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## CrisisWatch:

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

*CrisisWatch* is compiled by Crisis Group's Brussels Research Unit, drawing on multiple sources including the resources of our nearly 120 staff members across five continents, who already report on some 50 of the situations listed here. Comments and suggestions can be sent to [crisiswatch@crisisgroup.org](mailto:crisiswatch@crisisgroup.org).

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## November 2006 Watchlist



### Conflict Risk Alerts

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### Conflict Resolution Opportunities

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## Africa

### CENTRAL AFRICA

➡ Burundi Joint mechanism to oversee implementation of ceasefire between government and FNL rebels launched 11 October, but FNL did not attend after delegation leader detained. FNL requested, with support of opposition FRODEBU party, release of 7 alleged September coup plotters, but court ruled against release 31 October. Government maintains release of political prisoners contingent on FNL combatants assembling at specified sites as part of 7 September ceasefire agreement. UN Security Council adopted resolution 25 October defining mandate and structure of UN Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB) to replace current peacekeeping mission (ONUB) at year-end.

- [“Burundi court keeps coup suspects behind bars”](#), AlertNet, 31 Oct. 2006.
- [“Joint truce verification mechanism launched”](#), IRIN, 11 Oct. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°31, [Elections in Burundi: A Radical Shake-Up of the Political Landscape](#), 25 Aug. 2005.

➡ Central African Republic President Francois Bozize called for international military assistance along CAR-Chad-Sudan border after 30 October attack by armed rebels he claimed based in Sudan. Rebels reportedly seized northern town of Birao, saying would push on toward capital Bangui 800km south.

- [“Central African Republic asks France to help repel rebels”](#), AlertNet, 31 Oct. 2006.

➡ Democratic Republic of Congo After month of high tension ahead of 29 October run-off election between incumbent Joseph Kabila and VP Jean-Pierre Bemba, voting passed off mostly peacefully, but serious concerns remain about potential for violence surrounding announcement of results: preliminary figures expected within 10 days. Situation calm in Kinshasa, but tensions remain despite presence of 1,600 EUFOR soldiers. Violence reported in Equateur province, where at least 2 died when police attacked crowd protesting alleged electoral fraud. Campaigning on both sides exploited ethnic divisions, with violent clashes between opposing supporters throughout country. Worst incident 18 October when Congolese and UN police forced to escort Bemba's campaign team through Lubumbashi, Kabila southeastern stronghold, after they were attacked by mobs. EU High Rep Javier Solana said EUFOR troops should leave when mandate expires 30 November, despite widespread concern departure could jeopardise electoral transition.

- [“While most of Congo counts ballots, some cities burn them”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 30 Oct. 2006.
- [“The lesser of two evils”](#), *Economist*, 26 Oct. 2006.
- [“Landmark UNHCR convoy brings first of 25,000 home from Burundi”](#), UN News, 11 Oct. 2006.

Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°42, [Securing Congo's Elections: Lessons from the Kinshasa Showdown](#), 2 October 2006. The government and the

international community must move quickly to secure the run-off presidential election between Joseph Kabila and Jean-Pierre Bemba on 29 October. To maintain order in Kinshasa throughout the electoral period and after, the Congolese military, and particularly the private guards of the candidates, must be kept off the streets. EUFOR needs to deploy more troops to the capital from its reserve base in Gabon and give them clear authority to use force to prevent violence, and Brussels should extend this troop deployment until the new government takes office in January 2007.

➡ Uganda Government and Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) talks in Juba, Southern Sudan, resulted in renewal of August cessation of hostilities agreement at month-end – just days after appeared near breakdown. Progress followed earlier walkout by LRA, which, fearing Ugandan army (UPDF) presence, departed Owiny Ki-Bul assembly site and later clashed with UPDF north of Juba. Meanwhile, 38 civilians brutally murdered near Juba 18 October: LRA initially blamed, but Southern Sudanese troops subsequently arrested armed men they said associated with Khartoum. Other violent incidents in South reported throughout month. President Museveni attended talks 21 October, but brief meeting with LRA delegation backfired when both sides traded barbs and LRA reps refused to shake Museveni's hand. Government said would force closure of all IDP camps by year-end.

- Comment by Nick Grono and Adam O'Brien (Crisis Group), [“Exorcising the Ghost of the ICC”](#), *Monitor*, 31 Oct. 2006.
- [“Uganda and LRA to renew ceasefire pact”](#), *East African*, 30 Oct. 2006.
- Comment by Nick Grono (Crisis Group), [“What comes first, peace or justice?”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 26 Oct. 2006.
- [“Museveni's Juba trip”](#), *Monitor*, 25 Oct. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°41, [Peace in Northern Uganda?](#), 13 Sept. 2006.

### HORN OF AFRICA

➡ Chad Darfur-based Chadian rebels launched major new offensive in eastern Chad, most serious since April attack on N'djamena: took town of Goz Beida, 420 miles from capital, 22 October; heavy fighting near Sudanese border 29 October killed Chadian army chief, with both sides claiming victory. Government continued to blame Khartoum for arming rebels, while latter accused Chad of supporting rebel groups in Darfur. Sudanese militia killed at least 40 people in attacks on Chadian villages mid-October; AMIS reported 3 villages destroyed by Arab Militia suspected to be Janjaweed. Humanitarian situation deteriorated with increasingly limited access and increased refugee inflows from Darfur.

- [“Chad's army chief killed in clashes with rebels”](#), Reuters, 29 Oct. 2006.
- [“Rebel push in east Chad raises fears in the capital”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 24 Oct. 2006.

➡ Ethiopia Threat of regional conflict intensified as Somali Islamist forces declared jihad against Ethiopia and amassed near border in response to its military support for Somali Transitional Federal Government. PM Meles Zenawi admitted “a few hundred” armed military trainers in Somalia and stated countries “technically” at war following jihad declaration. Leaked report into 2005 post-election violence

confirmed government police killed 193 protesters in clashes; EU's chief election observer accused Western leaders of turning blind eye.

- "Ethiopian officer captured after fierce battle, claim Islamic radicals", *International Herald Tribune*, 24 Oct. 2006.
- "Ethiopia says technically at war with Somali Islamists", AlertNet, 24 Oct. 2006.
- "Ethiopian protesters 'massacred'", BBC, 19 Oct. 2006.

⏴ Ethiopia/Eritrea Tensions rose as Eritrea amassed reported 1,500 troops and 14 tanks in UN-monitored Temporary Security Zone, in what UN called "major breach" of 2000 peace agreement. Eritrea rejected UN Security Council call to withdraw, claiming right of troops to assist with food production and security. Risk of full-scale regional conflict involving Ethiopia and Eritrea increased: UN report cited estimates of 6,000-8,000 Ethiopian troops in Somalia supporting Transitional Federal Government, and 2,000 Eritrean soldiers supporting rival Union of Islamic Courts.

- "Eritrea masses troops at border", *Mail & Guardian*, 25 Oct. 2006.
- "Eritrea's proxy war jeopardizing regional stability – Meles", *Reporter*, 21 Oct. 2006.
- "Troops harvesting buffer zone", IRIN, 17 Oct. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°101, *Ethiopia and Eritrea: Preventing War*, 22 Dec. 2005.

