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April 2014 Trends



Deteriorated Situations

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Improved Situations

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May 2014 Watchlist



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Ukraine (p.8)



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- 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.

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Africa

Central Africa

➡ **Burundi** UN mission BNUB internal report containing allegations that ruling CNDD-FDD is arming “Imbonerakure” youth league leaked early April. Govt demanded evidence or retraction of allegations, accused UN of spreading unfounded rumours, 17 April expelled BNUB security chief Paul Debbie. U.S. ambassador to UN and UK Foreign Office under sec state 8 April met President Nkurunziza, warned of risk of civil war, said those responsible for violence would face international prosecution. Parliament 25 April adopted new electoral code by consensus; opposition satisfied, civil society applauded but warned tension still high; BNUB commended as significant step forward. Opposition Alliance of Democrats for Change (ADC-Ikibiri) chairman arrested 20 April for sending letter criticising govt to UNSG. Govt 10 April banned 15 political parties; UNSC expressed concern over political tensions, restrictions on press and civil liberties. Ruling CNDD-FDD 17 April voted to launch commission on truth and reconciliation; coalition partners UPRONA and FRODEBU boycotted vote, civil society groups expressed concerns over commission composition. Agathon Rwasa called on his FNL party to reunite 2 wings ahead of 2015 elections.

- “Burundi expels UN official over arms report”, Al Jazeera, 17 April 2014.

➡ **Cameroon** Nigerian Islamist sect Boko Haram (BH) suspected of kidnapping 2 Italian priests, 1 Canadian nun in Far North Diamaré district 4 April. Security forces deployed to area; 3 alleged BH members killed 14 April in Amchidé. BH believed to be actively continuing recruitment in Far North; 60 suspected BH arrested. At least 20 reported dead and thousands displaced 24 April following clash between local farmers and Nigerian herders in Menchum district, NW.

- “Fears in Cameroon of Boko Haram recruitment”, IRIN, 16 April 2014.

➡ **Central African Republic** UNSC 10 April authorised stabilisation mission “MINUSCA”; deployment of 11,800-strong peacekeeping force planned for 15 Sept. EU 2 April formally launched military mission EUFOR-RCA, deployment expected June. Chad withdrew its 830-strong MISCA contingent following allegations troops late-March opened fire on anti-balaka and civilians. Security in Bangui stabilised despite sporadic violence including 7 reportedly killed during clash with French soldiers 25 April, and continued anti-balaka attempts to block remaining Muslims’ departure. 2 killed 27 April in anti-Balaka attack on international force convoy escorting 1,300 Muslims from capital to north, authorities voiced concern exodus encouraging partition. Sectarian clashes continued in provinces: 30 killed in Dekoa 8 April; 22 in Grimari 14 April; several killed near Bozoum 10 April; hundreds of Muslims trapped in Boda in west. Chadian soldiers escorting remaining 540 Muslims from Bossangoa to Chad attacked by local militia 11 April. 22 killed 26 April in attack by suspected Seleka sympathisers on hospital in Nanga Boguila, NW. Seleka 22 April took control of Bouca in north. 2 MISCA soldiers injured in Bria 10 April during clash with Seleka. Seleka internal dissent led to creation of new movement Organisation de la résistance

musulmane centrafricaine (OMRC). UNSG and U.S. ambassador to UN early April visited Bangui, denounced human rights violations, called for national reconciliation.

- “U.N. Security Council OKs peacekeepers for Central African Republic”, Reuters, 10 April 2014.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°215, *The Security Challenges of Pastoralism in Central Africa*, 1 April 2014.

➡ **Chad** Govt withdrew all peacekeepers from CAR (see CAR); 28 April appealed to international community for aid for CAR refugees in Chad.

- “Chad withdraws all troops from CAR”, Al Jazeera, 17 April 2014.

➡ **DR Congo** Anti-ADF operation Sukola continued: stronghold Medina in N Kivu taken by army 13 April; Uganda military 22 April reported ADF leader Mukulu fled DRC. Ongoing army operations against Force de résistance patriotique de l’Ituri (FRPI) in Ituri. Mai Mai-Simba militia leader Paul Sadala 12 April surrendered with 40 members; Sadala killed in gunfire 14 April while being escorted by army to Bunia, circumstances unclear. First list of 50 people granted amnesty under Feb amnesty law published 19 April, included 15 M23 members.

- “Congo militia chief ‘Morgan’ killed in army firefight”, Reuters, 14 April 2014.

