meeting Xi in July, said no preconditions for meeting between Xi and Abe. Members of Abe’s cabinet 15 Aug visited Yasukuni Shrine on anniversary of Japanese surrender in WWII; Abe sent ritual offerings, spokesman 27 Aug revealed he also sent message honouring convicted war criminals as “martyrs” to April annual ceremony; both incidents drew sharp criticism from China. Tokyo 5 Aug released first defence ministry white paper since reinterpretation of constitution’s Article 9 lifting ban on collective self-defence, criticised China for “dangerous acts”; Tokyo 1 Aug named 158 islands including 5 islets in disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu island group; Beijing criticized moves.

- Yanmei Xie, [“Second Thoughts in Beijing: ‘We Are Still Facing a Powerful Japan’](#)”, *Huffington Post*, 21 Aug. 2014.
- [“Japanese PM Shinzo Abe’s offering to war dead angers China and South Korea”](#), *Guardian*, 15 Aug. 2014.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°258, [Old Scores and New Grudges: Evolving Sino-Japanese Tensions](#), 24 July 2014.

➔ **Korean Peninsula** DPRK 14 Aug test-fired 5 missiles appearing to be new short-range tactical ballistic missiles. China and Russia voiced opposition to possible U.S. Terminal High-Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) missile defence battery in ROK after Han Min-koo, supportive of THAAD, 30 July replaced Kim Kwan-jin as ROK defence minister. 50,000 ROK troops and 30,000 U.S. troops 18 Aug began UN Command (UNC) and Combined Forces Command (CFC) multinational and combined military exercise; DPRK criticised exercise, threatened retaliation.

- [“North Korea fires rockets as Pope arrives in South Korea”](#), *Telegraph*, 14 Aug. 2014.

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**New** Crisis Group Asia Report N°259, [Risks of Intelligence Pathologies in South Korea](#), 5 August 2014. In the shadow of growing North Korean threats, South Korea needs to reform its intelligence apparatus to restore public confidence while enhancing the country’s intelligence capacity.

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## South Asia

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➔ **Afghanistan** Election stalemate continued despite U.S. Sec State Kerry early Aug persuading presidential candidates Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani to sign statement pledging support for outcome of ongoing ballot audit process, renewing commitment to July political deal; Ghani campaign days later expressed doubt about power-sharing aspects of deal, Abdullah-supporter Balkh Governor Atta Mohammed Noor warned of possible civil uprisings. Abdullah 27 Aug boycotted audit protesting process for invalidating votes; pledged to rejoin if demands met in talks with UN. Security forces 11 Aug started disarming armed groups in central Parwan province, stronghold of Abdullah support. Economic effect of political deadlock underscored by govt's 17 Aug announcement of at least 50% decline in revenue since first election round in April. Pakistani newspaper 4 Aug reported Hezb-e-Islami insurgent faction negotiated joining new govt with Abdullah, Ghani; both candidates denied claim. Ministry of Defence 17 Aug rejected talks with Taliban, disavowing statement by special forces commander in Helmand announcing pursuit of local deal with insurgents. Kandahar chief of police, Brigadier-General Abdul Raziq, 7 Aug said 171 insurgents killed in recent operations, Taliban suspects killed rather than captured. Nangarhar province security officials 14 Aug claimed 145 Taliban killed in operation, including 23 Pakistanis.

- ["Unity government effort in doubt as candidate boycotts election audit"](#), *New York Times*, 27 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Bangladesh** Prospects of reconciliation between ruling Awami League (AL) and opposition Bangladesh National Party (BNP) remained slim: govt 4 Aug approved broadcast policy criticised by opposition and civil society for threatening freedom of expression; policy challenged in Supreme Court 18 Aug, BNP held protests in Dhaka. Govt claimed policy merely "guidelines", not enforceable. Draft act on NGOs pending before parliament: regulates activities of NGOs receiving foreign funds, penalises NGOs allegedly involved in activities deemed "illegal or harmful for country". Cabinet 18 Aug approved draft constitutional amendment restoring parliament's authority to impeach Supreme Court judges; criticised by prominent lawyers, former judges for undermining judicial independence. Police continued raids against extremist group Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), responsible for 2005 bombings, following late July arrest of 3 suspected activists in Dhaka; state minister for home affairs Asaduzzam Khan said JMB regrouping, seeking links with international terrorist groups including al-Qaeda.

- ["Bangladesh cabinet okays bill to empower parliament impeach judges"](#), Xinhua News Agency, 18 Aug. 2014.

➔ **India (non-Kashmir)** At least 15 killed in Assam-Nagaland border-clashes mid-month as Naga tribesmen attacked Assam villagers inside Assam; 5 killed by police in following days during protests against police failure to provide security. Several clashes involving Maoist insurgents including 3 police reported killed in Chhattisgarh 9-10 Aug; Maoists early month denied reports 11 insurgents killed late July, said dead

were civilians. Police claimed at least 14 killed in Maoist infighting in Jharkand state 9 Aug. Police 20 Aug reportedly killed 5 Bodo separatists in Assam, 22 Aug killed 3 Garo separatists in Meghalaya state.

- [“Protesters attack police as two Indian states fight over territory”](#), Reuters, 21 Aug. 2014.

↓ **Kashmir** Sharp deterioration in India-Pakistan relations as FM-level talks, aimed at setting agenda for resuming dialogue process, cancelled by India following 18 Aug meeting between Pakistan’s High Commissioner and Kashmiri separatist leaders in New Delhi. Meeting followed resumption of periodic clashes along Line of Control: at least dozen casualties reported. PM Modi 12 Aug visited Kargil in Jammu and Kashmir, first PM visit since 1999, condemned Pakistan for “proxy war of terrorism against India”; allegation strongly refuted by Pakistan. Unknown gunmen 13 Aug reportedly killed 2 police, 1 civilian in Pulwama district; militants 16 Aug shot dead 2 soldiers outside Pulwama air base.

