

CrisisWatch

A monthly bulletin on current and potential conflicts

Published by the International Crisis Group

No. 136

1 December 2014

November 2014 – Trends

↓ Deteriorated situations

[Afghanistan](#), [Colombia](#), [Egypt](#), [Kenya](#)

↑ Improved situations

[China/Japan](#)

December 2014 – Watchlist

💣* Conflict risk alerts

☺ Conflict resolution opportunities

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

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

Table of Contents

AFRICA	3
Central Africa	3
Horn of Africa.....	4
Southern Africa.....	6
West Africa	6
ASIA	10
North East Asia.....	10
South Asia	11
South East Asia	13
Pacific.....	15
EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA	16
Balkans.....	16
Caucasus.....	16
Eastern Europe.....	17
Western Europe/Mediterranean.....	18
Central Asia	19
LATIN AMERICA	21
MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA.....	23
Eastern Mediterranean	23
Gulf	24
North Africa.....	26

Africa

Central Africa

➔ **Burundi** Cabinet reshuffle 28 Nov saw chief of cabinet and head of secret services, both considered key allies of President Nkurunziza, replaced. Organisation of June 2015 elections criticised by opposition and civil society, with allegations municipal and provincial electoral commission are dominated by President Nkurunziza's CNDD-FDD party, and concerns voter registration that began 24 Nov easily rigged. Cassam Utee appointed Special Envoy and Head of UN electoral mission to Burundi, early electoral observation mission to start 1 Jan 2015. Security deteriorated in Bujumbura: several attacks by armed gangs throughout month; govt 3 Nov warned of Al-Shabaab threat, two arrested.

- ["Burundi opposition calls for postponement of voter registration"](#), Reuters, 23 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Cameroon** Clashes in Far North between Nigerian Islamist group Boko Haram (BH) and security forces; BH 8 Nov attacked Kerawa, Doumba, Karanchi, Kolofata, Kidjimadari, Limani and Amchide towns; one soldier, three civilians and 187 BH members reportedly killed. Some 13,000 additional Nigerian refugees crossed border into Cameroon after BH attack on Mubi town, Nigeria. Former Minister and President Biya ally Mendozé Gervais arrested 12 Nov in ongoing anti-corruption operation; Special Criminal Court 18 Nov held hearing for govt Minister Paul Atangana Nji, accused of embezzlement of state funds.

- ["Boko Haram in deadly attack on north Cameroon"](#), France 24, 11 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Central African Republic** Sporadic clashes in Bangui 13-17 Nov; ex-Seleka fighters blocked two main roads in protest at confinement to camps, protested against relocation outside Bangui, asked for money. Allegations govt gave some CFA4.5mn to protesters to return to Beal camp; anti-balaka in turn demanded financial assistance. Outside capital, anti-balaka obstructed humanitarian aid by establishing checkpoints, confiscating money and other assistance. Split of ex-Seleka into three entities confirmed following 26 Oct establishment of Unité pour la Centrafrique (UPC) composed of Al Khatim rebels and Ali Darass Fulani supporters; Nouredine Adam's Front Populaire pour la Renaissance en Centrafrique (FPRC) met in Kaga-Bandoro 2 Nov; third faction mostly composed of Gula and ex-Union des Forces Démocratiques pour le Rassemblement (UFDR) fighters gathered in Bria. All expressed willingness to participate in Jan national dialogue forum. International Contact Group met 11 Nov in Bangui, approved delay for presidential and legislative elections to Aug 2015. Former PM Martin Ziguélé 24 Nov declared presidential candidacy for 2015 polls, running on Mouvement pour la Libération du Peuple Centrafricain (MLCP) party platform.

- Thierry Vircoulon, ["CAR: The Time for Hard Questions"](#), In Pursuit of Peace, 4 Nov. 2014.
- Thibaud Lesueur, ["CAR: The Fate of Refugees in Southern Chad"](#), In Pursuit of Peace, 10 Nov. 2014.
- Jean-Herve Jezequel and Jean-Marie Guéhenno, ["Prendre le temps de construire la paix au Mali"](#), Le Monde, 19 Nov. 2014.
- ["Les chefs de la Seleka prêts à participer au dialogue national"](#), RFI, 7 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Chad** Protests 11 Nov in southern cities Sarh, Moundou and N'Djamena against oil shortage, rising cost of basic commodities. University professors and lawyers 10 Nov went on strike over unpaid salaries, followed by students; five killed, several injured in police crackdown. French PM Valls and Defence Minister Le Drian 22 Nov visited HQ of French “Barkhane” military operation in N'Djamena, met President Deby.

- [“Grogne sociale et manifestations à N'Djamena, Moundou et Sarh”](#), Jeune Afrique, 12 Nov. 2014.

➔ **DR Congo** Ongoing attacks in Beni, N Kivu, attributed to Allied Defence Forces (ADF) militias: over 200 killed since early Oct, one attack targeted MONUSCO vehicles; several arrested, govt and opposition traded accusations of political complicities. MONUSCO reinforcements sent to region; govt imposed curfew 25 Nov; 5 FARDC killed 27 Nov in Dungu. Disarmament program for FDLR rebels slow, 600 alleged FDLR weapons destroyed 27 Nov in Goma; M23 absent from evaluation meeting on implementation of Nairobi declarations held 7 Nov in Kinshasa. Govt 14 Nov announced launch of “Operation Likofi Three” to fight rising crime in Kinshasa.

- [“Tueries de Beni: 60 corps déjà inhumés à Tependi”](#), Radio Okapi, 24 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Rwanda** Two Rwandan League of Human Rights (LIPRODHOR) members arrested 21 Nov in Kigali, accused of forgery. New witness in former President Habyarimana 1994 plane crash case reportedly abducted 13 Nov.

- [“Affaire Habyarimana : le nouveau témoin rwandais disparu”](#), RFI, 17 Nov. 2014.

Horn of Africa

⚠ **Kenya** Violence in north and coastal regions increased: Al-Shabaab 22 Nov attacked bus in Mandera, killing 28. UNSC condemned attack, govt 23 Nov said over 100 militants killed in two operations in Somalia targeting planners. Some twenty armed youths 3 Nov attacked Nyali military barracks, Mombasa; six youths shot dead, one arrested. Similar attack launched same day on administration police camp in Malindi. Four mosques closed early Nov, reopened 27 Nov, after raids by police and arrest of hundreds of youths. Nineteen police officers killed, 22 firearms stolen by suspected armed Pokot bandits in Kapendo area of Baringo county 1 Nov; Kenya Defence Forces deployed in joint disarmament operation with police, recovered stolen firearms but banditry continued. IED explosion in Mandera injured three 5 Nov; IED explosion wounded one in Garissa 31 Nov. Policeman shot, another injured in suspected Al-Shabaab attack near Dadaab refugee camp 29 Nov.

- [“Kenyan strike on militant camps kills 100 after bus shooting”](#), Bloomberg, 24 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Somalia** Political infighting between President Hassan Sheikh and PM Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed continued following PM's 25 Oct attempted cabinet reshuffle: over 140 parliamentarians launched no-confidence vote against PM but internal disruptions to parliament prevented vote, stalemate ongoing. Infighting began to affect South West state formation process: PM 1 Nov recalled ministerial delegation tasked to monitor process, parliamentary speaker and interior minister at odds over mid-Nov election of Sharif Hassan as interim leader of SW state; Hassan's election prompted unrest in re-

gion, one protester died. At least fifteen reported killed 28-29 Nov in inter-clan clashes in Galgaduud, central Somalia.

- [“US frustrated with Somali leaders, threatens to cut funding”](#), AP, 14 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Somaliland** Attempt by ruling Kulmiye party MPs 15 Nov to oust parliamentary speaker and opposition Wadani party leader Abdirahman Mohamed “Irro” turned chaotic, leading to clash between security forces and opposition, arrest of five opposition Wadani MPs. Irro accused of fomenting protests in Burao, Borama and Gebile towns.

- [“Political wrangles split Somaliland parliament”](#), Garowe Online, 15 Nov. 2014.

➔ **South Sudan** Renewed fighting between govt and SPLA-IO despite 7 Nov recommitment to peace deal, at which parties recommitted to cessation of hostilities under pressure from regional body IGAD, Troika (U.S., UK and Norway) and China. IGAD threatened sanctions if ceasefire broken. Talks due to resume in late Nov but now postponed “indefinitely”; no IGAD sanctions at 25 Nov expiry of two-week deadline set by IGAD for warring parties to reach power-sharing deal. SPLM-IO 10 Nov proposed elimination of VP position as part of transitional govt, seen by many as tactic to prolong negotiations; govt refused request. Parties late Nov traded accusations over reported attacks in Jonglei. UNMISS mandate extended 24 Nov with few changes. Canada 1 Nov imposed sanctions against rebel commander Peter Gatdet and presidential guard commander Marial Chanuong for violations of 23 Jan 2014 cessation of hostilities deal.