➡ **Rwanda** Tensions with France increased when President Kagame emphasised France’s alleged involvement in genocide on eve of commemoration. Govt mid-April arrested popular musician and journalist, accused of involvement in opposition parties Rwanda National Congress (RNC) and Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) plot to overthrow govt; RNC and FDLR 21 April strongly condemned arrests.

- “France curtails role at genocide services after Rwanda leader casts blame”, *New York Times*, 6 April 2014.

Horn of Africa

➡ **Ethiopia** Unknown gunmen 15 April attacked public transport truck near Assosa in far western province Benishangul-Gumuz; 9 killed, 6 wounded. 6 bloggers, 3 journalists arrested 25-26 April, charged with inciting violence. Western Gambella region continued struggle to cope with S Sudanese refugees; almost 95,000 crossed border since Dec 2013, officials insist border will not be closed.

- “Nine gunned down in Benishangul region”, Reporter, 19 April 2014.

➡ **Kenya** At least 4,000 alleged illegal immigrants, including Somali refugees, arrested in ongoing counterterrorist operations, majority held at Kasarani Stadium for “screening”; at least 170 Somali refugees deported to Mogadishu. MPs accused govt of collective punishment and ethnic profiling. Somalia withdrew ambassador 27 April following arrest of diplomat. Radical cleric Sheikh Abubakar Shariff Ahmed, alias “Makaburi”, shot dead 1 April; supporters, sections of Muslim community accused govt of extrajudicial killing. Al-Shabaab 22 April released video threatening attacks on scale of Sept 2013 Westgate Mall siege. Car bomb killed 4 including 2 police in Nairobi 23 April. Several IED attacks reported 6 April in Mandera, near border with Somalia. UNHCR vehicle hijacked from Dadaab by

suspected Al-Shabaab militants 23 April. Inter-clan fighting in NE continued including 2 April clash over disputed area along Elwak-Lafey road that killed 2. Raid by armed bandits killed 5 including 2 police in Turkana in south 4 April.

- Cedric Barnes, “[Losing Hearts and Minds in Kenya](#)”, The African Peacebuilding Agenda, 16 April 2014.
- “[Kenya’s war on terror is East Africa’s looming nightmare](#)”, *Mail & Guardian*, 3 April 2014.

 **Somalia** Al-Shabaab attacks intensified in response to continued AMISOM and Somali Federal Govt (SFG) forces’ offensive that has now captured 10 major towns. Al-Shabaab 21 April recaptured Deynunay military base near Baidoa town, Bay region after SFG forces withdrew. 11 killed in Al-Shabaab attack on AMISOM supply trucks in Bakool region 12 April; 4 soldiers, 6 Al-Shabaab members killed 17 April in attack on military convoy in Bay region; journalist and 2 MPs killed 21-22 April in capital; traditional leader killed 21 April in Kismayo. 10 killed 18 April in clash between SFG forces and militia belonging to ousted mayor of Balad town, Middle Shabelle. Unknown gunmen 25 April killed 5 civilians leaving mosque in Muri, Lower Shabelle. UN SRSG Nicholas Kay 23 April denied reports UN would withdraw from Somalia if it suffered significant attacks. 2 UNODC consultants killed 7 April by unidentified gunman in Puntland-controlled Galkaayo airport.

- “[Al-Shabab strategy perplexes some experts](#)”, VOA, 11 April 2014.

 **Somaliland** Tensions between Somaliland and Puntland intensified; Somaliland govt forces 15 April entered Taleh town in Sool region, capital of self-declared “Khatumo” state and part of disputed Somaliland-Puntland area; Puntland govt promised tough response to “aggression”; 60 Somaliland soldiers 21 April reportedly surrendered to Puntland forces in Sanaag region. Police 7 April shut down Haatuf and Somaliland Times newspapers in Hargeisa, reportedly for allegedly insulting ministers and MPs.

- “[Puntland defence forces urged to confront Somaliland, Al Shabaab](#)”, Garowe Online, 19 April 2014.