- [“India, Pakistan intensify cross-border firing as ties sour”](#), Reuters, 24 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Nepal** Indian PM Modi early month visited country, highest level visit in 17 years; countries held joint military exercise late month.

- [“Nepal enthralled by visit of India premier, who hits ‘the right notes’”](#), *New York Times*, 3 Aug. 2014.

↓ **\* Pakistan** Month saw mass anti-govt demonstrations threaten fragile democratic transition, raise fears of military intervention: parallel protests led by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Imran Khan and Pakistan Awami Tehreek leader, cleric Tahirul Qadri, demanded PM Sharif’s resignation and parliament’s dissolution, rejected govt offers of negotiated settlement. Govt refuted rumours of military support for protests, relied on army for security in Islamabad despite concerns military could exploit crisis to extend political influence at govt’s expense; coup seen as unlikely by observers, opposed by all mainstream political parties, civil society, and superior courts. Khan and Qadri-led protest marches reached Islamabad from Lahore mid-month after at least 4 Qadri supporters killed in clashes with police early month in Punjab; 19 Aug entered Islamabad’s “Red Zone” containing parliament, other official buildings. Fears spread extremists could exploit situation to attack high level targets, provoke violence. Govt sought peaceful resolution including accepting Khan’s demands for audit of 2013 election result in certain constituencies, judicial commission investigation of vote rigging allegations; talks ongoing late month, both Qadri and Khan continued refusing to modify demand for PM’s resignation. Army chief Raheel Sharif 28 Aug met protest leaders, reportedly agreed to act as guarantor for deal with govt; military’s overt role strongly condemned in parliament, PM Sharif 29 Aug insisted govt only requested military facilitation, no request to act as mediator or guarantor; Khan and Qadri denied responsibility for involving military. At least 3 killed, over 200 wounded in clashes between protesters and police 30-31 Aug. Military continued N Waziristan operation, claimed progress in dismantling militant networks; at least 5 alleged militants killed in 6 Aug U.S. drone strike N Waziristan. Militants launched several high profile attacks including: 13 soldiers injured, 11 attackers killed in 14 Aug attacks on 2 Quetta air force bases, claimed by Pakistani Taliban (TTP) and

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Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). N Waziristan IDP crisis deteriorated further: military continued to refuse access for local and international humanitarian agencies; vacuum exploited by charity wings of jihadi organisations.

- Crisis Group Conflict Alert, "[Protecting Pakistan's Threatened Democracy](#)", 21 Aug. 2014.
- "[Populist's brash tactics stir fears of crisis in Pakistan](#)", *New York Times*, 23 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Sri Lanka** Govt continued crackdown on civil society groups following July banning of NGOs from holding press conferences, other public activities; continued to promise more restrictive laws on NGO operations. Several instances of intimidation including: mob led by Buddhist monks 4 Aug broke into church in Colombo, disrupted meeting between activists, diplomats and families of people missing since 2009 civil war; attack condemned by U.S., European govts. Series of armed attacks late month against main opposition party offices and workers during Uva province election campaign. President Rajapaksa 19 Aug said govt will refuse visas for UN investigators probing war crimes accusations, UNHCHR Pilyal earlier said investigation can continue without access.

- "[Sri Lanka president adamant on barring U.N. war crimes investigators](#)", Reuters, 19 Aug. 2014.

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## South East Asia

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➔ **Indonesia** Constitutional Court 21 Aug rejected challenge to President-elect Joko Widodo's election win, said opponent Prabowo Subianto failed to prove alleged irregularities. President elect met Papuan leaders early Aug, promised to focus on W Papua; new focus to be symbolised by building of presidential palace in regional capital Jayapura; plans received mixed reaction. Indonesian anti-terrorism chief 22 Aug met Chinese senior security official Meng Jianzhu in Beijing, vowed cooperation on anti-terror operations.

- "[Indonesian Court upholds Widodo's electoral win](#)", *Wall Street Journal*, 21 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Myanmar** Myanmar hosted 47th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Naypyitaw 8 Aug, ASEAN Regional Forum 10 Aug attended by U.S. Sec State Kerry; Kerry also met Aung San Suu-Kyi in Yangon. Night-time curfew in Mandalay lifted 11 Aug following early July violence. Ethnic armed-group representatives 15-17 Aug met with govt in Yangon, made progress on text of nationwide ceasefire agreement, but significant divergences remain.

- "[Myanmar cease-fire agreement 'paragraphs' away from completion](#)", Radio Free Asia, 18 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Philippines** Govt and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) peace process continued following July's disagreements over revision to Bangsamoro Basic Law; govt-MILF 15 Aug met to review amendments; revised edition submitted to President Aquino 20 Aug. Multiple clashes, insurgent attacks through month: 2 suspected New People's Army rebels killed 15 Aug in clash with govt forces in Agusan del Sur; 1 killed,

1 kidnapped 16 Aug by Abu Sayyaf militants in Zamboanga City; MILF commander Batush Mohammed and son killed 20 Aug in Sultan sa Barongis, reportedly by gunmen led by another MILF commander.

- [“Draft of Bangsamoro law submitted to Aquino”](#), *Inquirer*, 21 Aug. 2014.