⏴ ↘ Somalia Situation continued to deteriorate as talks between Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) and Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in Khartoum appeared close to collapsing, and fighting between both sides continued in Somalia. UIC delegation said would not negotiate with TFG until Ethiopian troops withdrawn from Somalia; also opposed Kenya's proposed chairmanship of talks. Risk of full-scale regional conflict involving Ethiopia and Eritrea increased: UN report cited estimates of 6,000-8,000 Ethiopian troops already in Somalia supporting TFG, and 2,000 Eritrean soldiers supporting UIC. UIC reportedly recruited 3,000 Somalis for jihad against Ethiopia and continued to make territorial gains over TFG. Ethiopia denied its troops entered key town of Dinsor end September, but Meles Zenawi admitted "a few hundred" armed military trainers in Somalia and stated countries "technically" at war due to UIC jihad declaration.

- "Diplomats battle to save Somali talks, avert war", AlertNet, 31 Oct. 2006.
- "Somali Islamists announce start of jihad against Ethiopia", *Mail & Guardian*, 23 Oct. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°116, *Can the Somali Crisis Be Contained?*, 10 August 2006.

⏴ Somaliland (Somalia) FM Abdullahi Mohamed Dualeh met with AU head Alpha Konare in Addis Ababa 16 October; Konare expressed support for Somaliland's AU membership and recognition as independent state. Security tightened after UIC said aim is to create "unified Somalia" by capturing Somaliland and Puntland. Discussions took place between Somaliland authorities and influential religious leaders in Hargeisa over imposition of Sharia.

- "Military build up in Somaliland", allAfrica.com, 25 Oct. 2006.
- "Somaliland pushes for recognition as tensions rise", *Reporter*, 21 Oct. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°110, *Somaliland: Time for African Union Leadership*, 23 May 2006.

⏴ Sudan Fierce fighting in north and south Darfur as Khartoum continued to pursue military solution to conflict. Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) suffered string of major defeats, and reportedly faced increased desertions during offensive against rebel National Redemption Front; UN Special Envoy Pronk expelled after blog comments noting SAF defeats and military's low morale. Khartoum continued to reject deployment of UN forces as authorised by UN Security Council resolution 1706. Implementation of 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement continued to falter: NCP undermining progress on reorganisation of oil sector, delineation of North-South borders and issue of oil-rich Abyei area. SPLM public support for UN mission in Darfur further strained NCP-SPLM relations. Government of Southern Sudan facilitating negotiations in Juba between Ugandan government and Ugandan rebel LRA, but series of violent attacks killing over 40 civilians around Juba between 17-20 October and clashes between LRA and UPDF shook South. Peace agreement between government and Eastern Front rebels signed in Asmara 14 October after negotiations facilitated by Eritrea; provides for increased development aid to East and minimal power sharing for Eastern Front in national and regional governments.

- "Shameful evasions", *Guardian*, 25 Oct. 2006.
- Comment by Dave Mozersky (Crisis Group) and Allan Rock, "Canada should lead in Darfur: 'Responsibility to Protect' more than a slogan", *Toronto Star*, 24 Oct. 2006.
- Comment by Morton Abramowitz (Crisis Group), "A new tack on Darfur", *Washington Post*, 22 Oct. 2006.
- "Armed group kills 42 civilians", IRIN, 20 Oct. 2006.
- Comment by John Prendergast and Colin Thomas-Jensen (Crisis Group), "U.S. must crank up the heat on Khartoum", *Washington Post Online*, 18 Oct. 2006.

Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°43, *Getting the UN into Darfur*, 12 October 2006. With Khartoum continuing to reject the expanded UN mission in Darfur, the international community must take strong measures to change the regime's calculation of the costs of non-cooperation. Upping the international pressure includes applying targeted sanctions like asset freezes and travel bans on key regime figures, authorising an investigation into offshore accounts to pave the way for economic sanctions, encouraging divestment campaigns, exploring sanctions on aspects of Sudan's petroleum sector, maintaining the threat of ICC prosecutions for atrocity crimes, moving to enforce a no-fly zone over Darfur, and obtaining Chad's consent to a rapid-reaction force on its Sudan border.

## SOUTHERN AFRICA

⏴ Angola UNITA opposition party called for government dialogue with factions of Cabindan society opposed to September peace treaty signed by FLEC-FAC faction. UN World Food Programme announced would end aid to continent's second-largest oil producer by year-end.

- "Concern as Luanda pushes through Cabinda peace deal", IRIN, 3 Oct. 2006.

⏴ Zimbabwe Opposition MDC failed to make strong showing in by-elections in Mashonaland East and Central, where ruling ZANU-PF easily retained its seats. Divisions within ZANU-PF again evident with Mugabe saying succession debate possible at December party conference. Reserve Bank governor Gono

closed all Money Transfer Agencies, source of remittance income for many Zimbabweans, in effort to encourage conversion of foreign currencies at official rate, in latest effort to halt currency crisis.

- ["By-election results raise questions over voter registration"](#), IRIN, 9 Oct. 2006.
- ["Zimbabwe opposition says no protests due to fear"](#), AlertNet, 8 Oct. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°117, [Zimbabwe: An Opposition Strategy](#), 24 Aug. 2006.

## WEST AFRICA

➤ Côte d'Ivoire Situation remained tense as AU's Peace and Security Council, following ECOWAS recommendations, recommended 17 October to prolong fragile transition for 12 months with Laurent Gbagbo remaining president and Charles Konan Banny PM. AU suggested reinforcing powers of PM, giving authority over defence and security forces to "allow him to accomplish his tasks", including implementation of disarmament program, voter identification process, dismantling of militias, restoration of state authority throughout country and electoral process. UNSC to pass resolution 1 November in support. Pro-Gbagbo camp insisted on full respect of constitution, which gives executive power exclusively to president.

- ["Divided UN council delays vote on Ivory Coast plan"](#), AlertNet, 1 Nov. 2006.
- ["AU hands down new peace blueprint"](#), IRIN, 18 Oct. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°40, [Côte d'Ivoire: Stepping Up the Pressure](#), 7 Sept. 2006.

➤ Guinea Political battle between rival clans over succession of ailing President Conté continued. Minister of State for Presidential Affairs Fodé Bangoura further consolidated his power in 14 October limited government reshuffle.

- ["EU could soon unblock aid to Guinea, official says"](#), Reuters, 25 Oct. 2006.
- ["Road to ruin"](#), IRIN, 20 Oct. 2006.

➤ Liberia Defence Minister Brownie Samukai called for international assistance in apprehending Charles Taylor's former chief of staff, Benjamin Yeaten, wanted for alleged plots to assassinate current government officials and destabilise country. UN report released 18 October said courts and police had failed to prosecute widespread sexual abuse against women and children. Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission began collecting testimony 3 October, with formal hearings set for January 2007.

- ["Liberia: Rapists go free"](#), IRIN, 19 Oct. 2006.
- ["Ex-Taylor aide plotting attacks in Liberia-minister"](#), AlertNet, 13 Oct. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°107, [Liberia: Resurrecting the Justice System](#), 6 Apr. 2006; and Briefing N°36, [Liberia: Staying Focused](#), 13 Jan. 2006.

➤ Mali Algerian Islamic insurgents attacked group of former Tuareg rebels in northern Mali desert, killing 9. Attack came month after Tuareg fighters killed leader of Algerian rebel movement Salafi Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC).

- ["Algerian militants ambush Malian Tuaregs, kill 9"](#), AlertNet, 24 Oct. 2006.

➤ Niger Government announced plan to expel 150,000 Mahamid Arab refugees, most of whom fled Chad in 1980s,

citing security threat to indigenous communities. Move sparked international and domestic protest and fears of ethnic violence. Government spokesman later said only those without legal papers would have to leave. 5,000 people held demonstration in eastern town of Diffa urging government to carry out full expulsion.

