

CrisisWatch

A monthly bulletin on current and potential conflicts
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September 2014 – Trends

↓ Deteriorated situations
[Iraq](#), [Lebanon](#), [Syria](#), [Yemen](#)

↑ Improved situations

October 2014 – Watchlist

💣* Conflict risk alerts
[Syria](#)

☺ Conflict resolution opportunities
[Sudan](#)

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

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

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Africa

Central Africa

➔ **Burundi** Human rights activist Pierre-Claver Mbonimpa, arrested 15 May, granted conditional release 29 Sept due old age, ill-health; transferred to private hospital. Release followed international pressure, including EU threat of sanctions; France's call for release; visit by UN Office in Burundi (BNUB) human rights officials. Leone Ngendakumana, president of opposition coalition ADC-Ikibiri appeared in court 2 Sept, accused of "damaging allegations, slanderous accusations and ethnic aversion" for Feb letter to UNSG Ban warning of risk of political violence and genocide.

- ["Pierre-Claver Mbonimpa remis en liberté provisoire"](#), RFI, 29 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Cameroon** Boko Haram (BH) attacks continued in Far North including attack on border village 18 Sept; over 100 militants reportedly killed by security forces 7 Sept. Assailants from CAR 18 Sept attacked Sabouna; 22 Sept reportedly killed Cameroonian trader in Ngaoui, Adamaoua region. Cameroon reportedly hosting 235,000 refugees from CAR, 43,700 from Nigeria. French lawyer Lydienne Yen-Eyoum sentenced 26 Sept to 25 years jail for embezzlement of public funds.

- ["Cameroon 'kills over 100 Boko Haram fighters'"](#), Al Jazeera, 9 Sept. 2014.

New Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°101, [Cameroon: Prevention is Better than Cure](#), 4 September 2014. Cameroon's apparent stability belies the variety of internal and external pressures threatening the country's future. Without social and political change, a weakened Cameroon could become another flashpoint in the region.

➔ **Central African Republic** UN 15 Sept assumed peacekeeping responsibilities: 6,500 troops, 1,000 police and civilian staff already deployed; full contingent of 12,000 troops expected April 2015. Some elements of AU MISCA mission rehatted under UN MINUSCA: elements of Congo-Brazzaville and whole Equatorial Guinea contingent to leave. EU currently discussing possible 3-month extension of EUFOR. ICC Prosecutor 24 Sept announced opening of investigation into crimes committed in CAR since 2012. 256 ex-Seleka fighters stationed in RDOT camp, Bangui, relocated 5 Sept. Divisions in ex-Seleka coalition deepened: exclusion of high rank officials; three Fulani and Arabic commanders formally left ex-Seleka, announced new movement. Manifest of new armed group Front national de libération du territoire d'Azandé (FNLA) published 10 Sept, said willing to join Seleka rebels. Deputy coordinator of anti-balaka 25 Sept announced coming transformation of movement into political party. Tensions over Mahamat Kamoun's appointment as PM continued; appointment unpopular with France, Congo-Brazzaville. President Samba Panza 6 Sept met with President Obiang; 10 Sept with President Dos Santos in attempt to rally support; Angola gave money and vehicles.

- Thierry Vircoulon, ["Reconciliation in Central African Republic 'a distant prospect'"](#), In Pursuit of Peace, 29 Sept. 2014.
- ["ICC opens investigations into Central African Republic violence"](#), Reuters, 24 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Chad** Five Chadian MINUSMA soldiers killed 18 Sept, north Mali; N'djamena accused UN mission of using Chadian soldiers as human shield. Magistrates trade unions early Sept criticised decree appointing members of Supreme Court, Court of Auditors, denounced appointments as ethnically-based, called on President Deby to address issue. Council of ministers 14 Sept adopted new penal code, abolishing death penalty; human rights NGOs criticized code for tougher legislation against homosexuals. Deby 8 Sept met with Nigerian President Jonathan in N'djamena to deepen cooperation against Boko Haram threat.

- ["Mort des soldats tchadiens au Mali: Ndjamenas s'en prend à l'ONU"](#), RFI, 19 Sept. 2014.

➔ **DR Congo** Authorities 21 Sept said Ebola outbreak under control after cases confirmed late Aug in Equateur province; 40 dead, 71 suspected cases. FDLR mid-Sept clashed with Cheka armed group in Lubero, North Kivu. SADC summit on DRC 15 Sept urged FDLR to meet 6-month deadline, called on international community to initiate resettlement program in third countries. Tensions over possible reform of article 220 of constitution to extend presidential terms limit continued: Senate President Léon Kengo Wa Dondo 15 Sept reiterated opposition; platform of opposition parties rallied against reform 13 and 27 Sept in Kinshasa. MP Jean-Bertrand Ewanga sentenced 11 Sept to one year imprisonment on charges of insulting head of state, govt and parliament. Military reshuffle announced 18 Sept. President Kabila 25 Sept confirmed elections to be held in 2016.

- ["Les églises prêchent contre la modification de la Constitution"](#), RFI, 22 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Rwanda** Repression continued, including among Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) high ranks: former Protocol Director to President Rose Kabuye, former Permanent Secretary Mary Baine, former Rwandan ambassador to the Netherlands Immaculée Uwanyirigira publicly accused of conspiring against RPF early Sept. Senate President Jean-Damascène Ntawukuliryayo 17 Sept resigned after allegations of mismanagement raised in petition from 15 senators. Manzi Byabagamba, brother of recently arrested Colonel Tom Byabagamba and brother-in-law of recently arrested Frank Rusagara, arrested 20 Sept with 8-month pregnant wife and son on undisclosed charges.

- ["Le président du Sénat démissionne"](#), RFI, 18 Sept. 2014.

Horn of Africa

➔ **Ethiopia** Ethiopian FM Tedros Adhanom 4 Sept met with Egyptian counterpart for talks on Renaissance Dam; Egyptian Irrigation Minister Hossam Moghazy 22 Sept visited site. Tripartite National Committee 20-22 Sept convened in Addis Ababa to discuss appointment of international consultant firm to conduct studies recommended by International Panel of Experts, including impact assessment. Russian FM Lavrov 17 Sept visited Ethiopia, discussed bilateral economic ties with Ethiopian PM Hailemariam Desalegn. UN Human Rights Council 19 Sept urged govt to stop misuse of anti-terrorism legislation in rights crackdown. EU Human Rights Committee 24 Sept held hearing on Ethiopia.

- ["UN experts urge Ethiopia to stop using anti-terrorism legislation to curb human rights"](#), *Addis Standard*, 18 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Kenya** Insecurity in Mandera county escalated despite calls on rival clans to stop clashes: one killed in attack along Elway-Rhamu road 7 Sept; two killed in raid on Darkale village 11 Sept; govt official killed 18 Sept in grenade attack in Mandera town; three bodies found 21 Sept in Ashabitu area. Govt 4 Sept announced enhanced security measures. Al-Shabaab threat continued; two govt officials killed by gunmen in Shamu 1 Sept; hand grenades thrown at food kiosk in Wajir 18 Sept; one killed by unknown assailants in Garissa town 19 Sept. Authorities 12 Sept appointed new intelligence chief Major General Philip Kameru. Suspected militant killed 14 Sept in police raid in Bondeni area, Mombasa; 2 German citizens detained 9 Sept for alleged Al-Shabaab membership; 2 Iranians detained 19 Sept, accused of plotting attacks. President Kenyatta 21 Sept announced Kenyan troops to remain deployed in Somalia until stability restored. ICC prosecutor 5 Sept requested adjournment of case against Kenyatta, citing lack of evidence due to govt's lack of cooperation. Kenyatta 7 Sept asked Jubilee coalition governors backing constitutional referendum to resign.

- ["Kenya leader Uhuru Kenyatta's ICC trial shelved"](#), BBC, 5 Sept. 2014.

New Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°102, [Kenya: Al-Shabaab – Closer to Home](#), 25 September 2014. One year after the Westgate attack, Al-Shabaab has become more entrenched and active in Kenya. Meanwhile, the country's immediate post-Westgate unity has broken down in the face of increasing attacks, and the political elites, security services, and ethnic and faith communities are beset by mutual suspicion and recriminations.