➔ **South China Sea** U.S.-Philippine joint communiqué issued 9 Aug at ASEAN foreign ministers meeting in Myanmar called for parties in S China Sea disputes to “exercise self-restraint”; Chinese FM Wang Yi said tensions exaggerated. Communiqué followed plans revealed 7 Aug by Chinese state media to build lighthouses on 5 islands in South China Sea, including in waters claimed by Vietnam. Vietnam Politburo member Le Hong Anh 26 Aug met Wang Jiariu Director of International Department of Central Committee of Communist Party of China (CPC) to smooth bilateral relations. Chinese fighter jet 19 Aug intercepted U.S. submarine-hunting plane 135 miles east of Hainan Island; U.S. lodged formal complaint through diplomatic channels. Chinese Foreign Ministry 20 Aug rejected Philippine complaint 2 Chinese survey ships present in Reed Bank, said area Chinese territory. Philippine court 5 Aug found 12 Chinese guilty of illegal fishing in Philippine waters, sentenced to 6-12 years jail.

- [“China says South China Sea tension exaggerated”](#), *Financial Times*, 10 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Thailand** Ruling military National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) continued consolidating power in wake of July interim constitution: 1 Aug Royal Decree finalised appointment of 200 National Legislative Assembly (NLA) members, more than half active or retired senior military officials. NLA opened 7 Aug; 21 Aug unanimously elected NCPO chief General Prayuth Chan-ocha PM; King Bhumibol Adulyadej 25 Aug endorsed appointment. Exiled former PM Thaksin Shinawatra 19 Aug urged supporters to allow NCPO to run country for 1 year. National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) 6 Aug recommended criminal prosecution of recently ousted PM Yingluck Shinawatra for alleged dereliction of duty; Yingluck 10 Aug returned to country despite speculation she would go into exile. Red shirt activist Kritsuda Khunasen 2-3 Aug posted videos claiming soldiers tortured her during her detention; NCPO refuted claims, 9 Aug issued arrest warrant for Kritsuda on weapons possession charges. Rights crackdown continued: 2 students participating in pro-democracy play charged with lèse-majesté mid-month; taxi driver sentenced to 2.5 years imprisonment on similar charge 14 Aug. Hundreds of anti-coup leaflets strewn in front of army HQ 15 Aug. Murder charges against former PM Abhisit Vejjajiva and deputy, Suthep Thaugsuban, linked to 2010 protest crackdown, dismissed 28 Aug. Govt 8 Aug said it would continue stalled dialogue with southern insurgents. Attacks continued in south: 2 rangers killed in bombing 11 Aug in Yala province; 1 soldier killed, 3 wounded 21 Aug as militants ambushed truck in same province; ranger injured 14 Aug by IED on highway in Pattani province.

- [“Thailand king endorses coup leader Prayuth as PM”](#), *BBC*, 25 Aug. 2014.

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## Europe and Central Asia

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### Balkans

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➔ **Kosovo** 40 alleged Islamic radicals suspected of fighting in Iraq and Syria arrested 11 Aug in Kosovo; weapons, ammunition, and explosives seized at 60 locations including makeshift mosques. Kosovo's parliament expected to pass legislation soon banning citizens from joining foreign insurgencies.

- ["Kosovo police arrest 40 for fighting in Iraq, Syria"](#), Reuters, 11 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Serbia** PM Vucic 14 Aug suggested legislation criminalising participation in foreign war following reports Serbian mercenaries fighting in Ukraine. Vucic 22 Aug said Serbia will not impose sanctions on Russia after EU and U.S. imposed sanctions over Ukraine crisis.

- ["Serbia says it won't impose sanctions on Russia"](#), RFE/RL, 22 Aug. 2014.

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### Caucasus

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➔ **Armenia** Yazidis demonstrated in Yerevan 14 Aug, called for govt to help Yazidis under siege in northern Iraq; deputy Chief of Staff pledged humanitarian aid. Minister of Economy Garegin Melkonyan 15 Aug said no import restrictions on U.S., EU goods after Armenia joins Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union in Oct. President Sarkisian 25 Aug denied reports govt pressured to join Union. Georgia PM Irakli Garibashvili met Armenian PM Abrahamyan in Yerevan, discussed bilateral cooperation. FM Nalbandyan visited Turkey 28 Aug for inauguration of Turkish President Erdogan.

- ["Yazidis rally in Yerevan"](#), RFE/RL, 14 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Azerbaijan** Repression of rights activists continued including: activist Rasul Jafarov detained 2 Aug on tax evasion and other charges; activist Intigam Aliyev arrested 8 Aug on same charges, reportedly jailed for 3 months. Arif Yunus sentenced to 3 months pre-trial detention following 30 July arrest on treason and fraud charges. Rights activist Ilgar Nasibov attacked 22 Aug by unknown assailants in Nakhichevan exclave; attack condemned by U.S. 28 Aug. Opposition journalist Seymour Hazi detained 29 Aug on hooliganism charges. Criticism over rights record dismissed 28 Aug by Azerbaijani PACE delegate Elkhan Suleymanov. HRW 14 Aug called for Azerbaijan's suspension from Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. Iran late month accused Azerbaijan of being base of Israeli drone Iran downed 26 Aug.