- ["Niger starts mass Arab expulsions"](#), BBC, 26 Oct. 2006.
- ["150,000 Arab refugees told to leave"](#), *New York Times*, 25 Oct. 2006.

➤ Nigeria Tensions rose in Plateau, Anambra and Ekiti states over impeachment of governors. President Obasanjo declared state of emergency in Ekiti state and appointed retired general as sole administrator for 6 months following controversial impeachment of Governor Ayo Fayose on charges of corruption. Independent National Electoral Commission released timetable for April 2007 elections, but politicians and civil society organisations expressed concern over Commission's level of preparedness and impartiality. 7 Western oil workers in Niger Delta, taken hostage 3 October, released 21 October.

- ["Capping the well-heads of corruption"](#), *Economist*, 19 Oct. 2006.
- ["Fears over Nigeria emergency rule"](#), BBC, 19 Oct. 2006.
- ["Reps wade into Plateau crisis"](#), *Daily Champion*, 12 Oct. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°118, [Fuelling the Niger Delta Crisis](#), 28 Sept. 2006.

Crisis Group Africa Report N°119, [Nigeria's Faltering Federal Experiment](#), 25 October 2006. Nigeria faces grave risks unless the government addresses the causes underlying the crisis in the federalist system. The government should grant a significant level of resource control to local communities and create a democratic constitutional reform process to allow Nigerians to engage for the first time in a free debate over restructuring the country's power-sharing arrangements.



➤ Senegal Army operations continued in Casamance against separatist MFDC. Clashes included 6 October army attack on rebel stronghold Tambaff. Over 5,000 civilians reportedly fled into Gambia and further 10,000 displaced inside Casamance.

- ["No end to region's longest-running war"](#), IRIN, 16 Oct. 2006.

➤ Sierra Leone Médecins sans frontières (MSF) reported public health has not improved since 2001 despite relative stability.

- ["Lessons from pain: Treating Sierra Leone's endless health emergency"](#), MSF, 17 Oct. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°87, [Liberia and Sierra Leone: Rebuilding Failed States](#), 8 Dec. 2004.

## Asia/Pacific

### CENTRAL ASIA

➤ Kazakhstan Opposition Aq Zhol party leader Alikhan Baimenov took up party's sole parliamentary seat, ending 2-year boycott in protest of flaws in 2004 parliamentary elections.

- ["Kazakhstan experiences political shift"](#), Eurasia Insight, 17 Oct. 2006.

- Kyrgyzstan Relations between President Bakiev and parliament remained strained: opposition planning opened rally 2 November to call for progress on constitutional reform. Bakiev warned would not allow protests to destabilise country but promised to send draft reforms to parliament by 20 November. 3 suspected Islamist rebels given commuted death sentences for involvement in May attacks on Kyrgyz and Tajik border posts. Bakiev visited Uzbekistan 3-4 October; presidents hailed cooperation and lifted bilateral visa requirements.

  - "Kyrgyz president addresses parliament on constitutional reforms", RFE/RL, 30 Oct. 2006.
  - "Constitutional reform effort in Kyrgyzstan enters critical period", Eurasia Insight, 24 Oct. 2006.
  - For most recent report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°118, *Kyrgyzstan's Prison System Nightmare*, 16 Aug. 2006.
  
- Tajikistan Electoral campaign for 6 November presidential elections underway; 4 challengers considered unlikely to displace incumbent Emomali Rahmonov. Major opposition parties boycotting vote. Communications ministry ordered censorship of several websites known for critical coverage of government, citing state security, but later appeared to reverse decision in face of NGO protests.

  - "Tajik president seemingly keen to foster competitive presidential election", Eurasia Insight, 23 Oct. 2006.
  - "Tajiks' election choices already limited", IWPR, 5 Oct. 2006.
  - For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°33, *Tajikistan's Politics: Confrontation or Consolidation?*, 19 May 2004.
  
- Turkmenistan European Parliament committee shelved trade pact with Ashgabat pending "clear, tangible and sustained progress" on human rights. Around half of prison population pardoned in annual amnesty; dissident Kakabay Tejenov, in forced psychiatric detention since January, also reportedly released. President Niyazov dismissed 2 regional governors for failing to meet cotton production targets.

  - "Turkmen dissident released from psychiatric detention", RFE/RL, 25 Oct. 2006.
  - "Turkmen president pardons 10,000 prisoners to mark independence anniversary", *International Herald Tribune*, 17 Oct. 2006.
  - For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°85, *Repression and Regression in Turkmenistan: A New International Strategy*, 4 Nov. 2004.
  
- Uzbekistan President Karimov dismissed governor of Andijon, laying partial blame for 2005 unrest on his neglect of population's grievances; Ferghana governor also sacked. In Jizzakh region, journalist Ulughbek Haidarov sentenced to 6 years prison on extortion charges activists say are politically motivated; fellow journalist Jamshid Karimov (nephew of president) reportedly ordered into psychiatric hospital for 6 months. EU appeared set to ease sanctions imposed on regime after Andijon unrest: European officials to meet Uzbek counterparts in November before member states decide whether to renew.

  - "Karimov reappraises Andijon", RFE/RL, 19 Oct. 2006.
  - Comment by Andrew Stroehlein (Crisis Group), "Media development in challenging environments: Uzbekistan after Andijon", *Media Matters*, 1 Oct. 2006.
  - For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°45, *Uzbekistan: In for the Long Haul*, 16 Feb. 2006.

## SOUTH ASIA

- Afghanistan 5 years after start of U.S.-led fighting in Afghanistan, NATO assumed command over all military operations in country, taking over command of 12,000 U.S. troops stationed in east. Clashes between NATO forces and militants resumed in Uruzgan and Kandahar after relative calm early in month. In possible model for fighting militants elsewhere, British ISAF troops withdrew from Musa Qala district after "tribal elders" pledged to expel Taliban fighters alone. NATO Commander James Jones "regretted" 12 civilian deaths in Panjwayi 24 October; local estimates much higher.

    - "In the Land of the Taliban", *New York Times*, 22 Oct. 2006.
    - "U.K. troops leave Afghan district in deal with elders", RFE/RL, 17 Oct. 2006.
    - "Karzai plans to convene a jirga", Eurasianet, 13 Oct. 2006.
    - For most recent report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°116, *Afghanistan's New Legislature: Making Democracy Work*, 15 May 2006.
  
  - Bangladesh Appointment of interim caretaker administration, required by constitution to rule in lead-up to January elections, marked by violent protests and uncertainty. Talks between ruling BNP and opposition Awami League failed to yield progress on Awami demands for electoral reform and neutral head of interim government. Over 20 killed in Awami-led protests in capital 28 October; BNP leaders threatened "tit-for-tat" street action. President Iajuddin Ahmed intervened, assuming head post 29 October after BNP nominee K.M. Hasan refused. Opposition continues to demand replacement of election commissioner and boycotted swearing-in, believing Ahmed partial to BNP.

    - "Bangladesh rivals stage rallies", BBC, 30 Oct. 2006.
    - "Bangladesh poll reform deadlock", BBC, 25 Oct. 2006.
- Crisis Group Asia Report N°121, *Bangladesh Today*, 23 October 2006. 

With national elections due in January amid political discord that could threaten its democracy and encourage the growth of militant Islamist forces, Bangladesh needs to be taken more seriously. It has made significant progress on development goals but suffers from dysfunctional politics, popular discontent and, increasingly, violence. While there is not an imminent threat of a major domestic breakdown, the system is fragile. More democracy is the best guarantee against the growth of extremism.
- India (non-Kashmir) New round of peace talks held 17 October between government and northeastern Nagaland separatists NSCN (IM faction) failed to yield progress on negotiations over autonomy for Naga people. Violence continued in Assam state, where Indian soldiers stepped up campaign against ULFA rebels and others.