 **South Sudan** Fighting between govt and SPLA-in-Opposition (SPLA-IO) and targeting of civilians on basis of ethnicity escalated as both parties continued to trade allegations of ceasefire violations. Over 200 killed and 400 wounded during 15-16 April SPLA-IO capture of Bentiu; UN 21 April reported targeted ethnic killings, said killings “game changer”; SPLA-IO 22 April denied accusations, blamed retreating govt forces. Armed youths 17 April attacked UNMISS base sheltering nearly 5,000 displaced in Bor, Jonglei, killing at least 58 and injuring 98; attackers reportedly targeted civilians on basis of ethnicity; UN said attack “war crime”. UN 23 April threatened sanctions; UN human rights chief Pillay and Special Envoy for Prevention of Genocide Adama Dieng visited 28-30 April, met with SPLM-IO leader Riek Machar and President Kiir, Pillay condemned “apparent lack of concern displayed” by both. UN aid convoy attacked 24 April in Upper Nile, perpetrators not identified. Kiir 23 April replaced Nuer army and Bor Dinka intelligence chiefs with Bahr el Ghazal Dinka. IGAD 28 April announced resumption of peace talks after several weeks’ adjournment; mediators 7 April agreed to exclude 7 former SPLM detainees (“SPLM 7”) from negotiations. Govt 25 April released 4 remaining treason suspects, dropped charges; 4 reportedly

prevented from leaving country. IGAD Ceasefire Monitoring and Verification Teams dispatched 1 April; ongoing discussions over deployment and mandate of IGAD Protection and Deterrence Force. U.S. President Obama 3 April authorised possible sanctions against anyone inciting or committing violence, failing to engage constructively in peace talks, interfering with humanitarian operations; specific govt and SPLA-IO targets not yet identified. SPLM 5 April announced Intra-Party Dialogue Forum, sponsored by South African and Ethiopian ruling parties; discussions postponed until after IGAD parties reconvene.

- “[Bentiu massacre is game-changer in South Sudan conflict, says UN official](#)”, *Guardian*, 22 April 2014.

New Crisis Group Africa Report N°217, *South Sudan: A Civil War by Any Other Name*, 10 April 2014. Refocusing international engagement as well as the peace negotiations is essential to stop South Sudan’s raging civil war from claiming ever more lives.

 **Sudan** Opposition divided over Khartoum’s proposed “national dialogue”: Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) and National Consensus Forces (NCF) 8 April demanded genuine national dialogue monitored by independent mechanism; Reform Now Party (RNP), Turabi-led Popular Congress Party (PCP), National Umma Party (NUP), Justice Party and others have agreed to talks. SRF 13 April accused govt of escalating military operations against civilians and armed opposition; NCF 19 April criticised govt decree banning political parties from holding meetings without authorities’ permission, called for transitional govt. Govt talks with SPLM-N resumed 22 April, SPLM-N 28 April agreed to negotiate framework agreement; govt accused them of “wasting time”. Ongoing fighting in S Kordofan: govt 7 April bombed JEM positions in region and in S Sudan’s Unity State. Wave of attacks in Darfur by Rapid Support Forces continued: JEM 1 April accused Khartoum of hiring Arab militias. Foreign Policy investigative report on UNAMID early April highlighted dependency on Khartoum, lack of neutrality, inefficiency; JEM 11 April blamed UN for turning blind eye and “legalizing genocide”; UNSC 3 April demanded better peacekeeping forces with more preventive and pre-emptive posture. Head of UN Population Fund expelled 9 April, accused of interference in internal affairs. Economy continued to deteriorate as EU, Saudi and Egyptian banks withdrew; Qatar 2 April announced \$1bn grant as part of previously agreed aid package, 28 April announced \$88mn for Darfur.

- “[Darfur violence: U.N. troops ‘failed to stop attacks’](#)”, BBC, 9 April 2014.

Southern Africa

 **Madagascar** President Rajaonarimampianina 11 April appointed relatively unknown, non-politically-aligned doctor Roger Kolo as PM, ending 3-month deadlock. Kolo announced govt of technocrats, move welcomed by U.S., EU, AU.

- “[Kolo Roger forme un gouvernement d’ouverture](#)”, RFI, 18 April 2014.

 **Mozambique** RENAMO 18 April said deal nearly reached on integration of fighters into army; govt 23 April announced would not cede to RENAMO demand for “parity” in security forces. Group continued to press for electoral reform, greater

inclusion in govt. FRELIMO acceded to RENAMO demands for international monitors, including beyond SADC. National Elections Commission 29 April extended voter registration to allow registration brigades to complete work in unstable key provinces. 2 soldiers killed, 4 injured 22 April in RENAMO ambush in Gorongosa.

- “Government rejects ‘parity’ with Renamo in army”, AIM, 22 April 2014.

➡ **Zimbabwe** Amid worsening economic situation in Zimbabwe, EU 3 April refused to provide budgetary support, China 11 April said would not provide bailout or economic rescue package. Govt early April offered increased diamond sales to UAE; 23 April suggested reintroducing Zimbabwe dollar; 24 April softened indigenisation policy, allowing foreign ownership of banks. MDC-T 10 April expelled party Deputy Treasurer General Elton Mangoma for criticising Tsvangirai’s leadership, 29 April expelled SG Tendai Biti for attempted “suspension” of Tsvangirai. U.S. 17 April imposed sanctions on Registrar General Tobaiwa Mudede for controversial role in July 2013 “rigged” elections.