➔ **Somalia** Offensive against Al-Shabaab continued: leader Ahmed Abdi Godane killed 1 Sept in U.S. drone strike in Sablale district; Sheikh Ahmad Umar appointed as successor 6 Sept. AMISOM 3 Sept captured town of Jalalaqsi, Hiraan; 33 militants killed in 12 Sep AMISOM attack on Al-Shabaab camps in Lagta Berta near Badhadhe, Lower Juba Region; joint AMISOM/SNA operation in Galgadud region 29 Sept recaptured several localities in El-Bur district. 45-day amnesty offered 3 Sept to al-Shabaab militants who would reject violence. HRW 8 Sept released report documenting sexual abuse by AMISOM forces; UN, U.S. called for investigation. Al-Shabaab attacks continued: at least 14 killed in suicide attack targeting AMISOM convoy in Mogadishu 8 Sept; senior Somali security official killed 13 Sept by Al-Shabaab gunmen in Mogadishu. Six pirates killed 25 Sept in gunfight, reportedly over ransom allegedly paid for release of German-U.S. journalist held hostage since 2012. Former warlord Barre Hirale 16 Sept withdrew from Juba peace process conference. SW3 and SW6 reconciliation conference 14 Sept opened in Baidoa, Bay region. President of Gal-mudug region 22 Sept sent letter to Somali Federal Govt (SFG) and international community protesting against Puntland's decision to close down newly built airstrip south of Galkayo.

- ["Somalia Al-Shabaab commander killed in U.S. airstrike"](#), *Wall Street Journal*, 5 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Somaliland** Interior Minister Hon Waran Cade 13 Sept warned Somali govt to stay clear of Somaliland territorial waters. Two Somaliland soldiers killed by gunmen 18 Sept; two killed, scores injured in clashes between Puntland and Somaliland forces in Dhahar in disputed Sanaag region 25 Sept.

- ["Somalia accuses Norwegian oil explorer DNO of destabilizing country"](#), Reuters, 3 Sept. 2014.

➔ **South Sudan** Fresh fighting erupted around oil facilities in Upper Nile's Renk County 18 Sept. IGAD-led talks resumed 22 Sept following discredited Aug peace deal. Despite agreement on formation of transitional govt, President Kiir 2 Sept began preparations for 2015 general elections. SPLM-IO 22 Sept announced opening office in Kampala; delegation 20 Sept visited Beijing for bilateral talks with Chinese govt; China 21 Sept halted arms sales to govt; 25 Sept confirmed to send 700 troops to UNMISS for civilian protection later this year, particularly around oil installations. U.S. 18 Sept extended sanctions to SPLA Major General Santino Deng, SPLA-IO Major General James Koang Chuol for prolonging conflict. Authorities 16 Sept announced plan to ban foreign aid workers by 15 Oct, to be replaced by nationals; 17 Sept rescinded order.

- ["Scores killed in South Sudan fighting as peace talks resume"](#), VOA, 22 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Sudan** Armed opposition Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF), political opposition National Umma Party (NUP), National Dialogue 7+7 Committee 4 Sept signed statement of principles on inclusive national dialogue under auspices of African Union High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), breaking months of deadlock. President Bashir, ruling National Congress Party (NCP) welcomed agreement; authorities 3 Sept released Sudanese Congress Party (SCP) Sec Gen Samia Kiir, arrested 11 July; 15 Sept released SCP head Ibrahim El Sheikh, detained since 8 June. National Consensus Forces (NCF) continued to boycott national dialogue; representative Mohamed Hassan Babiker detained in Khartoum 12 Sept. AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) 15 Sept praised positive developments, endorsed AUHIP-led meeting of parties and sequenced cessation of hostilities in South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur; urged international community to consider sanctions lift, debt relief, economic support. AUHIP head Mbeki to lead meetings with govt, rebel groups in Oct; but Bashir 27 Sept said NUP leader al-Mahdi to return to Sudan only after rescinding Aug Paris Declaration, 30 Sept rejected SRF participation in talks, ruled out comprehensive solution to conflicts. UNAMID and joint chief mediator for Darfur Mohamed Ibn Chambas to step down, welcomed Mbeki's leadership in mediation.

- ["Agreement on Sudan National Dialogue"](#), Radio Tamazuj, 5 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Uganda** Al-Shabaab threat intensified following leader's death in Somalia: police 13 Sept foiled alleged terror attack in Kampala, seizing explosives, suicide vests; increased security measures; U.S. same day warned citizens to seek shelter; ten charged 24 Sept with terror-related offenses. President Museveni 18 Sept dismissed PM and potential presidential rival Amama Mbabazi, appointed Ruhakana Rugunda. At least 7 killed in clashes over land, cattle on Ugandan-South Sudanese border 19 Sept, sparked by demonstrations in Ugandan border town of Moyo; authorities of both countries 26 Sept agreed on joint border patrols.

- ["Uganda police seize 'explosives from al-Shabab cell'"](#), BBC, 14 Sept. 2014.

Southern Africa

➔ **Madagascar** Electoral Commission 11 Sept postponed 2014 local elections due "insufficient legal framework", prompting civil society discontent. Three former ministers arrested early Sept for alleged corruption while in office. Several opposition par-

ties 6 Sept signed coalition charter. 36 cattle rustlers killed mid-Sept in clashes with security forces and villagers in southern Amboasary district.

- ["le Sud en proie au problème des dahalos"](#), RFI, 15 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Mozambique** President Guebuza, RENAMO leader Dhlakama 5 Sept signed peace deal in Maputo, paving way for RENAMO militants' integration into security forces and party's greater say in election oversight; parliament 8 Sept ratified deal. International military observers expected to monitor ceasefire, disarmament. Dhlakama 4 Sept left Gorongosa hideout; 16 Sept started presidential campaign. Clashes between Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO), Democratic Movement of Mozambique (MDM) supporters in southern Gaza province 23-24 Sept; MDM 27 Sept accused police of illegal night arrests in northern city of Nampula.

- ["Mozambique rivals sign peace deal"](#), Al Jazeera, 5 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Zimbabwe** Amid President Mugabe's succession battle, army chief 15 Sept said army to stay above politics; ruling Zanu-PF, opposition MDC-T still divided. As economic downturn continued, Central Bank early Sept confirmed repayment of \$180mn to China in 1st half of 2014 to keep credit line 5 Sept issued \$50mn bond to import coins; IMF 23 Sept announced country not entitled to debt relief.

- Piers Pigou, ["Much to be done to arrest decline in Zimbabwe"](#), BusinessDay, 30 Sept. 2014.
- ["Birth of a Mugabe dynasty in Zimbabwe?"](#), BBC, 29 Sept. 2014.

New Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°103, [Zimbabwe: Waiting for the Future](#), 29 September 2014. Zimbabwe's growing instability is exacerbated by dire economic decline, endemic governance failures, and tensions over ruling party succession; without major political and economic reforms, the country could slide into being a failed state.

West Africa

➔ **Burkina Faso** 81 ruling Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP) MPs 13 Sept called for President Compaoré to organise referendum to remove constitutional 2-term limit; opposition Union for Progress and Change (UPC), Movement of People for Progress (MPP) opposed; parties met 25 Sept; 29 Sept agreed to inclusive dialogue under Compaoré's leadership. Several MPP members allegedly resigned early Sept.

- ["Dialogue délicat entre la majorité et l'opposition"](#), RFI, 26 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Côte d'Ivoire** Two main opposition parties Ivorian Popular Front (FPI) and Alliance of Democratic Forces (ADF) 9 Sept suspended participation in new Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), condemning pro-Ouattara diplomat Youssouf Bakayoko's reappointment to commission chair. FPI's internal battle over participation in presidential election continued; party hardliners 1 Sept ransacked Abidjan party HQ. Former president Bédié 17 Sept endorsed President Ouattara for 2015 re-election; Bédié's Democratic Party of Cote d'Ivoire (PDCI) will not present own candidate. Akuedo military compound attacked 18 Sept, 6 attackers arrested, unclear whether former rebelion members.

- ["Konan Bédié apporte son soutien à Alassane Ouattara"](#), RFI, 17 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Guinea** Opposition Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea (UFDG) figure Amadou Oury Diallo murdered 15 Sept in Conakry; UFDG said murder political assassination. After pro-opposition websites asserted President Condé had health problems, Condé accused opposition of fuelling tension, attempting to push for military coup. Dialogue on electoral preparations remained stalled. Condé 9 Sept declared “war on Ebola”; 8 Ebola outreach delegates killed by villagers in Womey 16 Sept; 27 suspects arrested 24 Sept.

- [“Ebola : des membres d'une mission de prévention tués en Guinée”](#), *Le Monde*, 19 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Guinea-Bissau** President Vaz 15 Sept dismissed head of armed forces General Antonio Indjai, leader of 2012 coup and indicted by U.S. for narco-terrorism; dismissal key moment in new regime’s 1st spate of dismissals and designations; Vaz 17 Sept named well-respected veteran General Biague Nantam as new army chief.