- [“Rebels accuse South Sudan of breaking truce”](#), Al Jazeera, 9 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Sudan** Govt and SPLM-N 15 Nov endorsed AUHIP draft framework agreement on conflicts in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, including roadmap for participation of rebels in national dialogue, general elections and transitional period. Talks adjourned 17 Nov to give parties time to study draft agreement. Fighting nevertheless resumed in Blue Nile 24 Nov, both sides claimed responsibility for attacks. Parallel talks with Darfur rebels started 23 Nov, for the first time under AUHIP mediation in Addis Ababa; mediators hoping to achieve “synchronised” cessation of hostilities to merge both processes into national dialogue but govt again rejected idea, continued to insist on separate talks with Darfur rebels, called for them to join piecemeal Doha peace deal. President Bashir 30 Nov vowed to try Sadiq al-Mahdi, leader of opposition National Umma Party, for alliance with Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF) rebel coalition. Local Radio Dabanga 2 Nov alleged mass rape of 200 girls by Sudanese Armed Forces in Tabit, North Darfur late Oct. Govt blocked UNAMID investigation in Tabit until 9 Nov. UNAMID 10 Nov said no evidence of rape but leaked confidential report revealed investigation monitored by Sudanese Armed Forces, witnesses intimidated. Govt 21 Nov refused UNSG and UNSC demands for new UNAMID visit to Tabit, asked UNAMID to prepare exit strategy, 26 Nov ordered closure of its human rights department.

- [“See no evil, speak no evil: UN African mission continues to cover up Sudan’s bad behaviour in Darfur”](#), *Foreign Policy*, 21 Nov. 2014.

Southern Africa

➔ **Madagascar** Former presidents including Andry Rajoelina, Marc Ravalomanana, and current President Rajaonarimampianina agreed to national reconciliation following former President Ravalomanana's controversial return to country last month, who remains in custody. President Rajaonarimampianina 20 Nov said he would take reconciliation lead; other parties disagreed. Process has been unable to secure Rajoelina's input, who mid-Nov said reconciliation must follow justice.

- ["Réconciliation nationale - Le régime veut prendre la main"](#), L'Express de Madagascar, 22 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Mozambique** Afonso Dhlakama, leader of Mozambique opposition party Renamo, continued to deny legitimacy of Frelimo victory in Oct elections, called for annulment, late Nov threatened to establish own govt after Frelimo dismissed his call for creation of caretaker govt. Impasse raised concerns over implementation of Sept peace agreement, delayed DDR progress.

- ["Mozambican parliament rejects Renamo proposal of caretaker gov't"](#), Xinhua, 26 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Zimbabwe** ZANU-PF internal tensions over President Mugabe's succession as party leader intensified. Mugabe 23 Nov changed ZANU-PF constitution, further centralised power in president's hands; enabled him to select three highest office-bearers in party. First Lady Grace Mugabe 16 Nov accused VP Mujuru of plotting President's assassination; Mujuru denied charge. Numerous Mujuru allies removed from national and provincial positions in possible attempt to weaken VP's faction. Mujuru's application to participate in Dec party congress rejected 26 Nov.

- ["Purging Mugabe challengers in Zimbabwe"](#), Al Jazeera, 27 Nov. 2014.

West Africa

➔ **Burkina Faso** Transition govt announced 23 Nov following former President Compaoré's late-Oct ouster and army's 1 Nov seizure of power under Presidential Guard Second-in-Command Lieutenant Colonel Yacouba Isaac Zida. Army holds several posts, including defence, home affairs and mining. International pressure for return to civilian rule followed: AU 3 Nov declared two-week deadline for transfer of power, threatened sanctions. Negotiations for transition charter between army, political opposition, civil society, customary and religious chiefs ended 13 Nov; constitution restored 15 Nov; transition charter signed and civilian Michel Kafando appointed transitional president 16 Nov. Kafando 19 Nov appointed Zida as PM, ensuring army will retain influence during transition. Head of Presidential Guard under Compaoré General Gilbert Diendéré removed from post by Kafando 27 Nov. PM Zida 27 Nov said investigation planned for murders committed under Compaoré, namely former head of state Thomas Sankara; same day called for extradition of Compaoré, currently in Morocco, to Burkina Faso.

- ["Un gouvernement de transition à dominante militaire"](#), RFI, 24 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Côte d'Ivoire** Former President Laurent Gbagbo 12 Nov announced presidential candidacy on opposition Ivoirian Popular Front (FPI) platform; announcement sparked internal debate between hardliner pro-Gbagbo members, and moderates supporting Pascal Affi N'Guessan, party leader since 2001. FPI election committee 26 Nov validated Gbagbo's candidacy following N'Guessan's demand that committee reject Gbagbo's submission. Opposition coalition Alliance of Democratic Forces of Cote d'Ivoire announced reintegration into Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) after withdrawing in Sept. Soldiers 18 Nov protested in Abijan, Bouaké, Korhogo, Daloa, and San Pedro, demanded govt settle outstanding wages; Defence Minister Paul Koffi Koffi 20 Nov announced wages of 476 former Defence and Security Forces will be paid by end of Dec.

- ["Deux candidats pour le poste de président du FPI"](#), RFI, 26 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Guinea** Opposition leaders 7 Nov issued communiqué announcing resumed political activities, noting ruling party campaigning has continued despite Ebola crisis. Minister of Territorial Administration Alhassane Condé 21 Nov said July draft agreement on elections will be signed as soon as possible; opposition highlighted their 7 Nov demands for electoral reform exceeded July agreement stipulations, said govt has until 15 Dec to meet demands or risk countrywide protests. President Condé 26 Nov said protests not tolerated during Ebola outbreak. Electoral Commission (CENI) 13 Nov announced French company Gemalto as new electoral roll operator.

- ["Crise politique en Guinée: quelles sont les promesses du gouvernement?"](#), Africaguinee.com, 23 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Guinea-Bissau** Govt continued to reap benefits from Sept removal of controversial armed forces chief of staff Antonio Injai and push for increased financial aid: Portugal 4 Nov announced €7mn assistance plan for governance support following visit to Portugal by GB PM Pereira. Casamance separatist forces 25 Nov blocked Interior Minister Botche Candé's convoy near border with Senegal, Candé demanded rebels leave Guinea-Bissau. Candé resigned 28 Nov, Doménico Sanca named interim interior minister. International Contact Group on Guinea-Bissau met 18 Nov, discussed continued coordination, support for stability and development. UNSC 25 Nov announced three-month extension of UN Integrated Peace-Building Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), to continue political, security, development assistance. Ongoing changes in distribution of power and resources generated tensions within ruling coalition Party for Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) including 10 Nov public row between finance minister Geraldo Martins and assembly speaker Cipriano Cassama over perks available to parliamentarians.

- ["Security Council extends UN Guinea-Bissau office for three months"](#), UN News Center, 25 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Liberia** Ebola epidemic slowed, but cases continued, food supply affected. President Sirleaf 13 Nov announced end of national state of emergency, 16 Nov appointed new ministers, including changes in ministries of health, education, public works.

- ["Ebola response in Liberia is hampered by infighting"](#), *New York Times*, 19 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Mali** Algiers talks between govt and rebel armed groups resumed 20 Nov after 23 Oct suspension to allow Malian parties to discuss draft document with constituencies; Azawad Movements Coalition said document ignored key issues, 1 Nov released "coun-

ter-proposal” defending federalism. Algiers talks concluded 28 Nov, parties did not reach agreement; continued disagreement over federalism, next round of talks planned Jan 2015. Limited violations of ceasefire continued throughout month: 2 Nov clashes between govt forces and troops tied to High Council for Azawad Unity (HCUA) in Boulkessi resulted in arrest of twenty militants; explosion in Almoustarat killed two Malian troops same day. Landmine attack 7 Nov against MINUSMA in Almoustarat killed three civilians, another hit a ministerial convoy north of Gao 26 Nov killing two Malian soldiers.

- [“Inquiétude internationale autour des négociations de paix”](#), RFI, 23 Nov. 2014.

New Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°104, [Mali: Last Chance in Algiers](#), 18 November 2014. As the last phase of negotiations resumes on 20 November, the Algeria-led talks between the Malian government and the armed groups in the north should not be rushed as they offer a unique opportunity for a sustainable peace agreement.

➔ **Niger** Nigerien leader of group linked to Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) allegedly arrested 9 Nov near border in Algeria. Effects of Nigerian Boko Haram insurgency intensified: some 12,000 civilians fled to Niger’s Diffa region following 9 Nov fighting in Malam Fatori, Nigeria; Nigerian refugees in Diffa now total over 105,000. Increased border security measures implemented 28 Nov to prevent infiltration of jihadi insurgents. Countries contributing to UN peacekeeping mission in Mali 5 Nov met in Niamey to discuss Mali security, Niger indicated willingness to play greater role in regional security. Amid tensions over child trafficking charges brought against former National Assembly President Hama Hamadou, currently in France after fleeing in Aug, FM Mohamed Bazoum said no international arrest warrant would be issued. Amadou Salifou elected president of National Assembly 25 Nov; 42 opposition members boycotted vote.