    - "Naga rebels say India insincere at peace talks", AlertNet, 23 Oct. 2006.
    - "What hopes for peace in Assam?", BBC, 20 Oct. 2006.
    - "Police arrest rebels plotting attacks in New Delhi", AlertNet, 16 Oct. 2006.
  
  - Kashmir Mixed messages over Delhi-Islamabad dialogue following India's implication of Pakistani security services in Mumbai train bombings. First talks since July bombings due 13 November. Newly appointed foreign minister Pranab

Mukherjee said peace with Pakistan desirable and that India would share "certain" evidence over bombings with Islamabad, while PM Singh warned 18 October that further dialogue would be strained unless Pakistan took greater action on terrorism. Violence escalated in Srinagar with series of clashes between separatists and Indian security forces: 10 killed in 24-hour gun battle 5 October after attack on security camp, claimed by Al-Mansurian militants. After string of protests in Indian-controlled Kashmir, Indian government postponed execution of militant Kashmiri Afzal Guru pending review of clemency appeal.

- ["Indo-Pak relations: Diplomacy, sort of"](#), ISN, 23 Oct. 2006.
- ["India will burn if rebel hanged says Kashmiri leader"](#), AlertNet, 14 Oct. 2006.
- ["Bomb-blast diplomacy"](#), *Economist*, 5 Oct. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°51, [India, Pakistan and Kashmir: Stabilising a Cold Peace](#), 15 June 2006.

➡ Nepal Limited progress made in talks between interim government and Maoist leaders. Both parties agreed to hold elections before June 2007 for constituent assembly, which will determine future status of monarchy. But contentious issue of Maoist disarmament remains unsolved. PM Koirala and Maoist leader Prachandra met 29 October, agreeing to further talks to discuss arms management; Maoist ceasefire extended by 3 months. Interim government panel sent unprecedented letter to King Gyanendra 12 October questioning him over April killings of democracy activists: no response.

- ["PM meets Prachanda, Indian envoy"](#), eKantipur, 29 Oct. 2006.
- ["Rebels and government agree to hold elections"](#), AlertNet, 11 Oct. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°115, [Nepal: From People Power to Peace?](#), 10 May 2006.

➡ Pakistan Exiled opposition leaders Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif again called for free elections in 2007 and pledged to work together for democratic transition. But renewed rumours that Bhutto due to sign deal with President Musharraf, apparently spread by government, may weaken alliance. Rockets found planted near Musharraf residence in Rawalpindi and in Islamabad near National Assembly and headquarters of military intelligence agency (ISI). Military strike on madrassa in Bajaur killed 80; government claimed school was terrorist training ground.

- ["Pakistan's leader defends airstrike on school"](#), *New York Times*, 1 Nov. 2006.
- ["Seven years of Musharraf's 'general' rule"](#), ISN, 12 Oct. 2006.
- ["Pakistan toys with new strategy on border"](#), ISN, 6 Oct. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°119, [Pakistan: The Worsening Conflict in Balochistan](#), 14 Sept. 2006.

➡ Sri Lanka Violence between LTTE rebels and government continued to intensify amid heavy government losses. Over 1,000 reportedly killed since April. Government troops experienced setback in military offensive on Jaffna peninsula 11 October in attempt to clear rebels: over 130 troops killed and 400 wounded. LTTE suicide bombing on naval convoy in Habarana killed 100 sailors. Agreement between ruling SLFP and opposition UNP raised hopes of united stance on rebels, but LTTE-government talks in Geneva 28 October stalled over reopening of national highway that LTTE claimed necessary for getting

humanitarian supplies to Jaffna. 3 days after talks ended, government bombed LTTE targets in Batticaloa.

- ["Sri Lanka to rebels: stop attacks and we'll open road"](#), AlertNet, 31 Oct. 2006.
- ["Sri Lanka sees peace talks stall"](#), *New York Times*, 30 Oct. 2006.
- ["War again"](#), *Economist*, 19 Oct. 2006.

## NORTH EAST ASIA

➡ China (internal) Video footage emerged of Chinese border guards shooting dead 2 Tibetans and wounding 7 others from group of 70 crossing border into Nepal, raising international concern.

- ["Repression under China: Murder in the mountains"](#), *Independent*, 26 Oct. 2006.

➡ North Korea Pyongyang launched first nuclear test 9 October, escalating fears of regional instability and forcing U.S. and other powers to confront reality of weaponised North Korea. UN Security Council passed Resolution 1718 14 October, calling on North Korea to end its nuclear program and imposing sanctions. China and South Korea demurred on full slate of sanctions, while Pyongyang said unwilling to return to talks unless U.S. withdraws financial sanctions imposed in September 2005. North agreed return to 6-party talks 31 October, due by year-end, but short-term prospects for settlement dim. World Food Programme warned of humanitarian disaster if food stocks not bolstered before winter.

- ["North Korea will resume nuclear talks"](#), *New York Times*, 1 Nov. 2006.
- ["UN Security Council Resolution 1718"](#), 14 Oct. 2006.
- ["North Koreans say they plan a nuclear test"](#), *New York Times*, 3 Oct. 2006.

Crisis Group Asia Report N°122, [Perilous Journeys: The Plight of North Koreans in China and Beyond](#), 26 October 2006. The international community needs to do more to help thousands of desperate North Koreans who are fleeing their country or it may find the nuclear crisis with Pyongyang even more difficult to resolve. Primary responsibility for the mounting humanitarian tragedy lies with North Korea, but the international community has not found an effective means of dealing with the situation. China should shift its focus from keeping North Koreans out to protecting them once they have entered.



➡ Taiwan Strait President Chen Shui-bian continued to provoke Beijing with proposals for constitutional reform and arms procurement, despite widespread domestic opposition. Tens of thousands gathered in Taipei 10 October calling on Chen to step down; second recall motion failed in parliament 13 October. Proposed revisions to 1947 constitution unpopular at home and lack U.S. support. Taiwan relaxed controls on visits to mainland by low-ranking civil servants and police, amid expanding cross-Strait economic exchange; ban on travel to mainland remains for high-ranking officials.

- ["Second recall bid fails in Taiwan"](#), BBC, 13 Oct. 2006.
- ["Taipei police disperse anti-Chen protestors"](#), AlertNet, 11 Oct. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°42, [China and Taiwan: Uneasy Détente](#), 21 Sept. 2005.

## SOUTH EAST ASIA

Indonesia Violence continued to flare in Poso, Sulawesi, after 22 September executions of 3 Christian militants. String of attacks against Christians, including shooting of chief pastor 16 October, led national police chief to call for lower evidence thresholds for internal security. In Aceh, rift in GAM appeared to deepen in advance of 10 December local elections, which could benefit non-GAM candidates by splitting vote. Campaigning due to begin 6 November: 100 EU and 40 Japanese election monitors expected, supporting local observers and sharply reduced Aceh Monitoring Mission contingent.

- "Church set on fire in Indonesia's Poso region", AlertNet, 24 Oct. 2006.
- "Munir murder conviction quashed", BBC, 4 Oct. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°53, *Papua: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions*, 5 Sept. 2006.

Myanmar/Burma National Convention resumed drafting national constitution, first of 7 steps to democracy outlined by ruling junta; opposition boycotted proceedings. Dissident group "88 Generation Students" launched protest in response and gathered over 500,000 signatures on petition to free political prisoners and hold National Dialogue.