- “Zimbabwe turns 34, but struggles economically”, Al Jazeera, 18 April 2014.

West Africa

➡ **Côte d’Ivoire** Opposition Ivorian Popular Front (FPI) ended dialogue with govt after 22 March transfer of former President Gbagbo ally Charles Blé Goudé to ICC, called for boycott of population census. UN SRSG Mindaoudou 22 April met with both FPI and govt in attempt to mediate. UN experts 15 April called for halt to arms shipments via Côte d’Ivoire for MINUSMA peacekeepers in Mali, following discovery of unexplained excess of Chinese military hardware in cargo transiting via Abidjan; 17 April accused Issiaka Ouattara aka “Wattao”, senior army officer and former rebel commander, of breaking diamond embargo. Deputy Defence Minister Kofi Kofi 21 April announced thousands of “fake” soldiers serving in military. UNSC 29 April adopted resolution 2153, lifting ban on rough diamonds exports and partially lifting arms embargo.

- “Médiation de l’ONU entre le FPI et le gouvernement”, RFI, 23 April 2014.

➡ **Guinea** National transport union strike 7 April protested racketeering by security forces at roadblocks. Govt 17 April announced revocation of 2 iron ore concessions granted to Beny Steinmetz Resources Group (BSGR) due to corruption allegations.

- “La Guinée retire son permis à BSGR”, *Jeune Afrique*, 21 April 2014.

➡ **Guinea-Bissau** Legislative elections and 1st round of presidential elections held peacefully 13 April, voter turnout almost 90%. Observer missions expressed satisfaction but raised concerns regarding high number of invalid votes. Electoral commission 16 April announced provisional results: PAIGC candidate José Mario Vaz secured 41% and will face Nuno Nabiam, who took 25% and reportedly enjoys support of military, during 18 May run-off. PAIGC secured 57-seat majority in National Assembly, meaning party president Domingos Simões Pereira likely next PM. Social Renovation Party (PRS) saw dramatic increase in representation, securing 41 seats.

- “Will elections bring stability to Guinea-Bissau?”, BBC, 8 April 2014.

.....
New Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°98, *Guinea-Bissau: Elections, But Then What?*, 8 April 2014. Guinea-Bissau’s elections are an important first step, but to address its economic and political fragility the country needs strong international help, as well as political and military will for reform.

➡ **Mali** Month saw limited progress in peace talks; overlapping external facilitation attempts highlighted lack of coordination. President IBK 14 April repeated govt ready to negotiate but cautioned against MNLA’s “duplicité”. Security operations in north ongoing. MUJAO 23 April announced death of hostage Gilberto Rodrigues Leal, abducted Nov 2012, said “France is MUJAO’s enemy”; France next day vowed to punish MUJAO. PM Tatam Ly 6 April resigned, Moussa Mara appointed as replacement; Mara 11 April formed new cabinet with 31 members but only 8 newcomers. President 23 April appointed former PM Modibo Keita high representative for inter-Malian dialogue; PM Mara 29 April pledged to revive peace talks, did not give timeframe.

- “À l’ONU, le gouvernement malien dit vouloir dialoguer avec les groupes rebelles”, *Jeune Afrique*, 24 April 2014.

➡ **Niger** Govt 9 April extradited 10 senior Libyan officials of former Qadhafi regime. Humanitarian situation continued to deteriorate; UN Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for Sahel warned of looming food crisis, urged international community to provide more financial support.

- “Les indicateurs sociaux du Niger s’améliorent”, PANA, 9 April 2014.

➡ **Nigeria** Violence increased in NE: over 500 killed in Boko Haram (BH) attacks, including some 270 killed 10-11 April in series of attacks in Borno state; over 200 schoolgirls abducted 15 April in Chibok, Borno state, BH reportedly threatened to kill them if search continued, reports emerged of forced marriages with militants. BH leader Abubakar Shekau in video 19 April claimed responsibility for 14 April attack on bus station in Nyanya near capital that killed 70. President Jonathan 17 April held emergency meeting on BH violence with security officials, governors of People’s Democratic Party (PDP). Communal violence continued in Nasarawa, Zamfara, Taraba states; nearly 300 killed in April, including 30 Fulani herdsmen killed by army in Nasarawa state 3 April; 200 killed 5-6 April by suspected cattle rustlers in Unguwar Galadima town, Zamfara state; 50 killed 15 April in clashes between Fulani and Jukun tribesmen near Wukari, Taraba state.