- [“Guinea-Bissau army chief Gen Antonio Indjai sacked”](#), BBC, 16 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Liberia** Authorities 4 Sept postponed Oct senatorial elections to Dec amid Ebola outbreak; President Sirleaf 13 Sept dismissed 10 govt officials for failing to return home to fight epidemic; Information Minister Lewis Brown 22 Sept warned country could relapse into conflict. World Bank warned of impact to economy; human rights advocates reported growing restrictions to media freedom; U.S. President Obama 16 Sept announced 3,000 troops, 17 treatment centres, health training. Martina Johnson, ex-commander of rebel National Patriotic Front of Liberia, arrested in Belgium 18 Sept, charged with international war crimes committed during civil war.

- [“Liberia fears Ebola crisis will spark war”](#), Al Jazeera, 24 Sept. 2014.
- Crisis Group, [“Statement on Ebola and Conflict in West Africa”](#), 23 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Mali** Inter-Malian peace talks resumed 1 Sept in Algiers. Northern rebel groups HCUA, MNLA, MAA-dissidence, MAA, CPA 12 Sept signed alliance supporting federal solution for Azawad; CMPFR rejected alliance. Three CPA officials 16 Sept dismissed group’s president Ibrahim ag Assaleh for failing to consult with party leadership before signing alliance, ag Assaleh fired mutineers; MAA under similar tensions. MAA splinter group MPSA, SCA 15 Sept complained of exclusion from talks. Govt 18 Sept unveiled regionalisation plan for Azawad, rejected by pro-Azawad coalition. Talks suspended 27 Sept to 13 Oct. Pro-unity march in Bamako 25 Sept. Jihadi attacks continued in Kidal region: 10 Chadian MINUSMA peacekeepers killed, scores wounded in IED attacks; five Tuaregs abducted 16 Sept, 4 released, 1 found killed 23 Sept. AQIM-affiliated Algerian arrested by security forces 13 Sept. President IBK 4 Sept celebrated 1st year in office; 8-13 Sept visited China, secured investments. Opposition 7 Sept denounced general lack of progress; PM Moussa Mara increasingly criticised by majority.

- [“Mali beheading: Abducted Tuareg man decapitated”](#), BBC, 24 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Niger** Opposition figure and head of National Assembly Hama Amadou accused of complicity in baby trafficking, 7 Sept fled to France, said probe politically-motivated, accused govt of attempted poisoning; FM Bazoum Mohamed denied accusations; court 26 Sept issued national arrest warrant for Amadou. Ten opposition MPs 16 Sept filed lawsuit for misuse of public funds following announcement of new €30mn presidential plane. Authorities 1 Sept authorised 2nd U.S. drone base in

Agadez; France Defence Minister Le Drian 9 Sept said Barkhane operation to extend in northern Niger, possibly southern Libya. Influx of Nigerian refugees fleeing Boko Haram violence continued in south-eastern Niger.

- [“Niger issues arrest warrant for opposition chief on the run”](#), Reuters, 30 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Nigeria** Militant Islamist group Boko Haram (BH) early Sept seized several north-eastern towns; 8 Sept ambushed army platoon in Baza, killing 24 soldiers, wounding scores, including former President Obasanjo’s son. 20 dead, 34 wounded in suicide attack in Kano 17 Sept. Govt forces mid-Sept slowed BH advance: 12 Sept killed 50 insurgents in Kawuri; 12, 17 Sept repulsed attacks on Konduga, killing scores including commander who had featured in group’s videos; about 300 BH fighters “surrendered”. President Jonathan 8 Sept discussed counter-insurgency cooperation with Chad President Deby; Senate 17 Sept called on Jonathan to declare “total war” on BH. Australian self-appointed negotiator Stephen Davis early Sept accused former Borno state governor Sheriff, former army chief Ihejirika, Central Bank official of sponsoring BH; state security service investigated Sheriff; Sheriff and Ihejirika rejected accusations. Military court 16 Sept sentenced 12 soldiers to death for May 2014 mutiny at Maimalari cantonment, Maiduguri; sentence criticised by several civil society groups. Deadly inter-communal violence continued in Middle Belt killing over 200: 60 in Nasarawa 2 Sept; 70 in Taraba 2, 14 Sept; over 20 in Zamfara 7 Sept; about 60 in Kaduna 17, 27 Sept. Ruling People’s Democratic Party (PDP) 17 Sept endorsed Jonathan as candidate for 2015 presidential election, ahead of Dec party’s primaries.

- Thierry Vircoulon, [“Gulf of Guinea: A Regional Solution to Piracy?”](#), In Pursuit of Peace, 4 Sept. 2014.
- [“Boko Haram fighters ‘surrender’ as alleged chief killed”](#), BBC, 25 Sept. 2014.

Asia

North East Asia

➔ **China (internal)** Govt counter-terrorism crackdown continued throughout month, focusing on Uighur ethnic minority: three sentenced to death, one to life imprisonment 12 Sept over 1 March knife attack at Kunming station; four sentenced to up to 20 years imprisonment 17 Sept for planning terror activities; prominent Uighur scholar Ilham Tohti sentenced to life imprisonment 23 Sept for alleged “separatism”. Mass peaceful protests began late Sept in Hong Kong in opposition to Beijing’s restriction of candidates for election of city’s next chief executive due 2017.

- [“China sentences prominent Uyghur scholar to life in prison for ‘separatism’](#)”, CNN, 24 Sept. 2014.

➔ **China/Japan** Chinese President Xi Jinping, PM Li Keqiang and Politburo Standing Committee 3 Sept attended ceremony commemorating Japanese WWII surrender; Xi criticised Japan’s handling of history, current Japanese military reform. Trilateral meeting held 19 Sept between Chinese, Japanese and South Korean finance ministers, agreement to reinforce economic cooperation despite geopolitical tension.

- [“Japan, China, S. Korea agree to ensure geopolitical risks don’t threaten recovery”](#), Reuters, 19 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Korean Peninsula** DPRK continued missile testing: 1 Sept fired short-range missile from north-western Chagang province near China, 6 Sept fired three short-range projectiles from east coast near Wönsan; projectiles landed in Sea of Japan. Republic of Korea (ROK) navy 19 Sept fired warning shots at DPRK vessel crossing North Limit Line (NLL). Month saw extensive international diplomatic engagement by DPRK including: Kang Sok Ju Korean Workers Party (KWP) Secretary for International Affairs 7-16 Sept led delegation to Germany, Belgium, Switzerland and Italy; tour followed by 18 Sept visit to Mongolia, met President Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj and other senior officials; FM Ri Su-yong 14 Sept met Iranian FM Javad Zarif in Tehran; 21 Sept addressed UN General Assembly in New York. U.S. citizen Matthew Todd Miller sentenced to six years hard labour 14 Sept.

- [“North Korea reported to test short-range missiles”](#), *New York Times*, 6 Sept. 2014.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°259, [Risks of Intelligence Pathologies in South Korea](#), 5 August 2014.

South Asia

➔ **Afghanistan** Presidential candidates Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah 21 Sept signed agreement on unity govt: Ghani to assume presidency, Abdullah new position of chief executive officer. Independent Election Commission (IEC) same day declared Ghani winner of June run-off vote, said no formal result will be announced. Ghani, Abdullah inaugurated 29 Sept; new govt next day signed long-delayed Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) with U.S. Deal followed pressure from international donors

for negotiated settlement rather than outright victory partly due to threats of violence from Abdullah's supporters and flawed ballot audit. Members of parliament's lower house 8 Sept urged candidates to end electoral crisis citing economic and security implications of continued deadlock; Balkh provincial governor and prominent Abdullah supporter Atta Mohammed Noor 11 Sept accused President Karzai of colluding with IEC and Ghani in rigging vote, said unwilling to accept govt elected through fraud. Independent Electoral Complaint Commission (IECC) 15 Sept announced 1,683 of 2,200 complaints registered by Abdullah's team legitimate; finding not enough to put Abdullah in lead. Violence intensified with months-long political deadlock boosting insurgency: attacks escalated over past months despite previous years seeing decrease in late summer. Interior ministry 1 Sept reported at least 41 Taliban killed across country; officials 4 Sept claimed 22 insurgent killed in Logar province, Taliban said dozens of police killed or injured; at least 48 insurgents reported killed in Balkh province 7 Sept. Taliban fighters 14 Sept entered main bazaar, attacked administrative HQ in Helmand's Sangin district; local officials warned district could fall to insurgents. Similar warnings from Ghazni officials after more than 100 reported killed in Ajrestan district during late-month Taliban assault. Seven killed in Taliban suicide attack near Kabul airport on inauguration day 29 Sept.