- "Democracy activists collect half a million signatures as petition campaign ends", *International Herald Tribune*, 24 Oct. 2006.
- "Burma discusses version of democracy", BBC, 23 Oct. 2006.
- "Lost on the road to democracy", *Guardian*, 10 Oct. 2006.

Philippines Talks between MILF rebels and government close to breakdown after Manila blamed rebel leaders for deadly blast that killed 7 in Mindanao 10 October; worst of series of 7 bombs in week. MILF denied involvement and demanded charges be dropped before continuing peace talks with government; later accused government of breaking ceasefire by strafing MILF bases. Supreme Court rejected Arroyo administration's petition to hold referendum on adopting parliamentary system of government; administration vowed to appeal.

- "Gov't seeks new deadline in talks", *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 1 Nov. 2006.
- "MILF rebels accuse troops of strafing positions amid truce", *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 26 Oct. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°110, *Philippines Terrorism: The Role of Militant Islamic Converts*, 19 Dec. 2005.

Thailand Leaders of 19 September coup, Council on National Security (CNS), installed interim government and process for drafting new constitution. CNS retains significant influence over drafting process; final document due mid-2007 for public referendum. Retired general Surayud Chulanont appointed interim PM 1 October; seen as reformer and instrumental in keeping military out of politics after last coup. Surayud announced tackling southern violence top priority. Aree Wong-arya, Muslim with experience in south, appointed as interior minister; Southern Border Provinces Administration Centre, dismantled by Thaksin in 2002, to be revived. Emergency decree renewed for 3 months 17 October amid ongoing violence.

- "Thailand revives agency to tackle Muslim insurgency", AlertNet, 24 Oct. 2006.
- "Thai PM to reach out to Muslims", BBC, 18 Oct. 2006.

- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Reports N°105, *Thailand's Emergency Decree: No Solution*, 18 Nov. 2005; and N°98, *Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad*, 18 May 2005.

Timor-Leste Violence escalated after publication of UN inquiry into April-May unrest: report claimed former PM Mari Alkatiri's government knowingly provided civilians with state weapons, called for further investigation of his failure to stop transfers and recommended prosecution of former minister Rogerio Lobato, armed forces chief Taur Matan Rauk, and dozens of others. Street fighting left several dead in final week of October. T-L government dropped request for all-UN peacekeeping force, deciding to keep Australian and New Zealand troops under separate but coordinated command.

- "E.Timor PM defends military chief over U.N. inquiry", AlertNet, 18 Oct. 2006.
- *Report of the Independent Special Commission for Timor Leste*, UN OHCHR, 17 Oct. 2006.

Crisis Group Asia Report N°120, *Resolving Timor-Leste's Crisis*, 10 October 2006. The worst period in Timor-Leste's short independent history is not over but there is general agreement on the elements of a resolution. The problem is getting a dysfunctional government to implement them. Resolution of the crisis will depend on comprehensive security sector reform and better oversight of the courts. With elections due in May, it will also need reform within the dominant party and the willingness of key political actors to compromise.

## PACIFIC

Fiji Dispute between PM Qarase and military chief Bainimarama as troops seized ammunition stores in capital amid growing fears of military coup. Bainimarama opposes proposals by Qarase to grant amnesty to some involved in Fiji's 2000 coup and threatened to force PM's resignation. Qarase ordered ouster of Bainimarama 31 October but military officers refused to comply.

- "Fiji's Qarase stands firm", *Age*, 2 Nov. 2006.
- "Fears grow of Fiji military coup", BBC, 1 Nov. 2006.

Solomon Islands Tension with Canberra rose over Solomons' unwillingness to extradite on child sex charges Julian Moti, Australian lawyer recently appointed Attorney-General by PM Sogavare. Sogavare and other regional leaders used Pacific Islands forum to accuse Canberra of bullying, and said will seek to lessen Australia's role in RAMSI peacekeeping force.

- "RAMSI may reignite racial tension: Solomons PM", *Australian*, 26 Oct. 2006.
- "Trouble brews in Pacific paradise", BBC, 24 Oct. 2006.



## BALKANS

Albania Parties remained divided over date for municipal elections due in December or January; President Moisiu said would set date if no agreement by 15 November. PM Berisha called on parliament to renew efforts to have

Prosecutor General Theodhori Sollaku dismissed after Moisiu refused, saying Sollaku had not violated constitution.

- ["Albanian premier wants another investigative committee to fire prosecutor general"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 16 Oct. 2006.

- For most recent report, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°153, ["Pan-Albanianism: How Big a Threat to Balkan Stability?"](#), 25 Feb. 2004.

➤ Bosnia & Herzegovina Elections for tripartite presidency, central parliament, entity assemblies and Republika Srpska (RS) presidency held 1 October. Presidential elections returned Haris Silajdzic, Zeljko Komsic and Nebojsa Radmanovic as respective Bosniac, Croat and Serb members; 3 are divided over critical issue of entity powers. Bosniak Party of Democratic Action (SDA), Silajdzic's Party for BiH (SBIH), Komsic's Social Democratic Party, and Radmanovic's Union of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) dominated parliament. SDA and SBIH gained majority of seats in Federation assembly while SNSD 1 seat short of absolute majority in RS assembly. High Rep. Christian Schwarz-Schilling called on parties to immediately restart stalled reform process. EU foreign ministers confirmed plans for increased EU role from mid-2007 when mandate of High Representative ends. German defence minister said would begin withdrawing German troops as early as December. Mosque in Croat suburb of Mostar damaged in rocket attack 10 October.

- ["EU to expand role in Bosnia next year - ministers"](#), AlertNet, 17 Oct. 2006.

- ["Bosnians left divided after poll"](#), BBC, 2 Oct. 2006.

- For most recent report, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°164, ["Bosnia's Stalled Police Reform: No Progress, No EU"](#), 6 Sept. 2005.

➤ Kosovo Visiting U.S. envoy Frank Wisner rallied Pristina nerves, tested by mixed signals from Contact Group members over whether status decision will be delayed to 2007 in event of December elections in Serbia. Wisner said new Serbian constitution's claims to Kosovo irrelevant as Serbia had lost sovereignty over province in 1999; said U.S. would pursue "independence...sorry, final status" by year-end. UN envoy Ahtisaari's draft status document leaked to Kosovo media 30 October: proposes independence with international oversight. Ahtisaari deputy said status decision likely February or March 2007. Serbian constitutional referendum (see Serbia below) saw high Kosovo Serb turnout; North Mitrovica hailed positive result as guarantee Serbia will retain Kosovo. Kosovo Assembly called referendum "act of aggression" but Albanians remained calm. Democratic League of Kosovo branch elections marred by low-level violence and accusations of foul play.

- Comment by Morton Abramowitz and James Lyon (Crisis Group), ["Another Balkan high noon"](#), *Guardian*, 24 Oct. 2006.

- ["U.N. extends Kosovo envoy's contract"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 19 Oct. 2006.

- For most recent report, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°174, ["An Army for Kosovo?"](#), 28 July 2006.

➤ Macedonia Public prosecutor Aleksandar Prcevski removed by ruling coalition majority in parliament for inefficiency and unprofessional behaviour 13 October; opposition parties boycotted vote saying Prcevski not able to defend himself. Opposition Social Democratic Party leader Vlado Buckovski resigned after party no-confidence vote.

- ["Macedonia axes public servants on 'political grounds'"](#), IWPR, 12 Oct. 2006.