- “Nigeria bus station bombing kills 71 on edge of capital”, Reuters, 14 April 2014.

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New Crisis Group Africa Report N°216, *Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II): The Boko Haram Insurgency*, 3 April 2014. In an environment of poverty, injustice and lack of political will for reform, Boko Haram is increasingly putting local and regional stability at risk.

➡ **Senegal** Radical Casamance separatist leader Salif Sadio announced unilateral ceasefire 29 April. Border dispute with Gambia over transport tariffs ended 25 April, Gambian President Jammeh announced reopening of border. Former President Wade returned to country 25 April ahead of son’s trial for corruption.

- “Salif Sadio impose un cessez-le-feu à ses combattants”, DakarActu, 29 April 2014.

Asia

North East Asia

➡ **China (internal)** 3 killed, scores injured in bomb and knife attack on railway station in Urumqi, Xinjiang province 30 April, during visit to region by President Xi; Xi urged “decisive actions” against terrorist attacks.

- “Xinjiang station attack: President Xi Jinping urges action”, BBC, 1 May 2014.

➡ **China/Japan** Hu Deping, son of late Chinese leader Hu Yaobang and reportedly close confidant and adviser of President Xi, visited Japanese PM Abe’s office 8 April, also met with other senior govt figures, discussed future of Japan–China relations. Abe believed to have told Hu that Tokyo ready to hold dialogue, make efforts to mend bilateral relations. Hu’s latest visit believed to reflect China’s desire to improve ties with Tokyo ahead of planned Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum summit being hosted in Beijing in Nov. Shanghai court ordered seizure of Japanese ship over legal claims dating before WWII; Tokyo expressed concern decision could undermine diplomatic and business ties; Beijing said decision a matter of contract law, not related to wartime reparations; court released vessel after Japanese owner paid compensation. U.S. Sec Defence Hagel visited China early April; Chinese officials warned both in public and privately for U.S. not to take sides in China’s maritime disputes, implied U.S. has emboldened China’s rival claimants, namely Japan and Philippines, to “provoke China”.

- “Springtime in Tokyo?”, *Economist*, 24 April 2014.

➡ **Korean Peninsula** 2 drones of alleged DPRK origin found on ROK territory late March, sparking concerns over ROK air defence and DPRK intelligence gathering capabilities; ROK defence ministry responded unveiling 2 of its own drones. U.S. and ROK 18 April completed Foal Eagle joint and combined field exercises in ROK, also conducted amphibious landing training, large combined air exercise. ROK 4 April successfully flight-tested new ballistic missile capable of striking all DPRK territory. DPRK again conducted live-fire drill near disputed western sea border with ROK 29 April. DPRK’s newly elected Supreme People’s Assembly (SPA) held first meeting 9 April; Kim Jong-un re-elected as first chairman of National Defence Commission (NDC); Choe Ryong-hae elected vice chairman of NDC, position previously held by purged Chang Song-taek. ROK President Park delivered speech in Germany 28 March laying out proposals to pave way towards peaceful unification of Korea; DPRK NDC spokesman later lashed out at Park’s speech. Beijing responded to DPRK’s 30 March threat of “new type of nuclear test” to further strengthen nuclear deterrence with public warning that China does not support DPRK’s “threat of a nuclear test”. Satellite imagery released late April indicating new activity at DPRK’s Punggye-ri nuclear test site.

- “The new generation losing faith in the regime”, *Guardian*, 22 April 2014.

South Asia

➡ **Afghanistan** Millions voted in presidential and provincial council elections 5 April; early reports suggest fewer irregu-

larities than previous polls. Insurgent attacks remained near seasonal levels in south and west, but escalated sharply in east making 5 April most violent election day so far; absence of high-profile attacks in urban areas and self-censorship by Afghan media gave appearance of peaceful voting day. Taliban mainly targeted Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) guarding voters and polling sites, few reports of direct interference with electoral process. Several polling sites closed due to security threats, mainly in rural areas. Preliminary result announced 26 April: former FM Abdullah Abdullah led with 44.9%, former Finance Minister Ashraf Ghani second with 31.5%. Several deadly incidents before and after election day: 17 Taliban reported killed in airstrike 8 April, subsequent reports suggested 11 children also killed; 3 Americans killed by security guard at Kabul hospital 24 April. Large attack on army base in SE reportedly repelled late month, 60 militants killed.

- “Afghan election set for Abdullah-Ghani run-off”, BBC, 26 April 2014.