- ["Ghani named Afghan president-elect after deal to end election dispute"](#), Reuters, 21 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Bangladesh** Awami League (AL) won significant political victories, moved to consolidate power: Supreme Court 14 Sept rejected appeals by opposition Bangladesh National Party (BNP) leader Khaleda Zia in embezzlement case; possibility for life sentence. Parliament 17 Sept unanimously passed controversial constitutional amendment giving it power to impeach Supreme Court judges, signed by President Hamid late Sept. Three BNP leaders, 38 other BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) members indicted 1 Sept for violence during 2013 election-related demonstrations. Major protests in Dhaka against 17 Sept Supreme Court decision to commute death sentence of JeI leader to life imprisonment; demonstrators demanded death sentence, JeI called for a two-day strike to condemn Sayeedi's conviction.

- ["Bangladesh commutes Jamaat leader's sentence"](#), Al Jazeera, 17 Sept. 2014.

➔ **India (non-Kashmir)** Al-Qaeda 3 Sept announced formation of new branch "al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent" (AQIS) under leadership of Pakistani militant Asim Umar; several provinces reportedly put on heightened alert. Police 12-13 Sept reportedly killed at least three Maoists in Jharkhand state. Hundreds reported arrested after Hindu-Muslim clashes in Gujarat late month.

- ["Indian states on alert after al Qaeda announces local wing"](#), Reuters, 4 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Kashmir** Pakistani govt's efforts to normalise relations with India through trade liberalisation jeopardised by sporadic clashes along Line of Control (LoC), Pakistani military's reported attempts to use anti-govt protests in Islamabad to pressure PM Sharif to further relinquish control over foreign policy. Sharif called for international support to resolve Kashmir dispute in UNGA speech late month; Indian PM Modi questioned Sharif's highlighting of Kashmir issue, offered bilateral talks but rejected dialogue under "shadow of terrorism". Pakistani Islamic militant group Lashkar-e-Tayyaba provided assistance to flood-affected population in Punjab and Azad Jammu

and Kashmir, leader Hafiz Saeed accused India of deliberately allowing waters to flood Pakistan; claims echoed by Islamist Jamaat-i-Islami. PMs Sharif and Modi exchanged letters offering assistance in relief efforts. Pakistani high commissioner Abdul Basit mid-month met Indian Foreign Secretary Singh following Aug cancellation of FM-level talks. Several militants reported killed by security forces including three alleged Jaish-e-Muhammad members 2 Sept in Pulwama district; Lashkar-e-Tayyaba commander killed in Kupwara district 9 Sept; several militants killed along LoC, including four in clashes 20 Sept.

- [“Pakistani Islamists use floods to turn opinion against India”](#), Reuters, 17 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Nepal** All-party conference on constitution drafting process scheduled for 16 Sept postponed following boycott by extra-parliamentary party alliance led by Communist Party Nepal-Maoists (CPN-M); CPN-M alleged conference would fail to address CPN-M concerns. CPN-M organised several protests against Nepal-India power trade agreement signed early month.

- [“Political conference put off as CPN-M gives cold shoulder”](#), Republica, 16 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Pakistan** Continued signs military exploiting protests by Imran Khan’s Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Tahirul Qadri’s Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) to influence politics: PTI president Javed Hashmi 1 Sept said military elements encouraged Khan-led protests; Khan 16 Sept claimed army chief said govt would meet all protest demands except PM’s resignation. Joint session of parliament 19 Sept condemned protests. Govt negotiations with PTI and PAT suspended after police arrested over 500 protestors in Islamabad and Lahore 12 Sept; majority quickly released, charges dropped. Over 300 killed, hundreds of thousands displaced by flooding in Punjab and Pakistan-administered Kashmir, adding to almost 1mn displaced by ongoing military operation in N Waziristan. Jihadi organisations continued to exploit govt failure to provide adequate assistance: offered assistance through charity wings, sought to stoke anti-India sentiments in flood-affected areas (see Kashmir). Military claimed more than 1,000 militants, some 100 soldiers killed in N Waziristan operation since mid-June. Army spokesman 15 Sept claimed Pakistani Taliban (TTP) no longer able to launch attacks; at least four reported killed in TTP suicide bombing targeting military convoy in Peshawar 23 Sept; two killed in attack targeting senior counter-terrorism police officer in Karachi 25 Sept; at least seven killed in attack on IDP camp in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 28 Sept. TTP faction “Punjabi Taliban” 5 Sept declared intention to halt attacks in Pakistan and focus on Afghanistan, indicating peace deal with military. Other Punjab-based anti-Shia groups continued sectarian killings countrywide including: son of Shia Jafria Alliance Pakistan party leader murdered 6 Sept in Karachi by Lashkar-e-Jhangvi; head of Karachi University Islamic Studies department shot dead 19 Sept. Lieutenant General Rizwan Akhtar appointed new chief of Inter-Services Intelligence 22 Sept. At least 14 suspected militants reported killed in U.S. drone strikes in N and S Waziristan late month.

- [“Pakistan lawmakers rally around Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif against protestors”](#), *Washington Post*, 2 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Sri Lanka** Ruling UPFA coalition 20 Sept won narrow victory in Uva provincial polls with much reduced margins from previous elections, despite large-scale illegal use of state resources for govt candidates, violence against opposition campaigners.

Strong performance of main opposition UNP seen as increasing likelihood of early presidential election, expected Jan 2015. Militant Buddhist Bodu Bala Sena (BBS) 28 Sept held large rally of monks in Colombo in “defense of Buddhism”; attended by Myanmar’s Ashin Wirathu, accused of inciting deadly anti-Muslim violence. UN human rights chief Zeid 25 Sept urged govt to end “climate of intimidation, threat and harassment against civil society actors”, incitement to hatred and violence against Muslims, Christians; called for enhanced accountability. President Rajapaksa 25 Sept rejected OHCHR war crimes investigation as unbalanced, politically motivated in UNGA speech. Police detained Catholic priest in Jaffna early Sept for allegedly gathering evidence for OHCHR. Govt 10 Sept proposed long-promised witness and victim protection law in parliament seeking to address international concerns over accountability.

- [“Sri Lanka’s governing party claims victory in provincial election”](#), *New York Times*, 21 Sept. 2014.

South East Asia

➔ **Indonesia** Multiple raids on suspected terrorist hideouts throughout month: seven arrested 13 Sept in Ampibabo district over alleged links to Islamic State (IS; formerly ISIL); joint police-army raid 19 Sept targeting suspected East Indonesian Mujahidin (MIT) members following 18 Sept MIT killing of man in Poso; six arrested, one killed in 20 Sept police raid in Bima.

- [“Joint force locates terrorist hideout in Poso”](#), *Jakarta Post*, 23 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Myanmar** Democratic transition and peace process appeared on track despite Union Election Commission 7 Sept announcing by-elections for 35 vacant seats not to be held in 2014 due to cost, time constraints; announcement generally accepted by political parties. Four senior military officers assigned new posts, likely in preparation for 2015 retirement of commander-in-chief. Curfew in Sittwe, imposed in July in response to anti-Muslim riots, lifted 11 Sept. Médecins Sans Frontières 8 Sept signed memorandum of understanding with govt hoping to resume medical relief in Rakhine State. Myanmar’s FM Wunna Maung Lwin 29 Sept said at UNGA that Rohingya minority will be offered citizenship if they register as Bengali, otherwise will be detained and relocated overseas. Karen National Union 1 Sept said reviewing participation in United Nationalities Federal Council following disagreements over peace-process strategy. Peace talks between govt, ethnic groups continued 22 Sept.

- [“Myanmar govt, ethnic armed group resume ceasefire talks in Yangon”](#), *Shanghai Daily*, 22 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Philippines** Govt and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) panels continued ironing out details of Bangsamoro Basic Law. First draft delivered to Congress 10 Sept, certified as urgent by President Aquino; relevant committees in Senate, House of Representatives began deliberations week of 22 Sept; MILF chief negotiator Mohager Iqbal appealed for acceptance. Justice department rejected suspending arrest warrants against Nur Misuari of Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) faction and Umbra Kato of MILF splinter group Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF). Several clashes involving insurgents including two soldiers killed 11 Sept by BIFF; military also blamed group for two bomb explosions 16 Sept in General Santos city injuring six civil-

ians. Three suspected communist guerrillas killed, three govt militiamen wounded 15 Sept in two separate clashes in Davao del Norte province. Army 19 Sept killed two suspected New People's Army militants in Surigao del Sur.