- ["Azerbaijan activists jailed amid crackdown fears"](#), BBC, 15 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** At least 15 reportedly killed in late July-early Aug violence along front line. UNSG Ban, U.S., EU and OSCE all voiced serious concern, called for ceasefire to be respected. Armenian, Russian, U.S., French authorities demanded investigation after Armenian citizen 8 Aug died in Azerbaijani custody. Azeri-captured Armenian soldier Hakob Injighulyan transferred to third country 29 Aug. Armenian PM Abrahamyan, Defense Minister Seyran Oganian visited NK 9 Aug;

Armenian President Sarkisian visited NK 31 Aug; Azerbaijani President Aliyev visited front line 6 Aug. Russian President Putin 10 Aug convened trilateral meeting with Aliyev and Armenian President Sarkisian in Sochi to defuse tensions. UNSC discussed NK during open debate 22 Aug. California Senate 27 Aug passed resolution recognizing independence of NK, U.S. Embassy in Baku stated resolution does not reflect U.S. foreign policy.

- [“Armenia: wondering about Russia’s motives in Karabakh peace process”](#), Eurasianet, 14 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Georgia** Georgian authorities 1 Aug ordered pre-trial detention of former president Saakashvili, 14 Aug added him to country’s wanted list; additional charges of organizing assault on political opponent and embezzlement announced 5 and 13 Aug respectively. PM Garibashvili 11 Aug said investigation part of “efforts to end impunity” following letter from 4 U.S. senators expressing concern. U.S. VP Biden 22 Aug expressed support for Georgia’s bid to join NATO. Presidential elections in Abkhazia held 24 Aug after turbulent and controversial election campaign; opposition leader Raul Khadzhimba won and announced need to strengthen union with Russia. Rallies in support of Iraq’s Yazidis held 13 Aug.

- [“Abkhazia opposition leader wins election, wants stronger ties with Russia”](#), ITAR-TASS, 25 Aug. 2014.

➔ **North Caucasus (Russia)** Kabardian journalist, human rights activist and future candidate for regional legislative seat Timur Kuashev found dead 1 Aug, after receiving threats. In Dagestan: 1 policeman killed, 4 injured in Kizilyurt district 2 Aug; 1 police officer killed by unknown gunmen in Shamilsky District; 2 alleged insurgent supporters killed in Makhachkala 5 Aug, deputy chief of road police killed 8 Aug by 3 unidentified gunmen in Makhachkala; 1 civilian killed, 1 policeman injured by unknown assailants 19 Aug and 2 suspected militants killed by police 26 Aug in Khasavyurt; 2 suspected insurgents killed 26 Aug in Kizilyurt district. Majority of 16 alleged Karachay-Cherkessia insurgents sentenced 8 Aug to 2-20 years prison. 1 alleged insurgent killed, 2 policemen injured 5 Aug in Chegem district of Kabardino-Balkaria. Rasul Gamzatov, Deputy Head of Spiritual Board of Muslims of North Ossetia-Alania, shot dead 16 Aug. Chechen policeman injured in clash between Chechen and Ingush policeman on border of two republics 1 Aug.

- [“OSCE calls for ‘thorough investigation’ of Kabardian journalist’s death”](#), RFE/RL, 5 Aug. 2014.

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## Eastern Europe

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➔ **Belarus** Govt 22 Aug created national panel of experts to investigate possible extremism in media. Belarusian rights activist Bandarenka sentenced 12 Aug to 3 years in prison. Paval Vinahradau opposition activist sentenced to 10 days in jail for using vulgar words in public.

- [“Belarus to create watchdogs to scrutinize media products for signs of extremism”](#), ITAR-TASS, 23 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Moldova** Tensions over Transdniestar continued: Russia 4 Aug accused Moldova and Ukraine of trying to block Russia's access to its troops in Transdniestar; Moldova govt 5 Aug called on Moscow to withdraw troops and weapons from region. Pro-Russian separatists in Transdniestar 7 Aug put their security forces on alert citing alleged military threat from Ukraine and Moldova. Natural-gas pipeline from Romania reducing country's reliance on Russia completed 27 Aug.

- ["Transdniestar puts forces on alert"](#), RFE/RL, 7 Aug. 2014.

⚡ **Ukraine** Major escalation in fighting between govt forces and pro-Russian rebels as army attempted to encircle Donetsk and Luhansk, Russia stepped up support for rebels including reportedly deploying Russian troops inside Ukraine; NATO late month estimated over 1,000 Russian troops in Ukraine, 20,000 near border. UN 29 Aug estimated 2,593 killed since April, more than half in past month alone. Rebel setbacks accompanied by 14 Aug resignation of original leadership: Donetsk military leader Igor Girkin-Strelkov, Donetsk "prime minister" Alexander Borodai resigned; Luhansk rebel chief Valery Bolotov said temporarily relinquishing command. Russia 22 Aug sent humanitarian aid convoy into Ukraine without govt's permission after complaining of delays during days of inspections on border. NATO SG Rasmussen 22 Aug said Russian troops directly attacked Ukrainian forces with "artillery support" both across border and from within Ukraine; Ukrainian govt 25 Aug accused Russian column of armored vehicles of crossing border, engaging in fighting. Russian, Ukrainian presidents 26 Aug held inconclusive talks in Minsk. Russian President Putin 29 Aug publicly congratulated rebel forces on latest offensive. Ukraine President Poroshenko 25 Aug dissolved parliament, called early elections for 28 Oct.

- ["EU leaders deliver sanctions ultimatum to Russia over Ukraine"](#), *Guardian*, 31 Aug. 2014.

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## Western Europe/Mediterranean

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➔ **Cyprus** No progress in reunification talks: negotiators met 25 Aug, discussed "methodology"; Republic of Cyprus President Nicos Anastasiades 28 Aug requested personal involvement of Turkish President Erdoğan. Former Norwegian FM Espen Barth Eide appointed special advisor to UNSG on Cyprus 22 Aug, days after Norwegian Major General Kristin Lund appointed new chief of UN peacekeeping force in Cyprus (UNFICYP).