➡ **Bangladesh** Political situation remained tense as opposition and domestic observers denounced rigging and violence in ongoing upazila (sub-districts) elections between candidates backed by rival parties and between Awami League (AL) party cadres. Following 5th round of polls 31 March, AL-affiliated candidates had won 221 upazila chairmen posts, securing lead over BNP and JI-allied candidates; 6th round of polls scheduled 19 May. Election Commission said polls thus far free and fair, threatened legal action against those committing election-related violence. Impending anti-corruption trail of Bangladesh National Party (BNP) leader Khaleda Zia, which could see her jailed for life, and prosecutions against Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) members by International Crimes Tribunal (ICT), increased potential for more political unrest. Zia 13 April filed petition with High Court challenging indictment against her and her son and seeking stay order on trial, due to start 21 April. BNP’s joint secretary general 15 April said party preparing national movement to dislodge AL govt should trial proceed. High Court 23 April rejected Zia’s petitions, clearing way for cases to proceed, raising concerns of more BNP-led violent demonstrations and strikes; BNP now appealing to Supreme Court. BNP 22 April began “long march” from Dhaka in bid to gain popular support by criticising govt for failure to reach equitable water-sharing deal with India. ICT 25 March listed 7 charges of “crimes against humanity”, including genocide, against JI members, allegedly committed in 1971 independence war; also recommended party should be permanently banned. ICT 17 April decided to follow through with decision to indict UK journalist David Bergman with contempt of court for criticising its procedural flaws and biases in blog posts.

- “Elections scarred by violence”, Human Rights Watch, 29 April 2014.

➡ **India (non-Kashmir)** Voting in month-long general election began 7 April. Maoist rebels carried out several election-related attacks, including attacks in Chhattisgarh state killing several soldiers, election officials. Suspected Maoists killed 8 police, election officials in bus bombing in Jharkhand state 24 April. Suspected Bodo separatist killed 2 in Assam state 23 April.

- “Rebels kill 14 in anti-election campaign in India”, AP, 12 April 2014.

➡ **Kashmir** Polls opened 10 April in Jammu and Kashmir for voting in India’s general election, low turnout reported; several separatist militant groups called for boycott, carried out attacks including killing 3 village council heads south of Srinagar.

Security forces reportedly opened fire on protesters in Srinagar 30 April, 1 killed; Hurriyat Conference called general strike. 2 militants, 2 police killed 13 April during attack targeting National Conference youth leader and son of high court judge south of Srinagar; police killed both alleged Lashkar-e-Tayyaba attackers. Late-month exchanges of fire between Indian and Pakistani troops across Line of Control, no casualties reported.

- [“Four killed in rebel attack in Indian Kashmir”](#), AFP, 14 April 2014.

➡ **Nepal** Govt 9 April introduced bill offering amnesty for war crimes to former Maoist rebels, govt forces; UN human rights chief Navi Pillay said amnesty violates international law, would “weaken foundation for a genuine and lasting peace”.

- [“Nepal bill offers amnesty for war crimes”](#), AFP, 10 April 2014.

➡ **Pakistan** Pakistani Taliban (TTP) 16 April announced end to ceasefire despite prisoner releases by govt early month; announcement followed outbreak of infighting between rival TTP factions in Waziristan that reportedly killed over 40 early April; both TTP and govt declared continued willingness to hold talks. 1 killed 18 April in attack on govt forces near Peshawar, 3 troops killed in roadside bombing 27 April on border between N and S Waziristan; army 24 April launched airstrikes on militants in Khyber Agency, 37 reported killed. 22 killed in Islamabad bombing 9 April, TTP denied involvement. National Assembly 7 April passed controversial counterterrorism bill, criticised by observers for violating constitution and international law; bill awaiting deliberation in opposition-controlled Senate. Sectarian violence continued with at least 12 killed in Karachi 9 April; at least 3 children killed 28 April in attack on religious school in Karachi; 2 Hazaras killed by gunmen in Quetta 12 April. Military 7 April claimed to have killed 30 Baloch militants; Baloch group next day claimed responsibility for 31 March attack on Quetta-Rawalpindi train that killed 16.

- [“Fractured state of Pakistani Taliban calls peace deal into question”](#), *New York Times*, 20 April 2014.