- [“Boko Haram : le Niger face à l’afflux de réfugiés venus du Nigéria”](#), RFI, 1 Dec. 2014.

➔ **Nigeria** Boko Haram (BH) insurgency continued, with govt and BH both claiming gains and losses. BH 25 Nov took Damasak in Borno state near border with Niger. Suspected BH fighters 2 Nov stormed federal prison in Koton-Karfi, Kogi state, freed 145 inmates including suspected insurgents, killed two officers. Insurgents intensified attacks and suicide bombings in north killing over 230 civilians in Borno, Adamawa, Yobe and Bauchi states; over 1,000 insurgents 5 Nov overran army’s 174 Battalion camp in Abadan, Adamawa state; several soldiers ambushed and killed in Adamawa state 10 Nov. Roadside bomb exploded 27 Nov near Mubi, Adamawa state, killed 40 including five soldiers. Police station set on fire 29 Nov in attack on Shani town, Borno state. Bomb exploded 28 Nov, killing over 100 in grounds of central mosque in Kano, Kano state. Insurgents also suffered reversals: combined force of govt troops and local vigilantes 13 Nov drove them out of Mubi, largest town under BH control; also lost Vintim, Chibok mid-Nov. Lack of decisive response to intensified attacks deepened public distrust of military, including reports of army units fleeing BH’s 5 Nov attack on Abandan, and new charges of human rights abuses following 5 Nov killing of 16 men arrested by soldiers in Potiskum, Yobe state. Emir of Kano, Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, 14 Nov urged citizens to form militias to defend themselves. President Jonathan 18 Nov requested approval for six-month extension of emergency rule in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states. Intercommunal violence continued in Zamfara and Nawarawa states:

suspected Fulani gunmen 8 Nov invaded Alakyo village, home of Ombaste militia, killing villagers including Ombaste's spiritual leader Lega Agu. Fight spread to Shabu, suburb of Lafia, killing seven; further seven killed in Lafia 17 Nov. President Jonathan 11 Nov formally declared intention to seek re-election in Feb 2015 as candidate of ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP).

- ["Boko Haram crisis: 'Militant traders' raid Nigeria town"](#), BBC, 24 Nov. 2014.

New Crisis Group Africa Report N°220, *Nigeria's Dangerous 2015 Elections: Limiting the Violence*, 21 November 2014. Nigeria's politics is sliding dangerously toward violence before, during and after the February 2015 elections. With only three months to the polls, mitigating bloodshed requires urgent improvements in security and electoral arrangements, as well as in political mindsets.

Asia

North East Asia

➔ **China (internal)** State media reported fifteen people killed, fourteen injured in Xinjiang 28 Nov in Shache county by attackers who threw bombs from vehicle and stabbed people. Xinjiang court upheld life sentence imposed on prominent Uighur scholar Ilham Tohti for separatism; seven students who worked for website run by Tohti being tried on same charge. 22 imprisoned at mass trial in Xinjiang 11 Nov on charges including rape, disturbing public order, “illegal preaching”. State media 25 Nov reported gov’t “strike hard” campaign in Xinjiang, announced in May, has cracked 115 terrorist cells, shut down 171 “religious training sites” and arrested 238 people.

- [“To quell unrest, Beijing moves to scatter Uighurs across China”](#), *New York Times*, 6 Nov. 2014.

↑ **China/Japan** Following months of preparatory meetings and backchannel diplomacy, China and Japan 7 Nov jointly issued four-point agreement on improving relations; acknowledges different stances on recent “tensions” over islands and vaguely states sides have reached agreement on overcoming political obstacles regarding war-time history. Beijing had demanded that Tokyo acknowledge that Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands are disputed, and that Abe not visit Yasukuni Shrine again as PM, as preconditions for bilateral summit; Tokyo rejected preconditions. Communiqué seen as basis for more substantive talks. Agreement paved way for meeting between Chinese President Xi and Japanese PM Abe on sidelines of Beijing-hosted APEC summit 10 Nov; meeting seen as vital first step in thawing Sino-Japanese relations. Talks expected to restart soon to establish mechanisms to avoid accidental military clashes at sea.

- Yanmei Xie, [“After the Icy Handshake, What Comes Next?”](#), *Huffington Post*, 12 Nov. 2014.
- [“China and Japan, in sign of a thaw, agree to disagree on a disputed island group”](#), *New York Times*, 7 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Korean Peninsula** UN human rights committee 18 Nov passed resolution calling on UNSC to refer DPRK to ICC for alleged crimes against humanity, following Feb UN report; resolution also called on SC to consider targeted sanctions against those responsible. Pyongyang 20 Nov responded threatening to conduct nuclear test, accused U.S. of being behind resolution, which it called “grave political provocation”. Comes after DPRK official in Oct denied existence of prison camps. Satellite images emerged indicating new activity at DPRK’s Yongbyon nuclear facility. Pyongyang sent high-level envoy Ch’oe Ryong-hae to Moscow where he met with President Putin; part of DPRK’s efforts to reach out to Russia amid souring of relations with China. Afterwards, Russian FM Lavrov said Pyongyang ready to return to six-party talks without preconditions. Lavrov called 18 Nov UN resolution confrontational, counterproductive. Two U.S. citizens released from detention in DPRK early Nov. ROK staged annual Hoguk joint military exercise, and combined airforce exercise with U.S.; DPRK reportedly be-

gan winter military exercises. ROK official early Nov reportedly said DPRK has launched new submarine capable of firing ballistic missiles.

- Daniel Pinkston, [“DNI Clapper’s Rescue Mission to the DPRK”](#), In Pursuit of Peace, 14 Nov. 2014.
- [“North Korea halts U.N. charm offensive over human rights record”](#), Reuters, 10 Nov. 2014.

South Asia

↓ **Afghanistan** Month saw series of Taliban attacks on foreign targets in Kabul: seven killed, including one Briton, in attacks on UK embassy car, foreign compound 27 Nov; three South Africans killed in attack on foreign guest house next day; four suicide bombers killed 19 Nov in attack on “Green Village” international zone. President Ghani 30 Nov dismissed caretaker govt amid continued delay in formation of new unity cabinet, reflecting difficulty of reaching compromise between opposing factions supporting Ghani and govt “chief executive” Abdullah. Ghani, Abdullah continued to insist on formation of technocratic administration with educated candidates in senior positions despite perceived risks of excluding influential powerbrokers lacking formal education. International donors urged formation of govt before London conference to review funding commitments 5 Dec; several parliamentarians warned delay causing insecurity. Parliament late Nov approved Sept agreements allowing U.S., NATO troops in country beyond 2014. Parliament’s lower house 5 Nov criticised Independent Election Commission (IEC), Independent Electoral Complaint Commission (IECC) for refusing to brief lawmakers on allegations of widespread fraud in provincial council elections; acting Balkh governor Atta Mohammad Noor 9 Nov accused IEC, IECC of committing fraud, accepting bribes. Violence continued across country including at least 62 reported killed by suicide bomber at volleyball match in Paktika province 23 Nov; thirteen militants reported killed by police 10 Nov in Kunduz province, including Taliban shadow governor for Takhar province.

- [“Afghan president fires his cabinet; police chief offers to quit”](#), *New York Times*, 30 Nov. 2014.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°260, [Afghanistan’s Political Transition](#), 16 October 2014.

➔ **Bangladesh** Month saw several strikes and demonstrations by Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI), including in Dhaka, after controversial International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) late Oct sentenced JeI leader Motiur Rahman Nizami to death over alleged 1971 war crimes. Supreme Court 3 Nov upheld death sentence against JeI leader Muhammad Kamaruzzaman; govt 5 Nov requested preparations for execution, attorney general said apex court’s full verdict still required. ICT 2 Nov sentenced senior JeI member Mir Quasem Ali to death. JeI protests less violent than in past despite some incidents including vandalism, crude bomb explosions and vehicle torching; observers warned of risk of escalation if sentences carried out. ICT 13 Nov sentenced member of opposition Bangladesh National Party (BNP) to death; 24 Nov sentenced to death expelled former local leader of ruling Awami League. BNP continued struggling to mobilise long-promised mass movement; leader Khaleda Zia criticised “inactivity” of other parties. Police 9 Nov shot BNP demonstrators in Gazipur, other districts, injuring around

30. Supreme Court 24 Nov rejected appeals in corruption case against Zia, clearing way for trial. Indian, Bangladeshi officials mid-Nov discussed counter-terrorism cooperation after India late Oct claimed to have uncovered Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) plot to assassinate PM Sheikh Hasina, carry out coup; police 23 Nov said four JMB members arrested in Dhaka, another five suspected militants arrested in Chittagong. Harkatul Jihad al-Islami members, arrested late Oct/early Nov, admitted to receiving training in Pakistan from Lashkar-e-Tayyaba for attacks inside Bangladesh.