- ["Negotiators to meet on Tuesday"](#), CyprusMail, 26 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Turkey** Former PM Erdoğan sworn in as 1<sup>st</sup> popularly elected president 28 Aug after winning 10 Aug 1<sup>st</sup> round of presidential elections with 52% of vote; opposition MHP-CHP coalition candidate Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu claimed 38%; pro-Kurdish HDP candidate Selahattin Demirtaş secured impressive 10%, reflecting sympathizers beyond Kurdish constituency. Former FM Ahmet Davutoğlu declared new PM 22 Aug; 29 Aug announced govt. Erdoğan likely to maintain tight control over Turkey and push for executive presidency model. Govt-PKK peace process moved forward: HDP delegations visited jailed PKK chief Abdullah Öcalan and northern Iraq PKK HQ; Deputy PM Beşir Atalay 19 Aug said govt ready to send delegations to northern Iraq, finish roadmap by end of Sept. Hard-line exiled PKK leader Duran Kalkan called for radical

youth to support peace process. Despite progress, 1 Turkish lieutenant killed 19 Aug in army-PKK clash near Van; 1 civilian killed during protests near Diyarbakir same day. As hundreds of PKK fighters joined Syrian PYD affiliate and Iraqi Peshmergas in battle against IS, PKK commander 22 Aug called for EU military support. Govt reportedly toughened border control to prevent European jihadi infiltrations into Syria. Syrian refugees 11 Aug killed Turkish landlord in Gaziantep, prompting unrest and attacks on Syrian businesses and refugees, including in Istanbul.

- [“Erdogan is sworn in as president of Turkey”](#), *New York Times*, 28 Aug. 2014.

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## Central Asia

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➔ **Kazakhstan** President Nazarbayev 6 Aug announced govt reshuffle, reduction of ministries from 17 to 12, creation of super-sized Energy Ministry. Nazarbayev 13 Aug discussed with Russian President Putin and Belarussian President Lukashenko Russia’s sanctions on goods from EU, U.S., Canada and Norway; authorities announced Kazakhstan will not take part in sanctions. Uzbek-Kazakh clashes erupted 27 Aug in Madani village, south; Interior Minister Qasymov 29 Aug said clashes not ethnic.

- [“Nazarbaev announces major streamlining of government”](#), RFE/RL, 6 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Kyrgyzstan** Energy situation continued to deteriorate: Uzbekistan has not resumed gas exports to southern Kyrgyzstan following cuts 14 April; PM Otorbaev 7 Aug expressed concern over Russian petrol deliveries stuck in Kazakhstan (500 wagons); Toktogul reservoir attached to hydropower station that supplies 90% of country’s electricity unusually low. 1 Kyrgyz killed 9 Aug in reported incident in Jirgatol on eastern Kyrgyz-Tajik; officials met 11 Aug to discuss shooting; shootings reported 25 Aug in Gafurov Tajik district between Kyrgyz border guards and Tajik protesters against highway project, 4 reportedly wounded.

- [“Kyrgyzstan’s perfect storm of energy shortages portends winter crisis”](#), EurasiaNet, 8 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Tajikistan** Minister for Internal Affairs 11 Aug said Syria-trained jihadists pose threat; some 200 Tajiks reportedly fighting in Syria. Crackdown continued, including by using 26 July law criminalising recruitment and participation of citizens in armed conflicts; at least 88 detained on terrorism charges since beginning of year including 7 ethnic Uzbek Tajik citizens sentenced 12 Aug to 18 to 22 years jail for allegedly plotting terrorist attack against TALCO aluminium plant. Local media 9 Aug reported Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) planning return to Ferghana Valley from Waziristan, Pakistan.

- [“Tajikistan struggles to stem rise of jihadi recruits”](#), EurasiaNet, 12 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Turkmenistan** Increased fighting along Turkmen-Afghan border; source of violence unclear, some indicate IMU and Chechen involvement, others suggest Taliban. Rare public protest 23 Aug in Ashgabat.

- [“Turkmen defy officials in rare public protest”](#), RFE/RL, 23 Aug. 2014.

## Latin America

➔ **Colombia** President Santos sworn in for 2<sup>nd</sup> term 7 Aug; promised successful conclusion of peace negotiations in near future but also warned FARC his patience with continued attacks on civilian infrastructure not “indefinite”. 27<sup>th</sup> cycle of Cuba-based govt-FARC peace negotiations ended 22 Aug with significant progress in transitional justice discussions. Joint statement called first of five meetings between conflict victims and negotiators 16 Aug “watershed moment”; success helped to reduce tensions over composition of victims’ delegation. Clarification Commission on the Conflict and its Victims 21 Aug began working on academic report examining causes and effects of conflict. Sub-commission of military and civilian experts travelled to Havana 22 Aug to start consultations on the “End of the Conflict”, last substantive agenda item. Commission member Gen Javier Flórez 25 Aug resigned from Joint Chiefs of Staff to work full time on peace process. Constitutional Court 6 Aug upheld for second time Legal Framework for Peace, main legal base for current talks. “We are Defenders” activist group 18 Aug reported decrease in murders of human rights activists in first quarter of 2014 to 30 killed, but increase in number of attacks. President Santos 25 Aug called for investigations into “criminal ring” after detained presidential campaign advisor for opposition claimed in 23 Aug interview he received orders to spy, inter alia, on politicians and peace talks. Prosecutor 28 Aug announced 32 local politicians arrested for alleged ties to right-wing paramilitary groups. Authorities 26 Aug released “Popeye”, former head of Medellín cartel hitmen and right hand of Pablo Escobar, from prison, after having served 22 of a 30-year sentence.