➡ **Sri Lanka** Crackdown on Tamil activists in north and east that started mid-March continued: military 10 April killed 3 Tamils who govt alleged were working to revive LTTE; scores arrested March/April remain detained without charge under anti-terrorism laws. Govt 4 April released text of new regulation announced 31 March designating LTTE and 15 Tamil diaspora organisations as terrorist organisations, effectively criminalising contact with such organisations by Sri Lankan citizens. Tamil National Alliance (TNA) leaders visited South Africa 9-11 April to discuss South African efforts to restart govt-TNA negotiations. Leader of radical Buddhist group Bodu Bala Sena (BBS) and supporters 9 April disrupted inaugural press conference of group fostering Buddhist-Muslim cooperation; BBS supporters mid-April stormed offices of govt ministry headed by Muslim in search of rival Buddhist monk in hiding. Newly-established police unit to investigate religious hate crimes reportedly received nearly 300 complaints, over 280 from Muslims, on first day of operations late April. Govt supporters, including local mayor carrying gun, 17 April violently disrupted visit by UNP opposition parliamentarians in president’s home district Hambantota.

- [“Sri Lanka bans LTTE, 15 other Tamil diaspora groups”](#), *Hindu*, 1 April 2014.

South East Asia

➡ **Indonesia** President Yudhoyono’s Democratic Party won 9% of national parliamentary vote in largely peaceful 9 April elections, sharp fall from 2009 level of 21%. W Papua independence fighters reportedly shot and injured 2 security personnel near PNG border 5 April. 2 W Papua students reportedly beaten in police custody after participating in protest in Jayapura.

- [“Why a vote in Aceh matters for Indonesia”](#), *Wall Street Journal*, 3 April 2014.

➡ **Myanmar** National census went ahead 30 March-10 April, extended to end-April to allow time to collect data from difficult/hard-to-reach areas. Census enumeration accompanied by large military security operations in parts of Rakhine and Kachin, escalating in Kachin into armed clashes with Kachin Independence Organisation (which did not allow enumeration in areas under its control), causing estimated 5,000 people to flee, govt reports of 22 combatant deaths on both sides, in most serious clashes since early 2013. Following govt’s 29 March decision that Rohingya would not be allowed to self-identify as such in census, no credible enumeration of Rohingya households took place, sparking international criticism. Latest round of ceasefire negotiations between govt and ethnic armed groups in Yangon 5-8 April, resulting in first draft of single consolidated text for nationwide ceasefire accord, though with disagreement on some points relating to federalism, use of term “revolutionary” for armed groups, recognition of interim administrative authority of armed groups in their areas. Next meeting planned early May. In speech marking 3-year anniversary of his administration, President Thein Sein noted military had to continue to play political role during transition, but needed to reduce role as democratisation progressed. Brawl resulting from personal dispute in Hlegu, near Yangon, escalated into attacks on mosque and Muslim-owned properties by Buddhist mob 4 April. Democratic Voice of Burma reporter jailed for one year for “trespassing”, “disturbing a civil servant” while investigating operation of foreign-funded educational scholarship program; move condemned by local media, rights groups.

- [“5,000 displaced by Kachin clashes amid KIO leader’s US visit”](#), *Irrawaddy*, 21 April 2014.

New Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°143, [Myanmar’s Military: Back to the Barracks?](#), 22 April 2014. It was Myanmar’s military that initiated the end of its own dictatorship; to advance stable reform, it needs to continue withdrawing from civilian life.

➡ **Philippines** Members of Bangsamoro Transition Commission (BTC), chaired by Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) chief negotiator, 20 April signed final draft of Bangsamoro Basic Law, enabling Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao to be replaced with new political entity; needs to be ratified through plebiscite in proposed Bangsamoro territory. MILF early April announced it was forming new political group, United Bangsamoro Justice Party. MILF accused military of attacking its fighters during operation against Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in Basilan province 11 April, during which 18 rebels, including 4 alleged MILF, and 2 soldiers killed; military said MILF not intended targets. Military 30 April reported 14 ASG militants, 1 marine killed in clash in Patikul, Sulu province. Govt signed new military pact with U.S. allowing for larger U.S. military

presence in Philippines; visiting President Obama in speech spoke of “ironclad” U.S. commitment to defend Philippines.

- [“Gov’t peace deal with MILF founded on consultations – Ferrer”](#), Inquirer, 6 April 2014.