- [“Bangladesh arrests nine in crackdown on militant groups”](#), Reuters, 23 Nov 2014.

➔ **India (non-Kashmir)** Pakistani Taliban faction early Nov warned of future attacks inside India following deadly suicide bombing near border (see [Pakistan](#)). Members of Maoist splinter group 3 Nov reportedly shot dead seven members of local peacekeeping group in Jharkand state; no major incidents reported during first phase of state’s elections 25 Nov, results due 23 Dec. Govt forces 3-5 Nov reportedly killed five separatist militants in Assam state.

- [“Taliban group threatens to attack India following border blast”](#), Reuters, 5 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Kashmir** First phase of Jammu and Kashmir state elections began 25 Nov, results due 23 Dec. Indian authorities early Nov arrested several Kashmiri separatist leaders; move provoked demonstrations in Srinagar, human rights activists argued arrests aimed at suppressing anti-India vote. Indian defense minister 5 Nov said Pakistani authorities must choose between dialogue with Indian govt or Kashmiri separatists; Pakistan rejected conditions for dialogue. Twelve reported killed in attack on army base near border with Pakistan 27-28 Nov, including four militants, three soldiers, five civilians. Occasional firing across Line of Control (LoC) continued, including one soldier, one civilian reported killed 8 Nov. Indian military court 13 Nov sentenced five soldiers, including two officers, to life imprisonment over murder of three civilians in 2010.

- [“India’s BJP seeks gains in Kashmir elections”](#), BBC, 25 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Nepal** Political Dialogue and Consensus Committee 18 Nov postponed drafting of constitution indefinitely after opposition blocked ruling parties’ proposal for settling contentious issues. Netra Bikram Chand-led faction 24 Nov split from Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists (CPN-M) over alleged failure of CPN-M leader Mohan Baidya to advance class struggle.

- [“Nepal’s constitution drafting process gets stalled”](#), Xinhua, 19 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Pakistan** Large-scale demonstrations by Imran Khan’s Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) continued in several cities despite dwindling attendance in Islamabad: Khan 9 Nov called for involvement of military’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Military Intelligence (MI) in judicial commission to investigate fraud in 2013 elections; call met with sharp criticism, including from major political parties, govt rejected demand. Khan threatened to wage “decisive war” against govt ahead of 30 Nov Islamabad rally. Suicide bomber 2 Nov killed at least 57, injured hundreds near Wagah-Attari border with India; Pakistani Taliban (TTP) group Jamaat-ul Ahrar claimed responsibility, threatened attacks inside India. Afghan President Ghani 15 Nov visited Islamabad; PM Sharif expressed support for “Afghan-led”, “intra-Afghan” reconciliation process,

Ghani promised to target Pakistani tribal militants operating from Afghanistan. Sharif's foreign affairs advisor Sartaj Aziz 17 Nov suggested military should not target anti-U.S. militant groups not posing threat to state, including Haqqani network; foreign ministry claimed Aziz quoted out of context. Military operation in N Waziristan continued: army 16 Nov said 90% of N Waziristan cleared of militants, 1,200 killed in past five months; two IDPs killed in clash with police 13 Nov in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's (KPK) Bannu district. TTP chief Fazlullah 25 Nov survived U.S. drone strike in Afghan border province, five other militants killed. Highest number of polio cases since 1999 recorded mid-Nov; three killed in bomb attack on polio patrol in FATA's Bajaur agency 11 Nov, four polio workers shot dead in Quetta 26 Nov. Mob 4 Nov tortured and killed two Christians outside Lahore following blasphemy charges by local clerics; policeman next day killed Shia held on blasphemy charges in Gujrat. PM Sharif, Indian PM Modi dismissed rumours about planned bilateral meeting during late Nov summit of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation in Nepal.

- [“Pakistani army: 1,200 militants killed during five-month offensive”](#), Reuters, 16 Nov. 2014.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°262, [Resetting Pakistan's Relations with Afghanistan](#), 28 October 2014.

➔ **Sri Lanka** Election commission 21 Nov announced presidential polls scheduled for 8 Jan after President Rajapaksa called early election; observers predicted violent campaign, risk of coup in case of opposition victory. General Secretary of ruling Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), Maithripala Sirisena, 21 Nov resigned to run against Rajapaksa; fisheries minister, three other lawmakers resigned, pledged support for Sirisena as common opposition candidate in broad coalition led by main opposition United National Party (UNP). Sinhala nationalist party Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU), part of Rajapaksa's United People Freedom Alliance (UPFA) coalition, 18 Nov announced resignation from govt without joining opposition; expected to back Sirisena. Supreme Court 10 Nov declared Rajapaksa eligible to run for third term despite widespread doubts about legality. Left-wing Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) 17 Nov held major rally in Colombo, called Rajapaksa's candidacy for third term illegal. UN HCHR Zeid 7 Nov criticised govt campaign of “distortion and disinformation”, “insidious” attempts to intimidate witnesses in OHCHR investigation; move followed late Oct arrest of Tamil gathering information for investigators, govt's subsequent public rebuke of investigation.

- [“Sri Lankan minister quits, to challenge Rajapaksa for presidency”](#), Reuters, 21 Nov. 2014.

South East Asia

➔ **Indonesia** Security forces reportedly shot one West Papua separatist, arrested 11 separatists following demonstration in Moanemani late month.

- [“West papua: 11 activists arrested, 1 shot”](#), Pacific Scoop, 24 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Myanmar** Fear of serious implications for peace process with ethnic armed groups after mortar shell fired by govt forces 19 Nov hit military training facility near Laiza, Kachin Independence Organization HQ, killing 23 trainees; military claimed

strike unintentional. During late-Oct meeting Karen National Union standing committee reaffirmed earlier decision to indefinitely suspend membership of UNFC rebel alliance organisation. Activist and freelance journalist detained by military in east in area where clashes had broken out with rebel soldiers was killed and buried by unit that detained him; president ordered inquiry amid scepticism over military claims that he was shot trying to escape. Buddhist nationalist “Association for Protection of Race and Religion” organised large rally in Mandalay 30 Oct, calling for passage of controversial bills regulating interfaith marriage, religious conversion, polygamy and birth control for non-Buddhists. After constitutional review committee submitted report 22 Oct setting out proposals for amending charter, changes to clauses that would allow NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi to be presidential candidate appear unlikely; lower house speaker stated no changes will take effect until after 2015 elections. Lower house voted to retain current first-past-the-post electoral system. President Thein Sein attended 8-10 Nov APEC summit in Beijing, hosted high-profile ASEAN summit in Naypyitaw 11-13 Nov.

- Jean-Marie Guéhenno and Richard Horsey, [“Despite the Headlines, Progress in Myanmar Isn’t Slipping Away”](#), Reuters, 19 Nov. 2014.
- [“Burmese rebels’ deaths hurt peace talks”](#), *New York Times*, 20 Nov. 2014.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°261, [Myanmar: The Politics of Rakhine State](#), 22 October 2014.

➔ **Philippines** Consultations on Bangsamoro Basic Law, required for creation of new Bangsamoro region, continued. Addressing Philippine Development Forum early month, senior govt official said \$5bn needed for development of Bangsamoro until 2016. MILF early month reported to be finalising organisation of political party for 2016 national elections, United Bangsamoro Justice Party. Attacks blamed on breakaway group opposing MILF-govt peace deal continued: two killed by Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) mortar shell in Pikit 14 Nov. BIFF also suspected in other attacks including bomb in M’lang, North Cotabato 23 Nov, killing three. Three soldiers killed by BIFF in Maguindanao 17 Nov. Five govt soldiers, ten Abu Sayyaf group (ASG) killed in clashes in Sulu, southern Philippines 14 Nov. at least five suspected ASG rebels reported killed by govt soldiers in offensive in Basilan 23 Nov. One soldier wounded in clash with ASG 22 Nov. BIFF also suspected after bomb exploded in Kabacan, North Cotabato 16 Nov killing one.

- [“Philippine Muslim rebels to share fruits of peace deal”](#), Bloomberg News, 11 Nov. 2014.