- Javier Ciurlizza, [“Una comisión de la verdad para Colombia”](#), El Colombiano, 23 Aug. 2014.
- [“Breakthroughs and hurdles in Colombia’s peace talks”](#), IPS, 24 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Guatemala** 3 died during several days of clashes in north following 15 Aug arrest of peasant leaders accused of stealing electricity; authorities report 6 police wounded and more than 20 residents arrested. Army chief Rudy Ortiz killed 20 Aug in helicopter crash near Mexico border. News report published 11 Aug claimed more than 1,000 grenades reported stolen from army air base in Petén department instead sold to drug traffickers and other criminal organisations.

- [“Head of Guatemalan military dies in chopper crash”](#), AP, 20 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Mexico** President Peña Nieto 22 Aug unveiled new unit of federal police known as “Gendarmerie”, a 5,000-strong rapid-response force that will be used to protect key economic interests from outbreaks of violent crime. Dalia Santana Pineda, Mayor of Huetamo, Michoacán, arrested 14 Aug on charges of homicide and extortion, reportedly collaborated with Knights Templar cartel. New 500-member “citizen” police squad inaugurated in Michoacán 18 Aug will take over local law enforcement in state capital and 2 other municipalities, eventually replacing municipal police throughout Michoacán. News editor Octavio Rojas Hernández killed 11 Aug in Oaxaca. Authorities reportedly began rounding up undocumented Central American migrants along southern border.

- [“Mexico’s Peña Nieto unveils police unit, much smaller than envisioned”](#), LA Times, 22 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Venezuela** Tensions remained within ruling United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) following late-July endorsement of President Maduro as party chairman; some dissident factions expressed intention to demand “respect for the legacy of Chávez”. Opposition Democratic Unity alliance (MUD) also divided following July resignation of Ramón Guillermo Avelledo as executive sec; successor will be chosen in Sept; radicals pressing ahead with plan for “citizens’ congress” in Oct despite scepticism among moderates. Economic decline continued: reported leak from central bank suggested GDP shrunk by 4% to 5.5% in first half of 2014; annual inflation remains above 70%. Introduction of rationing cards with biometric system for access to basic staples announced; health sector in crisis according to National Medicine Academy. President Maduro 1 Aug met Colombian counterpart at Cartagena summit, discussed smuggling; govt 11 Aug unilaterally announced closure of borders between 2 countries from 10pm until 5am; communities around major crossing points staged protests.

- [“La MUD pacta continuidad hasta las parlamentarias”](#), La Razón, 16 Aug. 2014.

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## Middle East & North Africa

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### Eastern Mediterranean

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↓ **Israel-Palestine** Fighting between Israel and Hamas resumed 19 Aug after 3 consecutive ceasefires over previous 9 days: more than 2100 mostly civilian Palestinians, at least 66 Israeli soldiers and 6 civilians inside Israel killed since early July; Israel limited renewed campaign to air strikes, avoiding another ground operation. Egyptian-brokered ceasefire agreement reached 26 Aug; reportedly called for limited lifting of Gaza travel and trade restrictions; major issues including building of Gaza seaport, release of Palestinian prisoners deferred to later discussions. Hamas denied Israel's claim Gaza militants broke ceasefire 19 Aug; 5 killed in Israeli air strike same day including wife and child of Mohammad Deif, leader of Hamas's military wing; 3 senior Hamas commanders killed 21 Aug. Clashes between Palestinian protesters and Israeli army in W Bank continued, at least 20 Palestinians reported killed since early July.

- Nathan Thrall, "[Hamas's Chances](#)", *London Review of Books*, 1 Aug. 2014.
- "[Gaza truce holding but Israel's Netanyahu under fire at home](#)", Reuters, 27 Aug. 2014.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Middle East Briefing N°39, [Gaza and Israel: New Obstacles, New Solutions](#), 14 July 2014.

↓ **Lebanon** Month saw heavy clashes between Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and Syrian rebels in border town Arsal, first major Syrian rebel incursion directly challenging LAF: close to 100 soldiers, rebels and civilians reported killed; several soldiers captured by rebels. Fighting sparked by 2 Aug arrest of rebel commander reportedly tied to either al-Qaeda-linked Jabhat al-Nusra or Islamic State (formerly ISIL or ISIS): militants subsequently attacked checkpoints, overran govt and security buildings taking dozens hostage, attempted to take control of parts of Arsal; LAF counteroffensive, aided by Syrian Air Force raids, reclaimed city after 5-day battle. LAF launched series of raids targeting Syrians across country, detained tens of alleged members of extremist groups. Saudi Arabia early month offered \$1bn aid to LAF, U.S. later pledged additional arms.

- "[Lebanese Army on alert for Arsal unrest](#)", *Daily Star*, 24 Aug. 2014.