- ["MLF negotiator appeals for Filipinos' acceptance of Bangsamoro"](#), *Inquirer*, 24 Sept. 2014.

➔ **South China Sea** Maritime disputes continued despite diplomatic efforts to set framework to avoid further escalation. U.S. National Security Advisor Susan Rice 9 Sept met Chinese Vice Chairman of Central Military Commission Fan Chanlong, voiced concerns over 19 Aug U.S.-China jet interception. Indian oil company ONGC Videsh Ltd. and Vietnam Oil and Gas Group signed agreement 15 Sept to cooperate on oil and gas exploration in disputed waters despite Chinese objection. Philippines 11 Sept attempted to undermine Chinese claims to entire South China Sea by revealing historical maps depicting Hainan as southernmost point of Chinese territory. U.S., Philippines 29 Sept began their annual joint military exercises close to disputed territories.

- ["Vietnam, India to expand oil exploration in contested South China Sea"](#), *Wall Street Journal*, 15 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Thailand** National Council of Peace and Order (NCPO) led by PM General Prayuth Chan-ocha continued to consolidate political control; appointed 12 serving and former military officers to new cabinet. NCPO 16 Sept added 9 members, only two without military or police background. Office of Attorney General (OAG) 4 Sept declined National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) recommendation to prosecute former PM Yingluck Shinawatra for corruption. Police 17 Sept detained four academics, three students at Thammasat University for staging seminar on dictatorship, released after questioning; 60 university professors from 16 universities 22 Sept submitted petition to govt calling for respect of academic freedom. Deadly attacks continued in south including: member of Tha Nam Tambon Administration Organisation killed by gunman in Ban Surao village 5 Sept; militants 17 Sept killed five in attack on local administration office in Khok Pho district, Pattani.

- ["60 scholars call on NCPO for 'freedom'"](#), *Bangkok Post*, 22 Sept. 2014.

Pacific

➔ **Fiji** Fiji First Party led by military ruler Frank Bainimarama won 17 Sept general election, Bainimarama sworn in as PM 22 Sept; international monitors said results fair.

- ["Fiji's Frank Bainimarama confirmed as election winner with outright majority"](#), *Guardian*, 22 Sept. 2014.

Europe and Central Asia

Balkans

➔ **Bosnia** 16 alleged Islamic radicals suspected of fighting in Iraq and Syria, and recruiting and funding Bosnian nationals, to join Islamic militants detained 3 Sept. IMF 19 Sept said not to disperse next €380mn tranche of aid program until govt implements agreed economic reform.

- [“Bosnia detains suspected Jihadists”](#), RFE/RL, 3 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Kosovo** 15 influential Muslim leaders arrested 17 Sept across Kosovo in crackdown targeting alleged recruiting network for IS militants and al-Qaeda’s branch in Syria. Shefqet Krasniqi, imam of Pristina Grand Mosque, and several other imams arrested; hardline Islamic Movement Unify party described arrests as politically motivated.

- [“Kosovar imams arrested in bid to stem militant recruiting”](#), RFE/RL, 17 Sept. 2014.

Caucasus

➔ **Armenia** Yerevan still moving closer to Russia than EU: Russian President Putin 1 Sept indicated Treaty of Accession of Armenia to Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) to be signed at next meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council at presidential level. Armenian FM Nalbandian 9 Sept said Nagorno-Karabakh no obstacle for country’s entry in Moscow-led initiative; 20 Sept said developing relations with EU cannot be at expense of relations with Russia, 21 Sept entry in EEU no threat to Armenia’s independence. EU official 24 Sept asked for clarification from Armenian govt over obligations of membership of Russia-led Customs Union. Armenian Defence Minister Seyran Ohanyan 25 Sept met with Georgian counterpart, discussed military cooperation. 2,000 members of opposition protested 25 Sept in Abovian, further rallies announced ahead of joint anti-govt rally in Yerevan scheduled 10 Oct.

- [“Putin gives nod for Armenia’s Eurasian-Union membership”](#), Eurasianet, 2 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Azerbaijan** Rights crackdown continued: U.S. citizen and former deputy chief of pro-opposition youth group Yeni Fikir deported 12 Sept, U.S. State Department expressed concern; Baku office of NGO IREX raided 5 Sept by Azerbaijani security officials; UN Human Rights team 17 Sept prevented from visiting govt detention centers while investigating complaints of torture. Criticism over rights record increased: CoE Human Rights Commissioner Nils Muiznieks 8 Sept criticised authorities over deteriorating human rights conditions; European Parliament 18 Sept adopted resolution condemning persecution of human rights defenders, calling for targeted sanctions, dismissed by Baku as “completely biased”; U.S. President Obama 23 Sept criticised crackdown on NGOs; Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) head 22 Sept said Azerbaijan might be suspended from initiative following investigation. CoE Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) President Anne Brasseur visited 23-25 Sept, called for broad dialogue between authorities, political actors, civil society. Authorities 23

Sept arrested 26 suspected of joining militants in Syria and Pakistan. Turkish President Erdogan PM Davutoğlu visited 2 Sept and 19 Sept respectively; joint Azerbaijan-Turkey military exercise held 13-20 Sept.

- [“Concern grows over NGO crackdown in Azerbaijan”](#), *Financial Times*, 22 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** Mediation efforts continued: U.S. Sec State John Kerry 5 Sept convened meeting with Armenian President Sarkisian and Azerbaijani President Aliyev on sidelines of NATO summit; both presidents stressed importance of peace agreement; French ambassador to Azerbaijan 9 Sept announced tripartite talks between France, Armenia and Azerbaijan to be held in Paris in Nov; Azerbaijani FM Mammadyarov and Armenian FM Nalbandian 23 Sept met OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs, discussed preparations for Paris summit. Sarkisian 24 Sept criticised Azerbaijan in UN speech for preventing resolution of NK dispute. Azerbaijani citizen detained 5 Sept by NK de facto authorities after crossing contact line; released 11 Sept. Armenian soldier killed 18 Sept on contact line; Azerbaijani officer reportedly killed 27 Sept on contact line, denied by Armenian Defence Ministry.

- [“Leaders discuss Nagorno-Karabakh conflict; Kerry expresses ‘strong concern’”](#), RFE/RL, 5 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Georgia** Court 19 Sept seized properties of former President Saakashvili and his relatives. U.S. Defense Sec 7 Sept said Russia’s “blatant aggression” in Ukraine made U.S. and Georgia determined to build stronger military ties.

- [“Georgian court impounds Saakashvili’s property”](#), RFE/RL, 19 Sept. 2014.

➔ **North Caucasus (Russia)** Islamic militant group Islamic State video threatening to unleash “liberation” war in N Caucasus published 3 Sept; ISIS leader Abu-Omar al-Shishani, ethnic Chechen, reportedly announced \$5mn reward for assassination of Chechnya leader Ramzan Kadyrov; Putin 22 Sept discussed with UNSC potential cooperation with other countries on fighting IS. Pressure on Salafis continued including wave of detentions of Salafi women in Chechnya following statement by Ramzan Kadyrov calling for women in black hijab to be detained and undressed; dozens of parishioners detained during the Friday prayer in several mosques of Makhachkala and Derbent 12 Sept. Dagestan remained unstable: four construction workers on Avaro-Kakhetian road to Georgia kidnapped by unknown armed people in Shamil district 26 Sept, militant killed 25 Sept in Makhachkala. Antiterrorist operation in Vrememny, Untsukul district, launched 18 Sept; includes over 1000 police and FSB officers. Two insurgents, including group leader, killed in Tabasaran district 11 Sept; two alleged insurgents shot dead in Khasavyurt 6 Sept; five hunters reportedly killed by insurgents and found dead in Makhachkala suburb Shamkhal 3 Sept. In Ingushetia alleged insurgent and police officer killed in clash in Karabulak 21 Sept. Several enforced disappearances reported in Dagestan, Chechnya and Kabardino-Balkaria. Former prosecutor's aide in Dagestan sentenced to 11 years in jail 26 Sept.

- [“Russia’s Putin looking at cooperation to fight Islamic State: agency”](#), Reuters, 22 Sept. 2014.