➔ **South China Sea (SCS)** China took steps to manage ongoing SCS tensions through engagement with ASEAN and member states. President Xi’s informal meeting with Philippines President Aquino 11 Nov marked first presidential meeting between the two countries since 2011; Xi stressed China expects Philippines to return to previous bilateral consensus – interpreted as suggestion for Manila to withdraw international arbitration it initiated against China in Jan 2013. Aquino expressed hope that meeting would initiate “new beginning” in bilateral relations. In Myanmar 13 Nov Chinese Premier Li stressed China’s willingness to sign treaty of friendship and cooperation and discuss of ASEAN-China defence hotline; offered to host informal ASEAN-China defence ministers’ meeting in 2015. China and ASEAN agreed to series of “early harvest” measures on SCS, including hotline platform among search and rescue agencies and hotline among FMs for maritime emergencies, adoption of first list of com-

monalities for consultations on establishing Code of Conduct in SCS. China further advocated “dual-track” approach to SCS issues, in which claimant countries would resolve specific disputes through peaceful consultations while China and ASEAN jointly uphold peace and stability in the region. China and Vietnam continued diplomatic talks focused on strengthening communication and high-level exchange, with presidents discussing maintaining maritime stability and implementation of dispute negotiation mechanism during APEC summit. China continues reclamation activities, including building airstrip, on Fiery Cross Reef, reported 20 Nov; U.S. again called for construction freeze, China rejected as “irresponsible”.

- [“China defends land reclamation in South China Sea”](#), AP, 24 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Thailand** Possible impeachment of former House and Senate speakers and former PM Yingluck Shinawatra rekindled pre-coup political animosities. National Legislative Assembly (NLA) 7 Nov voted 87-75 in favour of impeachment motion against former speakers, as recommended by National Anti-Corruption Commission. No date set for proceedings against Yingluck. People’s Democratic Reform Council (PDRC) leaders 4 Nov promised to return to streets to demand impeachments, prompting threats by Red Shirts to stage counter-protests. PM Prayuth Chan-ocha warned against protests, threatened to invoke sweeping powers under interim constitution. Spate of small protests, acts of defiance signal growing restiveness as authorities banned public seminars on political issues. Ongoing arrests of senior police officers and associates for bribery, lèse-majesté began 23 Nov. At ASEAN Summit in Myanmar mid-Nov UNSG, Japanese PM Abe, urged Prayuth to restore civilian rule. In late Nov, media interview Finance Minister Sommai Phasae said elections may not take place until 2016. Several killed in insurgent attacks in south during month. Security agencies authorised formation of new marine paramilitary regiment, provision of 2,700 assault rifles to interior ministry defence volunteers, approved budget of \$234mn to improve security measures.

- [“Why does the 'Hunger Games' have Thailand on edge?”](#) Christian Science Monitor, 20 Nov. 2014.

Pacific

➔ **Fiji** Fiji hosted visits by Chinese President Xi and Indian PM Modi, following their attendance at G20 talks in Australia. Xi held talks with PM Bainimarama and other Pacific island leaders aimed at strengthening ties; announced additional \$11.4m aid for Fiji, signed MoUs including on defence. Further normalisation of regional, international ties following Sept elections: Pacific Islands Forum regional bloc late Oct reinstated Fiji’s membership; New Zealand reinstated High Commissioner to Fiji late Nov.

- [“Chinese president Xi Jinping signs five agreements with Fiji as part of China’s Pacific engagement strategy”](#), Radio Australia, 22 Nov. 2014.

Europe and Central Asia

Balkans

➔ **Bosnia** Following Oct elections, Party of Democratic Action (SDA), Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) and Democratic Front (DF) 19 Nov signed agreement to govern federation entity; seeking deal with party from Republika Srpska entity to form state-level govt. Lower house of state parliament expected to be inaugurated 4 Dec. New tri-partite presidency took office 17 Nov. Germany and UK FMs 5 Nov sent open letter to people of Bosnia outlining initiative to push for progress on EU membership if govt signs up to reforms. EU foreign policy chief Mogherini 17 Nov reported new EU effort to promote reforms.

- [“EU to focus on deal to break Bosnian deadlock”](#), *Wall Street Journal*, 16 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Kosovo** President Jahjaga 19 Nov reported two biggest parties, PM Thaci’s Democratic Party (PDK) and opposition Democratic League (LDK), agreed in principle to form coalition govt, bringing end to five-month deadlock since June elections. Deal came after opposition agreed to relinquish claim to post of parliament speaker. Jahjaga announced parliament session to install new govt scheduled 8 Dec. EU foreign policy chief Mogherini appointed independent expert to investigate allegations of corruption in EULEX mission. Joint report by Balkan Investigative Reporting Network Kosovo and Belgrade-based Center for Transparency, Research and Accountability highlighted failure to fully implement most accords reached in Kosovo-Serbia dialogue, called for action to revive momentum; Mogherini also called for action, resumption of dialogue.

- [“Mogherini urges action on Kosovo-Serbia deals”](#), *Balkan Insight*, 19 Nov. 2014.

Caucasus

➔ **Armenia** Opposition supporters 5 Nov rallied in Yerevan to mark anniversary of arrest of nationalist Tsegakron party leader Shand Harutiunian and supporters, demanded their release; eight protesters reportedly detained. PM Abrahamian 7 Nov said several ministries to be merged into new Interior Ministry. EU 4 Nov pledged €140-170mn over next three years for justice reforms, public administration and private sector investment.

- [“Armenian opposition supporters rally in Yerevan”](#), *RFE/RL*, 5 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Azerbaijan** Rights crackdown continued: second lawyer barred from defending jailed activist Leyla Yunis early Nov; blogger Mehman Huseynov detained at Baku airport 10 Nov, prevented from leaving country; rights activist Elcin Namazov sentenced to fifteen days’ jail 25 Nov for disobeying police. OSCE 10 Nov called on authorities to cease repression of independent media and rights activists. Thousands of opposition supporters 9 Nov protested against govt, demanded release of political prisoners, called for end to President Aliyev’s rule. Former deputy defence minister Mehman Sal-

imov arrested late Nov on corruption charges. Iranian President Rouhani mid-Nov visited Baku, met with President Aliyev to discuss bilateral relations.

- [“OSCE urges Azerbaijan to stop repression of free media”](#), Reuters, 10 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** Azerbaijan mid-Nov said airspace over NK closed after forces shot down Armenian helicopter when it reportedly “attempted to open fire”; Armenia said helicopter belonged to NK authorities, who 22 Nov said forces killed two Azerbaijani soldiers in operation to recover bodies of three crew members killed in the downing. Armenia defence minister Seiran Ohanian 22 Nov said Armenia will retaliate against “any provocation by Azerbaijan from now on”.

- [“Helicopter downing threatens shaky truce”](#), BBC, 14 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Georgia** PM Garibashvili 4 Nov said Western-leaning defence minister Irakli Alasania dismissed following Alasania’s accusation that recent arrest of defence ministry and general staff as part of govt inquiry into corruption politically motivated; FM and European minister resigned in protest, Alasania’s party quit ruling Georgian Dream coalition leaving coalition without parliamentary majority. President Margvelashvili 14 Nov urged lawmakers to “unite on the path toward Europe”. Some 30,000 opposition supporters rallied 15 Nov against govt’s Russia policy, creeping annexation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia separatist regions; Tbilisi criticised 24 Nov “strategic partnership” deal signed between Russia and Abkhazia as attempt at annexation by Moscow, asked UNSC to review legality of treaty. Former President Saakashvili charged with abuse of office 27 Nov in connection with 2006 murder of banker Sandro Girgvliani.

- [“Vladimir Putin signs treaty with Abkhazia and puts Tbilisi on edge”](#), *Financial Times*, 24 Nov. 2014.

➔ **North Caucasus (Russia)** One suspected militant killed, two detained in Tabasaran district, Dagestan 9 Nov; two militants including Suleyman-Stalsk group leader killed in Derbent 21 Nov. Four alleged militants killed, two police wounded 17 Nov in shootout near Sernovodskaya village, Chechnya. One militant killed, four police injured during special operation in Chegem village, Kabardino-Balkaria 4-5 Nov; police officer killed in Nalchik 5 Nov. Villagers allowed to return to Vremenny village in Dagestan’s Untsukul district 26 Nov following special operation which began Sept; reportedly found extensive damage to homes, property. Court 10 Nov sentenced Grozny native to two years’ imprisonment for fighting with Free Syrian Army. Leader of Aukh militant group in Dagestan swore allegiance to Islamic State (IS) leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, prompting experts to speculate about split in Caucasus Emirate.

- [“Two suspected militants killed in Dagestan”](#), RFE/RL, 21 Nov. 2014.

Eastern Europe

➔ **Moldova** Country went to polls for parliamentary election 30 Nov; preliminary results showed pro-EU parties gained almost half of votes.

- [“Pro-EU parties edge pro-Russian rivals”](#), BBC, 1 Dec. 2014.