↓ **Syria** Situation continued to worsen for northern armed opposition: regime advance continued in Aleppo, jihadi Islamic State (IS; formerly ISIL or ISIS) gained north of city including capturing series of towns; Aleppo's rebels expressed fears of impending defeat: regime pushing to encircle rebels inside city, IS fighting to recapture additional territory in northern countryside and push further west. Hostilities between regime and IS intensified: regime continued air strikes on IS-held territory near Aleppo and further east, including dozens reported killed in Raqqah city mid-month; IS 8 Aug reportedly captured army base in Raqqah province, scores killed; hundreds reported killed, including in IS mass executions, after several days of fighting concluding in IS capture of Taqba air base, last regime stronghold in Raqqah province, 24 Aug. IS early to mid-month reportedly executed 700 members of al-Sheitat tribe in Deir al-Zour province in response to local uprising against IS rule. Tensions between al-

Qaeda-linked Jabhat al-Nusra (JN) and former rebel allies continued in Idlib province; local JN chief reportedly assassinated 2 Aug. Regime and allied forces continued campaign around Damascus, scores reported killed in air strikes: mid-month seized most of Mleiha town in eastern suburbs after months-long battle; area seen as strategic entry-point to eastern Ghouta, most significant remaining rebel stronghold in greater Damascus. U.S. late month reportedly started surveillance flights following military intervention against IS in Iraq (see Iraq).

- [“Dual threat has mainstream Syrian rebels fearing demise”](#), *New York Times*, 16 Aug. 2014.

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## Gulf

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➔ **Iran** Near-hiatus in nuclear talks as European members of P5+1 observed EU summer vacation; Iran and U.S. tried to keep momentum, 7 Aug met bilaterally in Geneva. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director Yukiya Amano 17 Aug visited Tehran to discuss next steps in resolving past and present issues. Uranium conversion plant required for fulfilling obligations under Nov 2013 interim agreement inaugurated 23 Aug. President Rouhani launched attack on critics of nuclear diplomacy following efforts by rivals to derail diplomacy, including by detaining Washington Post’s correspondent in Tehran late July; hardliners criticised Rouhani’s “inappropriate” tone, intolerance to criticism. Hardliners further encouraged by Supreme Leader Khamenei’s 13 Aug speech reiterating pessimism about prospects of nuclear agreement; hardline-dominated parliament 20 Aug dismissed Rouhani’s science minister. Month saw Iran abandon long-time Iraqi ally PM Maliki (see Iraq): Khamenei 13 Aug publicly backed new Iraqi PM designate Haider al-Abadi; FM Zarif 24 Aug met Abadi in Baghdad.

- Ali Vaez, [“The need for objective criteria in Iran’s nuclear negotiations”](#), *New Europe*, 28 Aug. 2014.
- [“Rouhani calls Iranian critics of his nuclear policy ‘cowards’”](#), *Reuters*, 11 Aug. 2014.

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**New** Crisis Group Middle East Briefing N°40, [Iran and the P5+1: Getting to “Yes”](#), 27 August 2014. November’s deadline could be the last chance to avoid a breakdown in the Iran and the P5+1 nuclear talks. Compromise on Iran’s enrichment capacity is key to ending the impasse, requiring both sides to walk back from maximalist positions and focus on realistic solutions.

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↓ **Iraq** U.S. President Barack Obama 7 Aug announced renewed U.S. military action after Islamic State (IS; formerly ISIL or ISIS) fighters took control of northern Yazidi town Sinjar: scores of Yazidis reported killed, unknown number taken hostage; up to 200,000 fled, thousands trapped in Sinjar mountain range besieged by IS. Obama identified goals of U.S. airstrikes as breaking siege to prevent “genocide” and protecting U.S. personnel and assets “anywhere in Iraq”, emphasising need to stop IS from advancing closer toward Erbil; officials later expanded objectives to include protection of critical infrastructure, including Mosul dam captured by IS early month. Subsequent U.S. airstrikes near Erbil, Sinjar and Mosul dam mid-month helped Kurdish forces recapture dam with help from elite army units, break Sinjar siege: thousands of Yazidis escaped into Syria aided by PKK-linked Syrian Kurdish fighters; reports later emerged hundreds remained stranded. Army, Kurdish forces and Shiite militias sup-

ported by U.S. air strikes 31 Aug reportedly broke IS siege of northern Shiite Turkmen city Amerli. U.S. delivered arms to Kurds, indicated increased support to army contingent upon formation of new broad-based govt. PM Maliki 14 Aug stepped down after Iran, U.S., Saudi Arabia and about half of Maliki's State of Law coalition joined leading Shiite rivals in supporting fellow Dawa party member Haider al-Abadi for PM. FM Zebari, dismissed by Maliki mid-July, 20 Aug rejoined govt along with other Kurdish ministers. Numerous other deadly incidents across country: at least 60 reported killed in army air strikes targeting IS militants in Mosul 6 Aug, 47 killed in car bombing in Baghdad Shiite neighbourhood; govt forces 19 Aug launched another failed attempt to retake Tikrit; Shiite militiamen 22 Aug shot dead at least 68 Sunni worshipers in Diyala province; at least 35 killed next day in Baghdad, Kirkuk bombings, including in suicide attack on Baghdad intelligence HQ.

- Peter Harling, ["IS back in business"](#), *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 1 Sept. 2014.
- ["Iraqi forces 'reach besieged Amerli'"](#), BBC, 31 Aug. 2014.

📌\* **Yemen** Month saw mass Huthi-organised protests in Sanaa against govt's late July lifting of fuel subsidies, including rallies of tens of thousands starting 18 Aug demanding new govt, lower fuel prices; reports armed Huthi supporters gathered around Sanaa. Govt 23 Aug offered resignation within month and formation of economic committee to evaluate subsidies; Huthi leaders rejected offer, reemphasised demands including strengthening authority of body charged with overseeing national dialogue implementation, greater inclusion of Huthis in state institutions. President Hadi late month supported counter rallies largely attended by Sunni Islamist Islah party; hundreds of thousands reportedly rallied across country 29 Aug. Protests underscored growing political polarisation between pro-and anti-Huthi factions: some framed protests as real revolution, others as Iranian-inspired religious coup. Violence continued between Huthis and various adversaries in far north including in Jawf; at least 2 cease-fires collapsed during month. Scores reported killed in clashes between govt forces and al-Qaeda (AQAP) affiliates in southern Hadramout province; militants 8 Aug provoked widespread public anger by killing 14 unarmed soldiers in retaliation for govt strikes. AQAP leadership mid-month praised recent gains by jihadi group Islamic State (IS; formerly ISIL or ISIS) in Iraq without pledging allegiance to IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

- ["Talks on new Yemeni government collapse over Shi'ite Houthi subsidy demands"](#), Reuters, 24 Aug. 2014.