- ["Embattled Social Democrats oust leader"](#), IWPR, 12 Oct. 2006.

- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°41, ["Macedonia: Wobbling toward Europe"](#), 12 Jan. 2006.

➤ Montenegro PM Djukanovic resigned despite September electoral victory, citing personal reasons. Justice Minister Zeljko Sturanovic appointed PM-designate by President Vujanovic 11 October; parliament to confirm at next session. Author Jevrem Brkovic attacked and bodyguard killed by unknown assailants 24 October; Brkovic known for writing on organised crime links to government.

- ["Montenegro's president proposes justice minister as new prime minister"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 11 Oct. 2006.

- ["Veteran Montenegro PM 'to quit'"](#), BBC, 3 Oct. 2006.

- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°42, ["Montenegro's Referendum"](#), 30 May 2006.

➤ Serbia Government announced new constitution had been approved in 28-29 October referendum, but opposition and observers alleged massive irregularities. Turnout officially reported at 54.2%, with those in favour just over required threshold of 50% of electorate. Serb Radical Party re-elected leader Vojislav Seselj, currently in Hague on war crimes charges. Deputy state prosecutor Milorad Cvijovic arrested in corruption probe. Leadership continued to send hard-line messages on Kosovo: President Tadic warned Serbia had "right to defend its borders"; PM Kostunica said will consider any country recognising Kosovo independence as enemy.

- Crisis Group media release, ["Serbia's Constitutional Referendum: A Question Of Validity"](#), 30 Oct. 2006.

- ["Serbia's new constitution gets off to rocky start"](#), IWPR, 18 Oct. 2006.

- For most recent report, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°43, ["Southern Serbia: In Kosovo's Shadow"](#), 27 June 2006.

## CAUCASUS

➤ Armenia European Neighbourhood Action Plan agreed with EU 2 October. Former interior minister and opposition 'Republic' Party leader Suren Abrahamian beaten by unknown assailants 8 October; party accused government of intimidation.

- ["Politics without women"](#), IWPR, 19 Oct. 2006.

- ["Opposition party blames government for leader's beating"](#), Armenia Liberty, 9 Oct. 2006.

➤ Azerbaijan Local election re-runs held in 603 municipalities 6 October amidst low turnout and boycott by main opposition bloc. Council of Europe observers noted technical improvement but serious irregularities. Ruling New Azerbaijan Party won 1,115 of 1,931 seats. Pressure on media continued: opposition daily *Azadliq* journalist sentenced to 3 years prison on questionable drug charges; 2 other independent dailies suspended operations, alleging pressure and death threats; and media watchdog banned local radio from broadcasting foreign news services. President Aliiev later pardoned 2 editors convicted for slandering officials. European Neighbourhood Action Plan agreed with EU 3 October.

- ["Azerbaijani president pardons 2 newspapers editors"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 23 Oct. 2006.

- ["Azerbaijani media suffers blow"](#), IWPR, 4 Oct. 2006.

- For most recent report, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°40, ["Azerbaijan's 2005 Elections: Lost Opportunity"](#), 21 Nov. 2005.

➤ Chechnya (Russia) Journalist Anna Politkovskaya shot dead in Moscow by unknown assailants 7 October; had received threats over her work exposing human rights violations in Chechnya and due to publish report on police torture. Court closed Russian-Chechen human rights group; critics said attempt to silence criticism of Chechnya policy. At least 4 rebels and 1 police officer killed in clashes.

- [“Chechnya’s recovery clouded by abductions and abuse”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 17 Oct. 2006.
- [“Politkovskaya last report describes police torture”](#), AlertNet, 12 Oct. 2006.

➤ North Caucasus (non-Chechnya) Violence continued in Daghestan and Ingushetia with at least 3 police officers and 2 gunmen killed. Locals in Khasavyurt region of Daghestan staged roadblocks in protest of series of abductions by unknown gunmen.

- [“Hundreds block road in southern Russia for second time in a week to protest kidnappings”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 12 Oct. 2006.
- [“Two policemen shot dead in southern Russia”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 11 Oct. 2006.

➤ Georgia Relations with Russia remained tense, with Moscow halting air, sea and land communications and deporting hundreds of illegal Georgian immigrants. Tbilisi accused Russia of xenophobia and appealed for international assistance. UNSC Resolution 1716 extended mandate of UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) to April 2007, urged Tbilisi to refrain from “provocative actions”, especially in Upper Kodori gorge, and noted CIS peacekeepers’ “stabilising role” in Abkhazia conflict. UN/CIS peacekeepers conducted joint patrol in upper gorge for first time since 2003. Georgia accused Abkhaz forces of firing 3 rockets at gorge during interior minister visit 26 October. Joint Control Commission on South Ossetia failed to agree changes to negotiation format during 12-13 October meeting; de facto authorities to hold presidential election and independence referendum 12 November. Tbilisi agreed European Neighbourhood Action Plan with EU 2 October.

- [“Rice tells Russia, Georgia to reduce tension”](#), AlertNet, 21 Oct. 2006.
- [“Saakashvili victorious in local elections”](#), RFE/RL, 6 Oct. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°176, *Abkhazia Today*, 15 Sept. 2006.

➤ Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan) Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers held talks in Moscow and Paris; no breakthrough but agreed to meet again in November. Defence ministers discussed enforcement of ceasefire at border meeting 20 October; militaries traded accusations of ceasefire violations resulting in 2 soldier deaths.

- [“Armenian-Azeri talks again inconclusive”](#), Armenia Liberty, 24 Oct. 2006.
- [“Azerbaijani military says soldier killed by Armenian fire”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 21 Oct. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°167, *Nagorno-Karabakh: A Plan for Peace*, 11 Oct. 2005.

## EASTERN EUROPE

➤ Belarus President Lukashenko set regional and local legislative elections for 14 January; opposition leader Alexander Milinkevich said opposition would contest elections despite tougher campaign rules. EU parliament awarded Milinkevich annual Sakharov rights prize. EU extended travel ban on 31

officials to include 4 judges and prosecutors involved in recent trial of leading opposition activist Alyaksandr Kazulin; latter serving 5-year sentence, hospitalised 31 October.

- [“Belarus opposition to run in local elections despite tough campaign rules”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 10 Oct. 2006.
- [“Belarus police hold activist over blasts - lawyer”](#), Reuters, 5 Oct. 2006.

➤ Moldova OSCE, Russian and Ukrainian mediators held separate consultations with Moldovan and Transdniestrian representatives in Odessa 17-18 October, but meetings failed to open way for resumption of formal negotiations. Russian Duma passed statement in support of recent Transdniestrian independence referendum and called for international recognition of results. EU expressed concern Russia not cooperating to resolve dispute.

- [“Moldova’s parliament calls on Russian lawmakers to stop supporting separatists”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 12 Oct. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°175, *Moldova’s Uncertain Future*, 17 Aug. 2006.

➤ Ukraine President Yushchenko’s Our Ukraine party withdrew from government coalition with Party of Regions, Socialist Party, and Communist Party 19 October, citing coalition’s break with Yushchenko’s pro-Western policies. But Yushchenko criticised his party’s decision to move into opposition, urging leadership reshuffle. Regional parliament of Crimea passed resolution 18 October calling for Russian to be made second official language in Ukraine.

- [“Ukraine’s president criticizes party’s decision to move into opposition”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 21 Oct. 2006.
- [“Pro-presidential bloc goes into opposition”](#), RFE/RL, 19 Oct. 2006.