➔ **Ukraine** NATO commander Gen Breedlove said alliance saw Russian military equipment entering Ukraine early Nov; Moscow denied claims. NATO chief Stoltenberg urged Russia to pull back forces. U.S. called meeting of UNSC 12 Nov, UN Asst SG warned of possible return to full-scale fighting. Ukrainian defence minister said govt forces redeploying in preparation for possible offensive by separatists. Separatists in eastern Ukraine held elections for head of state and legislature 2 Nov in self-proclaimed people's republics in Donetsk and Luhansk, reported high turnout, victories for current leaders; Kyiv and West said polls illegitimate. Russia said it respected outcome. Western leaders rebuked Russian intervention in Ukraine at G20 summit in Australia mid-Nov. Ukrainian PM Yatsenyuk 20 Nov accused Russia of "deliberately seeking to provoke a large-scale war". Fighting continues at Donetsk airport and near Luhansk city; heavy artillery fire reported on outskirts Donetsk city early Nov. Large areas of the city temporarily without water after damage to infrastructure. President Poroshenko signed decree mid-Nov withdrawing all govt service funding to rebel-held territory. UN 18 Nov reported almost 1,000 people killed in Ukraine conflict since 5 Sept ceasefire, with both sides violating truce; real figure probably higher. UN describe breakdown of law and order in rebel-held areas, allegations of abuses by rebel and govt forces. Russia late Nov admitted international sanctions hurting its economy, exacerbating downturn.

- ["NATO: Russia sending forces into Ukraine"](#), Al Jazeera, 12 Nov. 2014.

Western Europe/Mediterranean

➔ **Cyprus** New tensions followed Turkey's deployment in Oct of warship to shadow offshore rig chartered to consortium drilling for hydrocarbons off Republic of Cyprus' SE coast. Republic of Cyprus President Anastasiades 8 Nov accused Turkey of "provocative actions", said it was hindering Cyprus peace talks and compromising security in east Mediterranean. Turkish navy continues to provide support and protection to research vessel, also keeping ship hired by Cyprus under surveillance. Reunification talks between Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots remain suspended. UNSG's special adviser on Cyprus Espen Barth Eide, after meeting leaders from both sides, 6 Nov said he remained "realistically optimistic" that sides could set aside hydrocarbons row, continue negotiations. But Republic of Cyprus govt said no conclusion reached on how talks could resume, stated cessation of Turkish "provocations" precondition for returning to table; Turkish Cypriot leader Eroğlu said withdrawal of Turkish research vessel from Cyprus' Exclusive Economic Zone "out of question". UN, UK and some others trying to split hydrocarbon issue off from main issue of talks.

- ["Intractable – or insoluble?"](#), *Economist*, 29 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Turkey** Month saw some positive momentum from both sides in Turkey-PKK peace process, welcome shift from Oct upsurge in violence and clashes between army and Kurdish PKK fighters. Ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) 13 Nov said roadmap was being discussed and new mechanisms could be established for process; gave no details. Pro-Kurdish national movement Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP's) deputy co-chair 15 Nov said jailed PKK leader Öcalan could call on PKK to abandon their weapons in May or April 2015 if the sides can take "simultaneous mutual steps in the peace process". Early Nov survey found 58% of Turkey's population said dialogue

between govt and PKK should continue. In volatile in mainly Kurdish SE, off-duty soldier shot dead by two PKK members in Diyarbakır 29 Oct; alleged “spy” within PKK’s youth arm, YDG-H, executed in Şırnak’s Cizre province 7 Nov. Security Forces 12 Nov said PKK elements had fired on military outpost in Uludere, Şırnak. On 16 Nov masked group from YDG-H attacked two public buses in Diyarbakır; another group clashed with police in Cizre province, Şırnak. Govt continues to push for no-fly zone and security zone inside Syria; President Erdoğan 19 Nov reiterated that Turkey would not join an international anti-jihadi coalition unless it also targets Assad regime alongside jihadis and establishes safe zone; U.S. still reluctant on committing to these goals.

- Hugh Pope, [“Turkey and the PKK: A Peace Process Without End Goals?”](#), In Pursuit of Peace, 23 Nov. 2014.
- Hugh Pope, [“A Precious Chance to End Turkey’s Conflict with the Kurds”](#), *Financial Times*, 13 Nov. 2014.
- [“Turkey-PKK peace process ‘at turning point’”](#), BBC, 12 Nov. 2014.

New Crisis Group Europe Report N°234, [Turkey and the PKK: Saving the Peace Process](#), 6 November 2014. The peace process between Turkey and the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) is threatened by ceasefire violations and spillover from the conflicts in Syria and Iraq. Both sides must set aside pretexts and inertia and seize the opportunity of having powerful leaders able to implement a deal whose outlines are clearer than ever.

Central Asia

➔ **Kazakhstan** Anti-extremist bill signed into law 3 Nov aiming to simplify procedures to define groups as terrorist/extremist. National Security Committee 18 Nov announced more than 300 Kazakh citizens fighting alongside IS in Syria and Iraq. Former PM and recently resigned Defence Minister Serik Akhmetov charged with embezzlement 19 Nov, placed under house arrest.

- [“Kazakhstan says at least 300 citizens fighting alongside IS”](#), RFE/RL, 18 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Kyrgyzstan** With winter coming, President Atambaev visited Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan early Nov to confirm energy cooperation. Border tensions continued: in Batken region Uzbek border guard 10 Nov shot and wounded one Kyrgyz man, detained one; in Jalal-Abad region Uzbek border guard 13 Nov shot dead Kyrgyz citizen. Speaking at Security Council Atambaev 3 Nov compared extremism to cancer, said IS a threat to Kyrgyzstan identity.

[“Radical Islam of IS poses ‘special threat’ to Kyrgyz national identity”](#), RFE/RL, 4 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Tajikistan** Authorities 12 Nov arrested twelve men in Sughd province, charged with organising criminal group, recruiting for IS. National Security Committee reported 300 Tajik citizens fighting alongside IS in Syria.

- [“Tajikistan works to bring women back from foreign wars”](#), Central Asia Online, 7 Nov.2014.

➔ **Uzbekistan** President Karimov’s grandson Islam Karimov 15 Nov gave BBC interview on house arrest of his mother Gulnara Karimova, previously seen as possible

successor to her father as president, now detained on corruption charges after falling out of favour with members of her family.

- [“Grandson of Uzbek president makes appeal”](#), BBC, 15 Nov. 2014.

Latin America

↓ **Colombia** FARC 30 Nov liberated army General Alzate, army lawyer and corporal, whose kidnapping had prompted President Santos to suspend peace talks 16 Nov; despite release of the three, impact of temporary suspension of talks on peace process uncertain. FARC 25 Nov also released two soldiers, captured in Arauca 9 Nov. FARC considered captured military personnel prisoners of war, govt insisted they were victims of kidnapping. FARC's commander in chief "Timochenko" 24 Nov slammed suspension for "destroying confidence" in peace process. Tensions high after FARC 5 Nov killed two guards of indigenous Nasa community in Cauca; indigenous court 9 Nov sentenced five FARC members up to 60 years' imprisonment. Trial criticised by UN; FARC stated regret for guards' deaths but regard trial as biased. FARC 30 Oct admitted their actions have adversely affected civilian population, but saying they did not target civilians or commit war crimes. Transport paralysed in Chocó after ELN 25 Nov initiated "armed strike" in region.

- ["Colombia divided over peace talks suspension"](#), Colombia Reports, 19 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Guatemala** Authorities 20 Nov announced arrests of nine people including alleged leader of criminal group Haroldo Mendoza, for crimes including murders and disappearances. Constitutional Court (CC) 19 Nov confirmed appointment of Supreme and appellate court judges, rejecting challenges filed by civil society groups. CC 12 Nov held hearing over irregularities in process, including conflicts of interest, political interference, lack of public debate, failure to investigate candidates' background, absence of debate and vetting; International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) also criticised absence of serious debate and vetting. CC also rejected accusations against lawmaker Gudy Rivera who allegedly pressured appeals court judge to issue ruling that favoured governing party.

- ["Capturan a cúpula de banda criminal"](#), Prensa Libre, 20 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Haiti** Legislative and municipal elections, already three years overdue, postponed indefinitely 26 Oct as parliament unable to agree on implementation of "El Rancho Accord" signed by President Martelly, opposition parties, and civil society groups in March. If elections not held by year-end, Martelly will rule by decree. Protesters marched through Port-Au-Prince 18 Nov demanding Martelly's resignation and chance to vote. At least one person killed as bullets fired on protestors; some sources claim gunfire from govt forces, others from govt supporters. During 29 Nov demonstration protestors demanded resignation of president and PM. Escalated crime-related violence in different regions. Report of UNSG on MINUSTAH announced peacekeeping force set to downsize from 5,021 to 2,370 in June 2015. UN report 26 Nov revealed 32 died, over 15,000 infected by cholera outbreak during 2014.