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## North Africa

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➡ **Algeria** 200 Syrian migrants detained 18 Aug in Oued Laâlemga near Libyan border, reportedly en route to Italy aided by Libyan Islamists. Army 12 Aug reportedly killed 2 militants in Ouled Riah.

- ["Algeria arrests 200 Syrian would-be migrants"](#), Reuters, 19 Aug. 2014.

➡ **Egypt** Several killed during protests marking first anniversary of deadly raids on Cairo protest camps, including Rabaa Square mass killings, following ouster of former President Morsi: 9 protesters, 1 police reported killed 14-15 Aug; protester reported killed 8 Aug. Human Rights Watch 12 Aug urged investigation into 2013 killings, said

protest raids may amount to crimes against humanity. MB Freedom and Justice Party dissolved by court 9 Aug; Grand Mufti Shawqi Allam 7 Aug rejected death sentence for Muslim Brotherhood leader Mohamed Badie, late month commuted sentence to life imprisonment. Violence continued in Sinai including reported army killing of 11 militants 3 Aug; jihadi group Ansar Beit al-Maqdis mid-month executed 4 over alleged links to security forces, Israel. 5 police, 4 alleged smugglers reported killed west of Alexandria 5 Aug; unknown gunmen 18 Aug shot dead policeman north of Cairo.

- [“Egypt’s Rabaa massacre: one year on”](#), *Guardian*, 16 Aug. 2014.

📌\* **Libya** Fighting between Islamist leaning Misrata-led militia coalition and anti-Islamist Zintan-led coalition continued in Tripoli, UN attempt to broker ceasefire failed mid-month; Misrata-led forces 23 Aug captured Tripoli’s international airport and Zintanis withdrew from the capital, but armed confrontations likely to continue. Fighting fuelled by instalment of new parliament, Council of Representatives (CoR), in eastern city Tobruk: 158 of 188 newly elected MPs 4 Aug convened for swearing-in ceremony; pro-Misrata factions disputed relocation from Tripoli, claimed transfer of authority to new parliament unconstitutional, CoR biased against Islamist factions; appealed to Supreme Constitutional Court. Former parliament General National Congress (GNC) 25 Aug reconvened in Tripoli, elected Islamist backed Omar al-Hasi PM in challenge to CoR’s authority. Acting PM al-Thinni 28 Aug announced resignation to allow CoR to form new govt. Multiple unidentified air strikes through month targeting Islamist positions; U.S. officials late month said Egypt and UAE responsible, Egypt denied involvement. Fighting between former General Hiftar’s forces and Islamist militants continued in Benghazi. UNSC 27 Aug imposed sanctions on individuals fueling fighting, ordered all arms transfers to be approved by UN sanctions committee.

- [“Rival second Libyan assembly chooses own PM as chaos spreads”](#), Reuters, 25 Aug. 2014.

➡ **Mauritania** President Mohamed Abdel Aziz sworn-in for second term 2 Aug; 2 members of youth opposition movement Kafana, including leader Jacob Ahmad, arrested by security forces 5 Aug over anti-Aziz graffiti.

- [“Two members of Kafana opposition movement, including its head Jacob Ahmad, arrested by security forces”](#), Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, 10 Aug. 2014.

➡ **Morocco** Military mid-month reportedly deployed to borders with Algeria and Western Sahara citing growing fears of terrorist attacks. Interior Ministry 14 Aug said 9 members of recruitment cell for jihadi Islamic State (IS; formerly ISIL) arrested; 22 Aug said another 2 arrested over alleged IS-links.

- [“Morocco dismantles ISIS recruitment cell”](#), AP, 14 Aug. 2014.

➡ **Tunisia** Optimism prevailed throughout month following late July “Gentlemen’s Agreement” on political party behaviour before and after elections, despite worries Oct election could re-ignite tensions. 1,500 electoral lists containing over 15,000 candidates submitted by 29 Aug deadline according to Independent High Electoral Commission (ISIE). Situation remained under control on eastern border, refugee influx from Libyan fighting stable (see Libya); approximately 3,000 Egyptians crossed daily, evacuated to Egypt with Tunisian cooperation. Security remained tense on Algerian border: suspected jihadis 2 Aug killed soldier manning border post; 2 others wounded

by landmine in same area 16 Aug. Police 23 Aug killed 2 women mistaken for members of armed group near Kasserine. Interior ministry 7 Aug said 21 Ansar al-Sharia members allegedly plotting terror attack arrested in Tunis.

- [“Legislative elections - 1,500 electoral lists filed and 15,652 candidates”](#). Tunis Afrique Presse, 31 Aug. 2014.

➔ **Western Sahara** Polisario Front leader Mohamed Abdelaziz 18 Aug sent letter to UN condemning Moroccan military deployment in Western Sahara, continued expulsion of journalists and human rights activists.

- [“Polisario Front condemns expulsion campaign of international observers in occupied Western Sahara”](#), Sahara Press Service, 19 Aug. 2014.