## WESTERN EUROPE/MEDITERRANEAN

➤ Basque Country (Spain) High Court confirmed Batasuna Party leader Arnaldo Otegi and 37 other party members to face prosecution for membership of terrorist organisation, as police launched investigation into ETA funding. Low-level street violence continued in region. French officials said ETA prime suspect in theft of 350 guns from warehouse in Nimes 23 October. Madrid denied press reports secretly engaged in talks with ETA in Norway.

- [“Spanish PM says government to verify whether ETA’s ceasefire is genuine”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 30 Oct. 2006.
- [“Basque group ETA, Spain holding talks in Norway - TV”](#), AlertNet, 7 Oct. 2006.

➤ Cyprus EU Finnish Presidency continued efforts to broker deal to end isolation of North and ensure Turkish extension of customs union to South; Greek Cypriots reiterated threat to block EU-Turkey accession talks if no deal. EU Commission released 38.1 million euros for 6 infrastructural and economic development projects in North 27 October.

- [“Cyprus says EU presidency mulls talks to avert crisis in Turkey’s accession negotiations”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 31 Oct. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°171, *The Cyprus Stalemate: What Next?*, 8 Mar. 2006.

➤ Northern Ireland (UK) St. Andrews talks 11-13 October resulted in timetable to ensure nomination of first and deputy first

minister by 24 November and return to devolved power-sharing by March 2007. Deal rests on Sinn Fein commitments to support police and DUP pledges to share power with Sinn Fein; sides have until 10 November to respond to agreement. Earlier in month, UK Sec. State Peter Hain said IRA no longer terrorist threat as Independent Monitoring Commission reported group had ceased criminal activity.

- ["Governments in 'St Andrews talks'", BBC, 24 Oct. 2006.](#)
- ["IRA no longer a threat, says Hain", Guardian, 4 Oct. 2006.](#)

- ↳ Turkey Chief of Staff Buyukanit rejected PKK's unilateral ceasefire, saying group must lay down arms unconditionally. Anti-rebel operations continued: at least 8 rebels killed. 15 injured in grenade attack on café in south west city Izmir. Government and parliament denounced French National Assembly passing of bill criminalising denial of 1915 Armenian "genocide", but stopped short of punitive measures on French interests. EU Commission Progress Report due 8 November.
- ["Three Kurdish rebels killed in Turkey-officials", AlertNet, 12 Oct. 2006.](#)
  - ["Turkish army rejects rebel truce", BBC, 2 Oct. 2006.](#)

## Latin America / Caribbean

- ↳ Bolivia Boost for President Morales's hydrocarbon nationalisation efforts as main investors agreed to hand over greater control to state and pay up to 82 per cent in tax. But crisis in mining industry showed fragility of political situation: violent clashes between independent and state-affiliated miners over control of tin mine in Huanuni killed 20 and injured dozens. Morales blamed for allowing dispute to escalate; independent miners withdrew support. Venezuelan President Chávez raised regional alarm when he promised to intervene in any coup against Morales. Constituent Assembly still stalled after 3 months over adoption of internal rules.
- ["Foreign investors bow to Morales", Financial Times, 29 Oct. 2006.](#)
  - ["La Asamblea se estancó de Nuevo por las comisiones", La Razón, 26 Oct. 2006.](#)
  - ["Losing the miners", Economist, 12 Oct. 2006.](#)
  - For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Report N°18, [Bolivia's Rocky Road to Reforms](#), 3 July 2006.

- ↳ Colombia Progress in talks between government and FARC rebels regarding hostage exchange fell apart after car bombing at military school in Bogota 19 October. President Uribe subsequently ruled out talks, blaming FARC and saying military would again pursue liberation of hostages. FARC also blamed for 28 October car bombing that killed 2 at Villavicencio army base. Earlier in month, both sides had proposed to engage in formal peace talks after planned hostage exchange, also broaching establishment of constituent assembly. Exploratory talks with ELN rebels ended 26 October with agreement to move towards full-fledged peace negotiations.
- ["Under fire", Economist, 26 Oct. 2006.](#)
  - ["Colombian leader ends Farc talks", BBC, 20 Oct. 2006.](#)

Crisis Group Latin America Briefing N°11, [Tougher Challenges Ahead for Colombia's Uribe](#), 20 October 2006. President Alvaro Uribe's second term may be more difficult than his first unless he broadens his emphasis on a military solution to the conflict, and confronts drug

trafficking, poverty, corruption and social inequality more effectively. The state needs to control the areas dominated by paramilitaries, attack their drugs and extortion enterprises and confront any new illegal armed groups. The army's flawed human rights record and scandals must be addressed. And Uribe should devise and implement a comprehensive strategy that includes bringing visible rural investment, infrastructure and economic opportunity for the poor.

- ↳ Ecuador Ecuadorians voted in peaceful presidential elections 15 October; run-off between right-wing Alvaro Noboa (who received 26%) and left-wing Rafael Correa (23%) to take place 26 November. Correa has pledged to close U.S. military base in Manta and promote Ecuadorian business at expense of foreign companies, but moved to distance himself from stance of close friend Hugo Chavez.
- ["Ecuador's Correa shifts right with Chavez comments", AlertNet, 19 Oct. 2006.](#)
  - ["Ecuador's election surprise", openDemocracy, 17 Oct. 2006.](#)
  - ["Presidential race in Ecuador heads to second round", Washington Post, 16 Oct. 2006.](#)

- ↳ Haiti In important vote of confidence in President Préval's government, U.S. announced would ease 15-year arms embargo, allowing government to bolster police arms supply in fight against gangs. Kidnappings declined and efforts to disarm gangs moved forward despite continued clashes in slum areas.
- ["US eases weapons embargo on Haiti", BBC, 11 Oct. 2006](#)

Crisis Group Latin America/Caribbean Briefing N°12, [Haiti: Security and the Reintegration of the State](#), 30 October 2006. Haitian President René Préval has only a small window of opportunity to re-establish the state's authority. The administration must tackle the country's pervasive violence, launch development projects to combat extreme poverty, and give people reason to trust in government. Police and judicial incompetence, corruption and gang violence cannot be eradicated immediately, but clear steps must be taken now. The longer security remains an issue, the longer it will obstruct other areas of socioeconomic development essential to stabilising the country.

- ↳ Peru Shining Path founder Abimael Guzmán sentenced to life imprisonment for crimes committed during Peru's "dirty war". Achuar Indians led 13-day blockade that shut down half of country's oil output in protest at poor environmental conditions; government ended standoff by promising tax and health concessions.
- ["Peru indigenous groups lift oil well blockade", AlertNet, 23 Oct. 2006.](#)
  - ["Condenado a cadena perpetua el líder de Sendero Luminoso", El País, 15 Oct. 2006.](#)
- ↳ Venezuela Venezuela's bid for Security Council seat unsuccessful as country failed to garner required votes in over 41 deadlocked rounds with Guatemala. Tens of thousands marched through capital 7 October in support of opposition candidate Rosales ahead of December presidential elections; largest opposition rally since early 2004.
- ["Venezuelan's diatribe at U.N. may have backfired", New York Times, 25 Oct. 2006.](#)
  - ["Mass Venezuela opposition rally", BBC, 8 Oct. 2006.](#)

## Middle East / North Africa

### EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

Israel/Occupied Territories Relations between Fatah and Hamas continued to deteriorate, Israeli incursions into Palestinian population centres intensified and potential for escalation on both fronts increased. Israeli low-intensity war in Gaza included incursion near town of Jabaliya 14 October and major fighting in northern Gaza 1 November. Some 280 Palestinians – approximately half civilians – and 2 Israeli soldiers killed in past four months. Violence came as Hamas delegation attended talks with Egyptian mediators in Cairo on possible prisoner exchange with Israel involving captured soldier Gilad Shalit. Meanwhile, several Hamas and Fatah activists killed in factional clashes in West Bank and Gaza. Negotiations on unity government collapsed despite Qatari and Egyptian mediation efforts. Hamas blamed Fatah for lack of progress and accused it of providing political cover for Western-imposed sanctions. Israeli cabinet voted to bring into government hawkish Beiteinu party.