- ["Anti-Government Protest in Haiti Turns Violent"](#), AP, 18 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Mexico** Amid anger over alleged involvement of local officials in disappearance of 43 students, President Peña Nieto 27 Nov announced security policy overhaul that would dissolve municipal police forces, placing them under control of state govts. Other proposed measures included legislation allowing federal govt to take over municipalities infiltrated by organised crime. Tens of thousands of protestors marched through Mexico City 20 Nov demanding justice for students from Ayotzinapa teachers

college who disappeared in Iguala, Guerrero 26 Sept. Protesters and relatives of students blame Peña Nieto's govt for failing to curb corruption and violence. March mostly peaceful, though some clashes with police. Anger over disappearances sparked further marches, vigils and protests throughout country. Protestors in Guerrero and Michoacán states attacked and occupied municipal buildings, ransacked party HQ, 10 Nov shut down Acapulco airport. Attorney General Murillo Karam 7 Nov announced that members of *Guerreros Unidos* gang admitted killing of students after they were turned over to gang by police; bodies still missing. Over 70 suspects including three dozen police arrested. Prosecutors say Iguala mayor José Luis Abarca, who allegedly has ties to criminal gangs, ordered police to detain students; Abarca fled but arrested 4 Nov in Mexico City. Eleven decapitated bodies found 27 Nov in city of Chilapa, some 160km from place where Ayotzinapa students went missing.

- Javier Ciurlizza and Mary Speck, "[Mexico Protests: 'I Am Fed Up With Fear'](#)", *The World Post*, 19 Nov. 2014.
- "[Mexican Leader, Facing Protests, Promises to Overhaul Policing](#)", *New York Times*, 27 Nov. 2014.

► **Venezuela** Support for President Maduro continues to fall amid severe economic disruption threatened by falling international oil prices, critical shortages of food, medicines and other vital goods. Maduro 28 Nov announced cuts in public spending. Left-wing faction of ruling PSUV, Socialist Tide, in open dissent from official line, may form new party. Relations with Brazil and Colombia worsened. Brazil demanded explanations over Venezuela's former FM signing agreement with its Landless Movement and allegedly recruiting Brazilians for political propaganda in Venezuela. Tensions with Colombia over allegations that murdered PSUV legislator Robert Serra was killed by Colombian paramilitaries in a counter-revolutionary plot. Colombian ambassador claimed leader of "El Colombia" gang who allegedly killed Serra was Venezuelan with no paramilitary links. Venezuela early Nov appeared before UN Committee Against Torture, facing allegations of torture during public disturbances earlier this year. Club de Madrid 25 Nov demanded immediate release of Leopoldo Lopez and other opposition leaders in prison, asked for restoration of rule of law.

- "[El precio del barril local retrocedió a 70,83 dólares](#)", *El Universal*, 15 Nov. 2014.

Middle East & North Africa

Eastern Mediterranean

➔ **Israel-Palestine** Month saw continued tensions and attacks on Israeli civilians in Jerusalem, increasingly referred to as “Jerusalem Intifada”: two killed in vehicular attack on pedestrians 5 Nov, Palestinian driver shot dead by police; four rabbis killed in W Jerusalem synagogue 18 Nov. Violence spread outside Jerusalem: several clashes reported across Israel between Palestinian protesters, Israeli civilians and police; Palestinian 10 Nov stabbed dead Israeli soldier in Tel Aviv. Right wing Israeli politicians, including PM Netanyahu, advanced legislation on automatic application of all new Israeli laws to settlers, discriminatory definition of Israel as nation-state of Jewish people; move deepened crisis of ruling coalition, sparked speculation about early election. PA security forces prevented large-scale organised protests in W Bank; Israeli woman killed outside Alon Shvut settlement 10 Nov, Israeli troops next day shot dead Palestinian during clash in refugee camp outside Hebron. Popular Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti, jailed in Israel since 2002, 11 Nov criticised PA security coordination with Israel, called for third Intifada. Gaza reconstruction remained stalled, long-running salary crisis unresolved; Hamas signalled unwillingness to tolerate status quo. Israeli forces 23 Nov shot dead Palestinian near border in northern Gaza.

- Ofer Zalzberg, [“Mounting Tensions: Jerusalem’s Holy Esplanade”](#), In Pursuit of Peace, 10 Nov. 2014.
- Nathan Thrall, [“Rage in Jerusalem”](#), *London Review of Books*, 21 Nov. 2014.
- [“Israel Edges Closer to Early Election”](#), AP, 30 Nov. 2014.
- For latest briefing, see Crisis Group Middle East Briefing N°42, [Toward a Lasting Ceasefire in Gaza](#), 23 October 2014.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°156, [Bringing back the Palestinian Refugee Question](#), 9 October 2014.

➔ **Lebanon** Sectarian tensions continued following late Oct clashes between Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), Sunni militants in Tripoli; LAF operation criticised for fueling Sunni suspicions that army has allied with Hezbollah against Sunnis, due to indiscriminate LAF raids on homes of Sunni Islamists and Syrian refugees, destruction of impoverished Sunni neighbourhoods during fighting. Observers criticised military-based approach for leaving deep-rooted political and socio-economic grievances unaddressed, heightening risks of radicalisation among some Lebanese and Syrian Sunnis. Parliament 5 Nov extended its own mandate to 2017 citing security concerns linked to Syria conflict.

- [“Lebanese parliament extends own term till 2017 amid protests”](#), Reuters, 5 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Syria** UN Syria envoy Staffan de Mistura early Nov launched initiative to establish “freeze” in battle between regime and opposition in Aleppo. Observers predicted low chance of success: regime described as lacking incentives for deal, seeing status quo as beneficial; initiative criticised by opposition, citing tendency of past local ceasefires to benefit regime by cementing military victories, freeing up resources for advances on other fronts. Syrian FM Moallem 27 Nov claimed govt, Russia, both supporting pro-

positional. Deadly regime airstrikes continued in Aleppo city, including at least twenty civilians reported killed in rebel-held areas 6 Nov; at least 21 reported killed in town held by Islamic State (IS, formerly ISIL) north east of city 9 Nov. Al-Qaeda (AQ)-linked Jabhat al-Nusra advanced in fight against other rebels, including Western-backed Syrian Revolutionary Front: early month reportedly captured several towns and villages in Idlib province, including Deir Sinbel and Khan al-Subul 1-2 Nov. Rebels continued advancing in south; observers described strategic impact as limited in absence of U.S. decision to increase cross-border flow of arms from Jordan. U.S.-led airstrikes targeting IS and AQ-linked militants continued: Syrian Observatory for Human Rights NGO 22 Nov said 910 killed, including 52 civilians, in coalition airstrikes since beginning of campaign late Oct; at least 50 militants reported killed in clashes, airstrikes in Kurdish city of Kobani 29-30 Nov. Almost 100 reported killed in regime airstrikes on IS-held Raqqah city 25 Nov.

- Noah Bonsey, [“What Obama Doesn’t Understand About Syria”](#), *Foreign Policy*, 26 Nov. 2014.
- [“Local ‘truces’ in Syria offer hope, generate criticism”](#), *Daily Star*, 13 Nov. 2014.

Gulf

➔ **Bahrain** 22 Nov parliamentary elections boycotted by opposition. Authorities claimed 51.5% turnout; main opposition al-Wefaq estimated turnout around 30%. Run-off vote held 29 Nov. Govt banned protest rallies scheduled for 21 Nov, hundreds of protesters reportedly clashed with police. Authorities mid-month arrested more than a dozen activists for allegedly calling on voters to turn elections into referendum on regime legitimacy. Justice ministry early month dropped suspensions case against opposition group Waad. Prominent activists Nabeel Rajab, Zainab al-Khawaja released from jail early/mid-month, awaiting trial.

- [“Bahrain holds run-off elections”](#), Al Jazeera, 29 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Iran** Joint Plan of Action interim nuclear agreement between Iran and P5+1 extended until 30 June 2015 after parties failed to reach comprehensive agreement by 24 Nov deadline during talks in Vienna. Talks set to resume in Dec, diplomats hoping to reach political agreement by 1 March, followed by fully-fledged agreement and implementation plan before 1 July. Vienna talks followed trilateral Iran-U.S.-EU meeting 9-10 Nov in Oman. Republican victory in early Nov U.S. mid-term elections seen as complicating future negotiations: Republican Senator Bob Corker prepared new legislation making deal subject to congressional review; co-sponsor of bill, Senator Lindsey Graham, 8 Nov threatened to “kill” any deal not satisfying maximalist criteria. IAEA early Nov reported Iran complying with commitments under Joint Plan of Action interim agreement but slowed cooperation on IAEA probe into past nuclear activities. Iran, Russia 11 Nov signed agreement on Russian construction of two new nuclear reactor units, potential for six further units; move seen as potentially easing Iranian demands for domestic uranium enrichment as nuclear fuel provided by Russia.

- Ali Vaez, [“What Next for the Iran Talks: Reykjavik Redux?”](#), European Leadership Network, 27 Nov. 2014.

- [“Iran nuclear talks extended to 2015 after failure at Vienna negotiations”](#), *Guardian*, 24 Nov 2014.