Eastern Europe

➔ **Ukraine** President Poroshenko 5 Sept agreed to ceasefire with pro-Russian rebels in east following heavy losses of personnel and equipment to regular Russian forces in late Aug. . Ukrainian military commanders admitted privately troops unable to withstand direct attack by Russian forces. Ukrainian parliament 16 Sept passed law allowing degree of self-govt for breakaway regions, separatists claimed ceasefire and subsequent agreements amounted to de facto recognition of independence; moves caused concern among Ukrainian, international officials who fear agreement tantamount to creation of new frozen conflict. International observers noted agreement left separatists in control of several hundred kms of Ukrainian-Russian border. Worst post-ceasefire violence around Donetsk airport began 29 Sept, at least 12 killed. Dutch investigators 9 Sept released preliminary report on MH17 plane crash, concluded plane brought down by “high-energy objects”. Parliament 16 Sept ratified Association Agreement with EU and 17 Sept passed lustration law, awaiting presidential signature.

- [“Renewed fighting around Donetsk airport tests Ukraine cease-fire”](#), *New York Times*, 29 Sept. 2014.

Western Europe/Mediterranean

➔ **Cyprus** UN special adviser on Cyprus Espen Barth Eide 17 Sept met with Cyprus President Nicos Anastasiades, Turkish-Cypriot leader Dervis Eroglu, secured commitment to twice-monthly “structured negotiations”; UNSG Ban 27 Sept met with Eroglu, urged leaders to bridge differences. Turkish President Erdogan 1 Sept visited Turkish Cyprus, prompting protests, Cypriot authorities said visit illegal.

- [“Cyprus leaders agree to speed up peace talks”](#), *Guardian*, 17 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Turkey** Amid criticism of Turkey’s “laissez-faire” attitude toward militant group Islamic State (IS), President Erdogan 22 Sept said IS “terrorist organisation”, but also symptom of bigger governance problems in Baghdad and Damascus; also pushed for no-fly zone in northern Syria. Turkey still not part of U.S.-led anti-IS coalition, though parliament early Oct to consider cross-border operations, use of Turkish soil by foreign militaries; authorities tightened border control to stop jihadi crossings, 29 Sept deployed tanks to border with Syria’s Kobani region. IS 20 Sept released 49 Turkish diplomatic staff abducted from Mosul consulate in June, including 3 Iraqi nationals, possibly in prisoner exchange with Syrian pro-Turkish group Liwa al-Tawhid. Hundreds of PKK fighters continued crossing into Syria, Iraq to fight; PKK military leader Murat Karayılan 22 Sept accused Turkey of collaborating with IS, said govt-PKK settlement process “meaningless”. PKK militants early Sept set fire to over 17 schools in protest at govt closing down illegal all-Kurdish schools in south. 130,000 Syrian Kurdish refugees 19-22 Sept crossed into Turkey; total 1.5mn refugees to date; 3,000 protested in Istanbul 21 Sept in solidarity with Syrian Kurds; clashes reported between security forces, Turkish Kurds sympathetic to refugees on border same day. Scores of police investigators detained 1 Sept over alleged attempt to overthrow govt through corruption charges against Erdogan.

- [“Tipping point for Turkey with large influx of Syrian Kurds”](#), BBC, 22 Sept. 2014.

Central Asia

New Crisis Group Europe and Central Asia Report N°233, [Water Pressures in Central Asia](#), 11 September 2014. Growing tensions in the Ferghana Valley are exacerbated by disputes over shared water resources. To address this, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan urgently need to step back from using water or energy as a coercive tool and focus on reaching a series of modest, bilateral agreements, pending comprehensive resolution of this serious problem.

➔ **Kazakhstan** Russian President Putin and Nazarbayev met 30 Sept in Atyrau (Kazakhstan) to discuss inter-regional cooperation following late-Aug tensions after Putin insinuated that prior to Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan had no statehood. Kazakh FM Erlan Idrisov 22 Sept met U.S. Sec State John Kerry, discussed counter-terrorism, post-election period in Afghanistan.

- ["Nazarbaev: Astana could quit EES if independence threatened"](#), RFE/RL, 1 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Kyrgyzstan** Series of high level meetings between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan officials culminated in 12 Sept meeting between Presidents; talks failed to produce practical measures to diffuse tensions between states, delineate border. Spokesman for the Interior Affairs Directorate 29 Sept confirmed 8 Kyrgyz nationals reported killed in Syria, fighting along Islamist forces. Govt 30 Sept said 7 women in southern Jalal-Abad province detained for allegedly recruiting for Islamist militant group Hizb ut-Tahrir.

- Deirdre Tynan, ["Central Asia's Coming Winter of Discontent"](#), In Pursuit of Peace, 25 Sept. 2014.
- ["Russia tightens control over Kyrgyzstan"](#), *Guardian*, 18 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Tajikistan** President Rahmon 18 Sept said 200 Tajik jihadis fighting in Syria and Iraq. Regional Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) Sec Gen Bordyuzha 17 Sept said spillover from Afghanistan serious regional problem; Tajik-Afghan border remains very porous. Two Uzbeks arrested June sentenced 26 Sept to 9 years imprisonment for fighting alongside Taliban in Afghanistan. Iranian President Hassan Rohani and Emomali Rahmon early Sept launched Iran-funded Sangtuda-2 hydropower plant. Fatwa issued 27 Sept by Tajik mufti against govt critics.

- ["Tajik president says 200 Tajik jihadists fight in Iraq, Syria"](#), RFE/RL, 19 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Turkmenistan** National armed forces reportedly entered Afghanistan early Sept following series of Taliban attacks on border posts.

- ["Turkmenistan armed forces reportedly cross Afghanistan border"](#), Eurasianet, 18 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Uzbekistan** Anti-terror exercise held on Afghan border early Sept. Prosecutor general's office 23 Sept acknowledged president's daughter Gulnara Karimova's house arrest on corruption charges.

- ["Islamic State flag hung from Tashkent bridge"](#), RFE/RL, 4 Sept. 2014.

Latin America

➔ **Colombia** 29th round of govt-FARC negotiations began 23 Sept; parties 24 Sept published full texts of 3 outline agreements reached thus far in “measure of transparency”. Previous cycle ended 10 Sept; FARC 9 Sept presented proposals on transitional justice. FARC 2 Sept announced creation of “Guerrilla Normalisation Command” to “study the army’s return to its constitutional role” following late Aug govt creation of “Transition Command” to oversee the guerrilla’s disarmament. FARC 20 Sept assumed responsibility for 16 Sept attack on police convoy in Córdoba which left 7 police dead, rejected allegations attack carried out in alliance with Urabeños armed group. Senator Clara Rojas, kidnapped by FARC in 2002 for 6 years, 8 Sept resigned seat in Congressional peace commission in protest at statement appearing on FARC website questioning whether she should be considered a FARC victim. Some 120 Colombian and transnational companies 8 Sept launched large reconciliation campaign “Soy CaPAZ”, first major public statement in favour of peace process from private sector. Left-wing senator Iván Cepeda 17 Sept accused former president Uribe of collusion with paramilitaries and drug traffickers; accusation caused major political upheaval, string of counter accusations and law suits. Govt’s chief negotiator 27 Sept said his communications had been wiretapped illegally. Paramilitary groups Aguilas Negras and Los Rastrojos throughout month issued “hit list” threatening over 150 political leaders, activists and journalists.

- [“FARC proposes \\$11B fund for Colombia conflict victims”](#), Colombia Reports, 8 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Ecuador** Thousands rallied for and against President Correa mid-Sept in Quito, after a protest called by largest trade unions federation; at least 15 police wounded, several protesters arrested, of whom 53 remain detained. President Correa 23 Sept forced to reshuffle cabinet due to unexpected resignation of minister of defence.

- [“At least 15 police hurt as thousands rally in Ecuador”](#), AFP, 18 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Guatemala** Authorities 3 Sept arrested national director of prisons and 6 others following year-long investigation by public prosecutors, police and International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) into alleged collaboration with criminal network led by inmate Byron Lima, ex-army captain serving 20-year sentence for assassination of Bishop Juan Gerardi. President Pérez Molina 8 Sept said would not ask for extension of CICIG’s mandate; VP Baldetti 18 Sept said govt would consult with civil society groups on matter; extension would need agreement between govt and UN, and international funding. CICIG Commissioner Velásquez 16 Sept questioned selection process for appellate and Supreme Court justices citing serious irregularities; critics say process subject to manipulation by political and economic interests including organised crime.