- "Israeli strikes kill 6 Palestinians, wound 33", AlertNet, 1 Nov. 2006.
- "Fatah preparing showdown with Hamas", *Jerusalem Post*, 24 Oct. 2006.
- "Gaza 'faction feuding' toll rises", BBC, 23 Oct. 2006.
- Comment by Gareth Evans and Robert Malley (Crisis Group), "Whose move in the Middle East?", *Washington Post*, 14 Oct. 2006.
- Crisis Group Middle East Initiative, "Towards a Comprehensive Settlement of the Arab-Israeli Conflict", 4 Oct. 2006.

Crisis Group Middle East Report N°58, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: To Reach a Lasting Peace*, 5 October 2006. Now is the time for a serious international push to launch an Arab-Israeli peace initiative. Catastrophic as the recent series of developments in the Middle East have been, they can give new impetus to the search for a comprehensive settlement. The goal must be unambiguously stated as security and full recognition to the state of Israel within internationally recognised borders, an end to the occupation for the Palestinian people in an independent, sovereign state with East Jerusalem as its capital, recovery of lost land to Syria and a fully sovereign and secure Lebanon.



Lebanon Turkey sent almost 500 soldiers and naval forces to join UNIFIL peacekeepers monitoring ceasefire in south. PM Fouad Siniora dismissed peace overtures by Israeli PM Ehud Olmert, saying Lebanon would be last Arab state to sign deal with Israel. Parliament speaker Nabih Berri called for talks among rival groups to start month-end and focus on forming national unity government, drafting new elections law and confronting country's mounting national debt. Despite previous denials Israel confirmed use of phosphorus shells during war against Hizbollah.

- "Lebanese parliament speaker calls for Oct. 30 meeting of rival politicians", *International Herald Tribune*, 25 Oct. 2006.
- "Annan presses Lebanon on disarming Hezbollah", AlertNet, 20 Oct. 2006.
- "Turkish peacekeepers join UN force in Lebanon", AlertNet, 20 Oct. 2006.

- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°57, *Israel/Palestine/Lebanon: Climbing Out of the Abyss*, 25 July 2006.

Syria President Assad re-stated desire for peace and readiness to engage in new round of discussions with Israel; rejected by Israeli PM Olmert. Signs of new Western policy of engagement with Syria, as senior adviser to UK PM Tony Blair visited Damascus for private discussions with Assad, while Spanish FM Moratinos announced would visit Damascus mid-November.

- "Blair aide meets Assad on secret trip to Syria", *International Herald Tribune* (Reuters), 31 Oct. 2006.
- "Syrian president's patient wait for peace", BBC, 9 Oct. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°39, *Syria After Lebanon, Lebanon After Syria*, 12 Apr. 2005.

### GULF

Bahrain Parliamentary and municipal elections scheduled for 25 November. Sectarian tensions reported ahead of vote, with Shiite majority accusing government of pro-Sunni gerrymandering.

- "Bahrain press protest gag order on election case", Reuters, 15 Oct. 2006.

Iran Meetings between chief negotiator Ali Larijani and EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana failed to break nuclear impasse. President Mahmoud Ahmadi-Nejad and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei rejected suspension of uranium enrichment and reports emerged of installation of second centrifuge cascade for enrichment. Discussions underway at UN over draft resolution tabled by EU 3 (UK, Germany, France). Creeping crackdown on social and political freedoms, as top reformist newspaper, *Sharq*, closed down and restrictions placed on high-speed internet and satellite television dishes.

- "In Iran, two power centers vie amid standoff over nuclear fuel", *Wall Street Journal*, 13 Oct. 2006.
- "Iran rejects six nations' demands", BBC, 8 Oct. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°51, *Iran: Is There a Way Out of the Nuclear Impasse?*, 23 Feb. 2006.

Iraq Sectarian violence and insurgent attacks escalated. U.S. forces reported highest death toll since November 2004 with 103 dead; over 300 Iraqi troops also killed while estimated 40 civilians dying every day. Government postponed national reconciliation conference, citing sectarian violence. Shiite militia loyal to radical cleric Moqtada Sadr clashed with Iraqi police in Amara, leaving at least 30 dead. Majlis Shura al-Mujahidin coalition of some Sunni insurgent groups staged unhindered demonstrations in large towns of western Iraq and announced creation of Islamic State in Sunni Arab heartland and adjacent areas; seen as largely symbolic response to Shiite federalism moves in south. Sunni and Shiite clerics agreed to statement calling for end to sectarian violence 20 October; includes preservation of Iraq's unity, protection of holy sites and release of innocent detainees. Iraqi legislators passed law 11 October establishing mechanism for creating new regions, further deepening fault lines that threaten country's unity; law cannot be implemented for 18 months due to earlier compromise arrangement. Domestic calls for change in U.S. policy increased ahead of 7 November Congressional elections.

- "Deadly attacks on police in Iraq", BBC, 26 Oct. 2006.

- Comment by Robert Malley and Peter Harling (Crisis Group), ["Containing a Shiite symbol of hope"](#), *Christian Science Monitor*, 24 Oct. 2006.
- ["Iraqi reconciliation effort is put on hold"](#), AP, 15 Oct. 2006.
- For most recent report, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°56, [Iraq and the Kurds: The Brewing Battle over Kirkuk](#), 18 July 2006.

## NORTH AFRICA

- Algeria Violence continued despite September amnesty extension: Salafi Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) suspected of carrying out series of attacks, including on police stations, killing 16. Popular president of Tizi-Ouzou regional assembly assassinated by unidentified gunmen 12 October.
  - ["Algerian rebels kill 8 security guards – reports"](#), AlertNet, 17 Oct. 2006.
  - ["Four dead in Algeria rebel attack – report"](#), Independent Online, 9 Oct. 2006.
  - For background, see Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°29, [Islamism, Violence and Reform in Algeria: Turning the Page](#), 30 July 2004.

- Egypt Authorities arrested 8 Muslim Brothers in Menoufiya 13 October and briefly detained 8 more trying to register as candidates in national trade union elections. 15 Brothers arrested in August, including Secretary-General Mahmoud Ezzat, released 16 October, but group said 62 remained in custody. Government came under fire for religious and intellectual freedom infringements highlighted by confiscation of book on religious extremism by Censorship Office.

- ["Egypt: Crackdown on Muslim Brotherhood deepens"](#), AlertNet, 25 Oct. 2006.
- ["Egypt frees Brotherhood members"](#), BBC, 19 Oct. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°46, [Reforming Egypt: In Search of a Strategy](#), 4 Oct. 2005.

- Western Sahara UNSC extended MINURSO mission to April 2007; UNSG Annan report warned of possible outbreak of violence and called on both sides to undertake talks without preconditions. Morocco denounced UN criticism of alleged human rights abuses in Western Sahara as biased.

- ["Security Council extends UN Western Sahara mission for six months until April 2007"](#), UN News, 31 Oct. 2006.
- ["Morocco indignant over U.N. criticism of alleged human rights abuses in Western Sahara"](#), Associated Press, 10 Oct. 2006.

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