➔ **Iraq** Islamic State (IS, formerly ISIL) militants kept advancing in predominantly Sunni Anbar province, continued large-scale killings of members of anti-IS Sunni tribes: at least 50 members of al-Nimr tribe reported killed 2 Nov; at least 25 members of Albu Fahd tribe reported killed 22 Nov. Iran, U.S. competed to provide assistance, increase influence in predominantly Sunni Anbar: U.S. President Obama early Nov authorised sending 1,500 additional U.S. ground troops to embed with Iraqi army despite increasing entanglement of army with Shiite militias. Shiite militias offered support to outgunned Sunni tribal leaders, settled in Anbar’s Ain al-Assad military base; fears move could exacerbate sectarian tensions, increase Sunni support for IS. PM Abadi mid-Nov introduced plans to reform security sector, reportedly fired 26 unnamed military commanders. Month saw some improvement in relations between central govt and Kurdistan Regional Govt (KRG): oil minister Adil Abdul Mahdi, KRG PM Nechirwan Barzani 13 Nov took steps toward resolving disputed issues, including unauthorised KRG oil exports, outstanding payments of KRG’s share of country’s revenues; agreed KRG will export 150,000 barrels per day through govt-controlled infrastructure, receive \$500mn as first instalment from Baghdad. Deadly bombings in and around Baghdad continued including at least nineteen reported killed 14 Nov. At least six killed in suicide car bombing in KRG capital Erbil 19 Nov.

- [“Obama plans to double U.S. force in Iraq”](#), *Washington Post*, 7 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Yemen** Clashes between Huthis and al-Qaeda (AQAP)-allied tribesmen continued in central Baydah province: hundreds, possibly thousands, reported killed. Huthis continued advancing, 19 Nov seized AQAP stronghold Radaa city, pushed toward predominantly Sunni Marib governorate containing significant part of country’s oil reserves. Marib tribesmen warned against Huthi advances, pledged to destroy oil and electricity infrastructure if Huthis sought to occupy facilities, causing fears of more clashes, economic damage and growing sectarian tensions. Southern pro-independence demonstrations continued; protesters maintained 30 Nov deadline for all northern govt personnel to leave south. UNSC 7 Nov issued sanctions against former president Saleh and two Huthi commanders; announcement galvanised opposition against govt and president Hadi from Saleh’s General People’s Congress (GPC) party; GPC announced opposition to new cabinet sworn in by Hadi 9 Nov, removed Hadi from party leadership. Economic crisis deepened following Saudi Arabia’s reported halt of direct financial assistance to govt in response to Sept Huthi takeover of Sanaa; fears declining reserves could render govt unable to cover salaries, imports in coming months. At least seven reported killed in U.S. drone strike 12 Nov in southern Shabwa province.

- [“At least 33 dead in Yemeni clashes, U.S. drone kills seven”](#), Reuters, 12 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Saudi Arabia** Suspected militants 3 Nov killed at least eight in attack on Shiite gathering in al-Ahsa governorate; two suspects, two police killed north of Riyadh 4 Nov. Interior ministry 24 Nov claimed assailants linked to Islamic State (IS, formerly ISIL).

- [“Four killed as Saudi Arabia hunts gunmen who attacked Shi’ites”](#), Reuters, 4 Nov. 2014.

North Africa

➔ **Algeria** Budget deficit looming with continued lowering of international price of oil. Police mid-Nov staged three-day strike to protest working conditions; govt negotiated social but not political concessions to end strike. Two killed, dozens wounded 28 Nov in clashes between security forces and protesters in southern province of Ouargla. Security along Libya border increased. Reports President Bouteflika mid-month visited France for medical treatment.

- [“Un immobilisme source de tous les dangers”](#), *Le Monde*, 25 Nov. 2014.

⚡ **Egypt** Sinai-based militant group Ansar Beit al-Maqdis (ABM) 10 Nov pledged allegiance to Islamic State (IS, formerly ISIL), changed name to Province of Sinai (Welayet Sina); 14 Nov claimed responsibility for late Oct attack on army checkpoint killing 33 soldiers. ABM 13 Nov killed five govt forces in Sinai; three militants, seven civilians reported killed in clash with army 19 Nov. Court 30 Nov designated IS, affiliated groups terrorist organisations. Court 29 Nov dropped case against former President Mubarak over killings of protesters in 2011; two anti-Mubarak protesters killed same day. Civilian criminal court 16 Nov referred five Al Azhar University students to military court after President Sisi late Oct expanded jurisdiction of military courts to try civilians. Crackdown on Muslim Brotherhood (MB) members continued following PM Mehleb’s late Oct decree dissolving MB-led National Alliance to Support Legitimacy (NASL); senior MB leader Mohamed Ali Bishr arrested 20 Nov. Clashes between police, MB-supporters continued: two protesters killed south of Cairo 7 Nov. Salafi Front called for demonstrations 28 Nov, some leaders called strategy of peaceful protest a failure: four protesters reported killed in Cairo after ministry of interior pledged to use lethal force against demonstrators; two senior army officers shot dead in Cairo same day, another killed in Alexandria. Four killed, including two police, in bomb attack on train in Nile Delta’s Menufia province 5 Nov. Sisi 10 Nov said parliamentary elections to take place by March 2015.

- [“Egyptian militant group pledges loyalty to Islamic State in audio clip”](#), Reuters, 10 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Libya** Supreme Court 6 Nov stripped Tobruk-based House of Representatives (HoR, Libya’s internationally recognised parliament) of legal basis, plunging Libya into further political chaos; anti-HoR factions approved verdict, some continue to support former legislature General National Congress (GNC) as interim legal authority, others call for early elections. U.S., Canada and six EU states issued statement but declined to take position; Egypt stated continued support for HoR; Turkey called for early elections. Clashes between armed factions continued in main cities: ongoing clashes in Benghazi, where some 400 reported killed in past six weeks; army 21 Nov declared shutdown of Tripoli and Misrata airports; airstrike by unidentified jet 24 Nov targeted Tripoli’s Mitiga airport, controlled by Islamist Libya Dawn militia. Fighters loyal to HoR seized control of Kekla town in west, following weeks of clashes with Libya Dawn forces. Car bombs exploded outside Egypt, UAE embassies 13 Nov amid reports countries conducting airstrikes in Libya. UNSC 26 Nov expressed “profound concern” over security deterioration, warned of sanctions. Egyptian FM Sameh Shoukry 30 Nov announced regional FMs to meet 4 Jan to discuss support to Libya. Head of Tripoli-

based legislature Omar al-Hassi 28 Nov said struggle for control of Libya's oil could split country.

- [“Libyan Supreme Court rules parliament invalid”](#), *New York Times*, 6 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Mauritania** Nine human rights and anti-slavery activists including Biram Dah Abeid, leader of Initiative for the Resurgence of the Abolitionist Movement, arrested 11 Nov near Rosso, jailed on charges of inciting violence, violating public order, offending authorities, belonging to non-sanctioned organisation.

- [“Mauritania jails human rights activists”](#), *Maghrebia*, 17 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Morocco** Five arrested 15 Nov in Marrakech on suspicion of seeking to join militant Islamist group Islamic State (IS, formerly ISIL). Burkina Faso's ex-President Compaoré reportedly arrived as exile late Nov.

- [“Morocco arrests five would-be jihadists”](#), *AFP*, 15 Nov. 2014.

➔ **Tunisia** Presidential polls held peacefully 21-23 Nov, interim President Marzouki will face Beji Caid Essebsi of secular Nida Tounes party in run-off 26-28 Dec. Nida Tounes' success in Oct parliamentary polls and prospect it will secure presidency contributing to polarisation of Tunisian politics: Islamist An-Nahda party supporters concerned it will mean return to former regime and dictatorship. Marzouki seeking support from Islamist right, self-proclaimed “defenders of the revolution”, and supporters in south. Insecurity near Algerian border continued: five soldiers killed, ten wounded 5 Nov in attack on army bus by alleged jihadis. Authorities closed border with Tunisia ahead of polls, raised alert level amid reports jihadi group Islamic State established presence in Libya.

- [“Tunisia faces runoff in presidential race”](#), *Wall Street Journal*, 25 Nov. 2014.

- For latest briefing, see Crisis Group Middle East and North Africa Briefing N°41, [Tunisia's Border \(II\): Terrorism and Regional Polarisation](#), 20 October 2014.

➔ **Western Sahara** King of Morocco Mohammed VI early Nov said W Sahara autonomy initiative is “maximum” Morocco can offer, rejected any change of parameters of negotiations or change in UN MINURSO peacekeeping mandate to include human rights; also called on U.S. to adopt less ambiguous position on conflict, pressure Algeria to end support for Polisario separatist movement. Polisario countered with threat of “return to armed struggle” if Morocco and international community “fail to comply with international regulations and legitimate resolutions”; called on EU to condemn king's speech.

- [“Polisario vows to return to ‘armed resistance’ in response to Moroccan King's speech”](#), *Middle East Monitor*, 10 Nov. 2014.