- [“Guatemala bishop’s killer ran alleged jail empire”](#), AP, 3 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Mexico** 300 members of the newly created Gendarmerie, elite mobile federal police force, sent 8 Sept to Tierra Caliente, Michoacán, to bolster federal forces and a recently created rural police force led by former self-defence militia members. Attacks on journalists continued: assailants 2 Sept opened fire in house of reporter Ignacio

Domínguez in Veracruz; reporter Víctor Pérez found dead 3 Sept in Ciudad Juárez; reporter Karla Silva assaulted 4 Sept in Silao, Guanajuato. Federal Congressman Gabriel Gómez Michel kidnapped 22 Sept in Guadalajara, found dead 23 Sept in Zacatecas. Opposition PAN party Gen Sec in Guerrero, Braulio Zaragoza, killed 28 Sept. 8 soldiers arrested 26 Sept over killing of 22 suspected kidnapers in June, charged with military disobedience and breach of duty, 3 of them charged with homicide. Shootout between rival gangs 26 Sept killed 11 suspected gang members near town of Guachochi, Chihuahua. 6 killed 27 Sept when police and unidentified armed men opened fire during clash with students in Iguala, Guerrero; 58 students reported missing following clash; 22 police officers arrested.

- [“Mexican congressman was likely executed by drug cartel, prosecutor says”](#), *New York Times*, 24 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Venezuela** President Maduro 2 Sept reshuffled cabinet: FM Elias Jaua, prominent figure on hard left, moved to ministry of communes and appointed “VP for development of territorial socialism” in push toward “communal state”. Economic reformer Rafael Ramírez removed from posts as energy minister, chairman of state oil corporation and VP for economic affairs; removal suggests Ramírez’s economic reform programme shelved. Economic deterioration continued; reported scarcity of basic goods; Venezuelan debt downgraded to CCC+ following slump in bond prices. Jesús “Chúo” Torrealba appointed as opposition MUD Exec Sec following 30 July resignation of Ramón Guillermo amid internal divisions; Torrealba 24 Sept said MUD open to dialogue with govt, but that opposition would intensify “social activism” including national march 4 Oct.

- Mark Schneider, [“Crisis in Venezuela Worsening”](#), *Miami Herald*, 24 Sept. 2014.
- Javier Ciurlizza, [“Inercia peligrosa en Venezuela”](#), *El Colombiano*, 25 Sept. 2014.

New Crisis Group Latin America Briefing N°31, [Venezuela: Dangerous Inertia](#), 23 September 2014. The end of street protests does not mean the end of Venezuela’s crisis. Rising economic problems and unaddressed political demands could lead to renewed violence and threaten national stability.

Middle East & North Africa

Eastern Mediterranean

➔ **Israel-Palestine** UN-mediated agreement to allow increased entry of commodities into Gaza, including dual-use construction materials, reached mid-Sept; concerns inflow of materials insufficient to address enormous reconstruction needs following July-Aug fighting. Both sides claimed Aug ceasefire not fully implemented: Hamas said Israel violated Gaza fishing rights, entered Gaza's perimeter; Israel pointed to mortar fire on southern Israel. Indirect Israel-Hamas negotiations resumed in Cairo late Sept. Egypt convened Fatah-Hamas talks 23-24 Sept; agreement reached on salary payments for all civil servants and security force members of previous Hamas-led govt starting late Sept. Palestinian President Abbas announced intention to submit resolution to UNSC calling for end date to Israeli occupation; PA, Fatah officials vowed to join UN agencies and International Criminal Court in case of failure. E Jerusalem protests continued: over 700 youths arrested since early July, 1 died early Sept following clashes with police. Israeli troops 10 Sept killed Palestinian in W Bank refugee camp; 23 Sept killed 2 alleged perpetrators of June murders of 3 Israeli youths in Hebron.

- Ofer Zalzberg, "[How not to demilitarize Hamas](#)", CNN GPS, 11 Sept. 2014.
- Nathan Thrall, "[Israel & the US: The Delusions of Our Diplomacy](#)", *New York Review of Books*, 19 Sept. 2014.
- "[Fatah-Hamas agreement gives unity government control over Gaza](#)", Reuters, 25 Sept. 2014.

⚡ **Lebanon** Islamic State (IS; formerly ISIL) militants early month beheaded 2 Lebanese soldiers captured along with 8 others during Aug clashes in eastern border town Aرسال; al-Qaeda-linked Jabhat al-Nusra (JN) reportedly detained 18 others, 19 Sept executed soldier, demanded release of Sunni Islamist imprisoned in Lebanon and Hizbollah withdrawal from Syria. Executions exacerbated ethnic and communal tensions including sparking attacks on Syrian refugees, tit-for-tat abductions between Sunni and Shiite tribes in Bekaa Valley. Hizbollah sought to use events in Aرسال to justify involvement in Syria by playing up jihadi threat, rejected any negotiations with IS, JN. 4 Hizbollah members among several casualties reported after clashes outside border village Ras Baalbek 10 Sept; 3 killed in attack on Hizbollah checkpoint near eastern village Khraibeh 20 Sept. Clashes between army and militants continued: Syrian militant killed 6 Sept in border town Al-Qaa; 2 soldiers killed in roadside bombing in Aرسال 19 Sept, military subsequently arrested hundreds in raids. Several reported killed 22 Sept in Syrian regime airstrikes targeting rebels near Aرسال. Deadly shootings reported in Tripoli late month including soldier killed by unknown gunmen 23 Sept.

- "[Syria militants kill captive Lebanese soldier, bomb kills two](#)", Reuters, 19 Sept. 2014.

⚡ **Syria** U.S. late month began airstrikes against Islamic State (IS; formerly ISIL) militants and fighters linked to al-Qaeda (AQ) central leadership and AQ affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra (JN) inside Syria: dozens of IS fighters reported killed in Raqqah and Deir az-Zour provinces starting 23 Sept; Bahrain, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE participated in or provided support for operation. Scores reported killed in U.S. strikes

targeting AQ-linked fighters in northern Aleppo and Idlib provinces; JN threatened retaliation. Observers expressed fears intervention risks strengthening IS, alienating other rebel groups; IS continued gaining ground, mid-month seized dozens of towns around predominantly Kurdish city Kobani near Turkish border; at least 160,000 Kurds fled, initially refused entry into Turkey sparking protests and clashes inside Turkey. Most of senior leadership of influential Ahrar as-Sham group among dozens killed in unexplained bomb blast in Idlib province 9 Sept; dead included group's leader Hassan Aboud also acting as political chief of major rebel alliance Islamic Front; deaths seen as heavy blow to mainstream armed opposition. Regime mid-month revealed previously undeclared chemical facilities to Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) confirming suspicions about earlier declarations, fuelling concerns toxic material could be seized by IS. Deadly regime airstrikes on rebel held areas continued including 25 reported killed in IS-held Raqqah city 6 Sept; at least 48 reported killed in Talbiseh north of Homs 16-17 Sept.

- Jean-Marie Guéhenno and Noah Bonsey, ["To Stop ISIS in Syria, Support Aleppo"](#), *New York Times*, 14 Sept. 2014.
- ["Opposition in Syria is skeptical of U.S. airstrikes on ISIS"](#), *New York Times*, 29 Sept. 2014.

New Crisis Group Middle East Report N°155, ["Rigged Cars and Barrel Bombs: Aleppo and the State of the Syrian War"](#), 9 September 2014. Syria is sliding toward unending war between an autocratic, sectarian regime and the even more autocratic, more sectarian jihadi group that has made dramatic gains in both Syria and Iraq. Without either a ceasefire in Aleppo or greater support from its state backers, the mainstream opposition is likely to suffer a defeat that will dash chances of a political resolution for the foreseeable future.

Gulf

➔ **Bahrain** Several activist reported arrested throughout month including well-known activist Maryam al-Khawaja, later released awaiting trial. Police early month dispersed anti-govt protesters near Manama using tear gas.

- ["Bahrain releases prominent human rights activist awaiting trial"](#), Reuters, 18 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Iran** Nuclear negotiations between Iran and P5+1 resumed 18-26 Sept in New York following bilateral Iran-U.S. talks in Geneva 4-5 Sept and Iran-EU3 (EU, UK, France and Germany) talks in Vienna 11 Sept; ministerial level talks on sidelines of UNGA seen as possible "make or break" moment determining chances of success before 24 Nov negotiating deadline. IAEA early month indicated technical talks slowed in Aug, parallel to slow-down in diplomatic engagement: 5 Sept released report suggesting Iran failed to provide sufficient information on "possible military dimensions" of past nuclear research; Iran reaffirmed commitment to meeting obligations. Tensions continued ahead of UNGA meetings including over late-Aug U.S. imposition of new sanctions on several Iranian organisations; Iran argued move violated Nov Joint Plan of Action, contradicted spirit of current negotiations. Despite signs of possible readjustment of regional policy, including Iranian silence on U.S. airstrikes in Iraq and

FM-level meeting with Saudi Arabia 21 Sept, Supreme Leader Khamenei indicated change limited and tactical; 15 Sept said refused U.S. requests for cooperation in Iraq.

- Ali Vaez, Daryl Kimball and Kelsey Davenport, [“As Iran talks resume, it’s time to play ‘Let’s Make a Deal’”](#), Reuters, 18 Sept. 2014.
- [“Iranian President sees little progress on nuclear dispute”](#), *New York Times*, 26 Sept. 2014.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Middle East Briefing N°40, [Iran and the P5+1: Getting to “Yes”](#), 27 August 2014.

↓ **Iraq** Month saw strong Western reactions to Aug and Sept beheadings of U.S. journalists and British aid worker by Islamic State militants (IS; formerly ISIL): White House spokesperson said U.S. at “war” with IS, President Obama 24 Sept vowed to dismantle IS “network of death”. U.S.-led operation continued to rely on airstrikes, France and UK mid- to late month launched first strikes targeting IS in north; IS spokesman urged killing of citizens of coalition countries. Observers expressed concern regional partners continue pursuing policies partly responsible for IS’s initial rise including: Iran channelling money and weapons to sectarian Shiite militias in central Iraq; support for Kurdish Regional Govt (KRG) from U.S., France, UK, and Iran bypassing Baghdad at cost of advancing KRG’s ultimate goal of independence. Majority of incoming PM Abadi’s govt approved by parliament 8 Sept; mid-month rejected proposed candidates for crucial posts of interior and defence minister. Violence continued in Anbar province: over 30 militants reported killed 10 Sept in U.S. airstrike near Haditha dam; over 100 soldiers reported killed or missing after IS attack on army camp 21 Sept. Deadly attacks, suicide bombings continued in Baghdad including at least 30 killed 10 Sept, 35 killed 30 Sept.

- [“Iraq’s Shi’ite militia, Kurds use U.S. air strikes to further own agendas”](#), Reuters, 9 Sept. 2014.

↓ **Yemen** Weeks of Huthi-led anti-govt protests in Sanaa degenerated into several days of fighting mid-month between Huthis and rival forces loyal to General Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar and Sunni Islamist party Islah; over 200 killed, Huthis captured Mohsen-affiliated military camp, al-Iman University and nearby state TV station. Large parts of security forces sided with Huthis, allowing group to control govt buildings and security in city. New peace deal and power sharing agreement signed 21 Sept calling for implementation of national dialogue outcomes including govt inclusive of all groups, anti-corruption measures, timeline for disarmament of non-state actors; accord seen as favouring Huthis to detriment of other stakeholders, particularly Islah. Peace deal called for Huthis to withdraw from capital, replacement of govt; President Hadi has not yet appointed new premier. Prospects for Huthi withdrawal uncertain despite peace deal ending major combat in Sanaa: Huthis surrounded and entered homes of political enemies following agreement, 27 Sept attacked home of national security chief Ali al-Ahmadi. Widespread fears of retaliatory attacks against Huthis and govt, particularly from al-Qaeda (AQ); at least 20 reported killed in separate AQ attacks targeting Huthis 28 Sept.

- Crisis Group Conflict Alert, [“Unrest in Sanaa”](#), 8 Sept. 2014.
- [“Houthis tighten grip on Yemen capital after swift capture, power-sharing deal”](#), Reuters, 22 Sept. 2014.

North Africa

➔ **Algeria** Algerian AQIM faction 13 Sept announced split from group, creation of Jund Al-Khilafa (“Soldiers of the Caliphate”), pledged allegiance to Islamic State (IS; formerly ISIL); late month beheaded French citizen Hervé Gourdel following 21 Sept abduction and demands for halt to French airstrikes against IS in Iraq.

- [“Algeria’s al-Qaeda defectors join IS group”](#), Al Jazeera, 14 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Egypt** Muslim Brotherhood (MB) appeared to be losing support as protest turnout declined. Salafi al-Watan party 17 Sept withdrew from MB-led Alliance to Support Legitimacy (ASL) after earlier withdrawal of moderate al-Wasat party; both said planning to act as opposition groups, indicating participation in coming elections. Non-Islamist criticism of regime continued: at least 105 detainees, mostly secular activists, on hunger strike to protest unjust detentions under 2013 Protest Law; many in pre-trial detention. High-profile activist Alaa Abdelfattah, 2 others released from pre-trial detention 15 Sept; 116 students, arrested during demonstrations, released 17 Sept. MB leader Mohamed Badie handed another life sentence 15 Sept; prominent MB politician Mohamed Beltagy sentenced to 20 years imprisonment early month. Attacks by jihadi group Ansar Beit al-Maqdis (ABM) continued in Sinai including 11 soldiers killed 2 Sept, 6 police killed 16 Sept; 4 ABM militants reported killed 23 Sept. ABM continued beheadings of local Sinai residents accused of cooperating with Israeli intelligence: corpse discovered 19 Sept marking eleventh such execution since mid-Aug. 3 police killed in bombing outside foreign ministry in Cairo 21 Sept, claimed by militant group Afnan Misr.

- [“Egyptian activist Alaa Abd El Fattah is released on bail”](#), *New York Times*, 15 Sept. 2014.

➔ **Libya** Military and political standoffs continued as Islamist-leaning militia coalition continued to clash with anti-Islamist groups, country’s 2 rival legislatures refused to recognise each other’s legitimacy; state institutions in increasing disarray as neither Council of Representatives (CoR) based in Tobruk nor General National Congress (GNC) in Tripoli exert control. More than 100 killed in clashes between supporters of Islamist-leaning Operation Libya Dawn and rivals on outskirts of Tripoli; dozens killed in Benghazi including 9 in clashes between Islamist groups and Khalifa Haftar’s troops 9 Sept; several assassinations by suspected Islamists targeting activists and journalists, including 14 killed 18-20 Sept. Up to 12 reported killed in clashes between militias and police near El Shahara oil field 17 Sept. CoR 4 Sept reportedly signed military agreement with Egypt following alleged Egyptian airstrikes on Islamist positions in Tripoli in Aug; more airstrikes reported mid- to late Sept. CoR 22 Sept approved PM al-Thinni’s new cabinet. Head of GNC-backed administration Omar al-Hassi 15 Sept called for international recognition; GNC mid-month sent emissaries to Chad and Sudan. Rival parliamentary factions 29 Sept held talks under UN auspices in Western town of Ghadames, reportedly agreed to call for ceasefire; Libyan Dawn rejected call, demanded disarmament of rivals; earlier unsuccessful mediation attempts in early-Sept and 17 Sept international conference in Madrid produced no clear plan of action, only agreement not to recognise Tripoli-based govt.

- [“UN dialogue seeks to end Libya crisis”](#), Al Jazeera, 30 Sept. 2014.

➡ **Morocco** Interior ministry 12 Sept said Islamic State (IS; formerly ISIL) recruitment cell operating in Fez, Outat El Haj, and Zaïo dismantled; Spanish minister of interior 9 Sept announced another 9 arrested in joint Moroccan-Spanish operation against IS-linked cell in Spanish North African enclave Melilla and nearby Moroccan town Nador.

- [“ISIS recruitment cell busted in Morocco”](#), Magharebia, 15 Sept. 2014.

➡ **Tunisia** Tensions and divisions grew among secular politicians ahead of parliamentary election campaign: leading secular party deputy Nida Tounes 1 Sept escaped assassination attempt; party leader and presidential candidate Beji Caid Essebsi 12 Sept claimed top party dissidents and security officials plotting his assassination; two top party officials opposing Essebsi’s candidacy fired following day. Islamist An-Nahda party appeared calm and confident, maintained not planning to field candidate for upcoming presidential election; former leader Hamdi Jebali 19 Sept echoed stance, declining to run and citing wish for Tunisia’s democracy to mature without Islamist-secular divide. Security situation remained stable despite border tensions; police 17 Sept killed 2 armed jihadis on border with Algeria.

- [“Islamist arrest sparks Tunisia clash”](#), AFP, 12 Sept. 2014.