➔ **Thailand** Constitutional Court (CC) 2 April accepted petition to review PM Yingluck’s transfer of Thawil Pliensri from NSC chief in 2011, earlier ruled improper by Supreme Administrative Court; CC ruling against Yingluck would force Yingluck govt to step down. People’s Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC) Secretary General Suthep Thaugsuban 5 April in speech to supporters said once courts and independent agencies toppled caretaker govt, he would assume “sovereign powers”. PDRC protester shot dead 1 April while leaving rally site. Election for 77 non-appointed senate seats proceeded without incident 30 March; candidates aligned with Pheu Thai Party caretaker govt won 44 seats. 22 April meeting of Election Commission (EC) and political party representatives to discuss timing and other conditions for new general election inconclusive. Democrat Party (DP) leader Abhisit Vejjajiva 24 April announced plan to resolve political impasse; offered no details, but declared that elections are integral to reform, distancing from PDRC stance of “reform before election”. EC 30 April announced 20 July date for elections, agreed with caretaker govt; unclear if DP will take part. Formation of pro-govt Red Shirt militia Democracy Protection Volunteer Group and royalist Rubbish Collection Organisation, to pursue lèse-majesté violators, reflects trend toward vigilantism. Red-Shirt poet and lèse-majesté law critic Kamol Duangpasuk murdered 23 April. United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD), main Red Shirt organisation, held rally large outside Bangkok 2-7 April; cancelled another rally planned 19-20 April. Several thousand Red Shirts gathered in NE province Nakorn Ratchasima, participated in basic martial arts training. Insurgent attacks and violence continued in southernmost provinces, including quadruple bombing in Yala town 6 April killing 1 and injuring at least 28; several killed in attacks in Yala province.

- [“No end in sight”](#), *Economist*, 24 April 2014.

Europe

Balkans

➔ **Kosovo** 3 ethnic Serb police attacked in northern municipality Zubin Potok 1 April. Following arrest of Kosovo Serb early month for 2011 killing of ethnic Albanian police officer in 2011, 4 Serb municipalities in north 16 April announced they would cease cooperation with EULEX. Parliament approved international court to address alleged crimes committed by ethnic Albanian guerrillas during 1998-99 war with Serbia.

- [“Kosovo constitution still challenged in North”](#), Balkan Insight, 10 April 2014.

Caucasus

➔ **Armenia** Acting economy minister said Armenia would sign agreement on joining Russian-led Customs Union in May or June, not 29 April as earlier reported; Yerevan has cited hundreds of objections which would raise tariffs on imports

in delaying agreement. Russian ambassador issued statement seen by some analysts as blunt warning for Yerevan to quickly endorse Moscow-led bloc agreement or face damage to relations. Constitutional Court 2 April struck down several clauses of controversial new mandatory pensions law. PM Tigran Sargsyan, criticised over dire economy and pensions law, resigned 3 April. Turkish PM Erdoğan 23 April offered condolences to descendants of victims of mass killing of Armenians by Ottoman forces during WWI; President Sargsyan dismissed gesture as ongoing denial of genocide.

- [“Choking embrace: ‘Mother’ Russia says won’t tolerate ‘outside interference’ in friendly countries”](#), Armenia Now, 18 April 2014.

➔ **Azerbaijan** President Aliyev met with Iranian President Rouhani in Tehran 9 April in sign of improving relations, signed cooperation agreements including on hydropower plant construction. Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights criticised authorities over deteriorating rights, basic freedoms. Prominent analyst and Turkey-based journalist from Zerkalo newspaper detained in Turkey late April, deported to Azerbaijan and charged with espionage for Armenia; had attended civil society meetings with Armenian counterparts. Prominent rights activist detained 28 April, later released.

- [“Azerbaijan’s Leyla Yunus, human rights defender, held”](#), BBC, 29 April 2014.

➔ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** Azerbaijan reported it held unprecedented large military drills in sensitive Nakhichevan exclave late April involving around 20,000 troops, 400 armoured vehicles, weapons systems. Several reports of renewed fighting with Armenian forces, many around northern border between countries near Georgian border. Azerbaijan 8 April reported officer and 2 conscripts killed in mine explosion on contact line with Armenian-occupied Fizuli district. Opposition media also reported fierce fighting in area late April, no confirmation. Also reported 90 tanks and other armoured vehicles relocated from Russian military base in Gyumri to Armenia’s Goris region, alleged plans to send them to Azerbaijan’s Lachin region, occupied by Armenian forces.

- [“Three Azerbaijani servicemen killed, two injured in mine explosion”](#), RFE/RL, 8 April 2014.

➔ **Georgia** FM Panjikidze said country plans to sign association agreement by June with EU, which has brought date forward several times from original plan for Oct. PM’s envoy for relations with Russia met with deputy Russian FM in Prague for 6th time since late 2012; latter said talks “constructive”, Russia has no intention of blocking signing of association agreement between Georgia and EU. Russia released 3 Georgians convicted on spying charges in 2010. 3 Georgian journalists detained by Russian troops close to South Ossetia (SO) administrative boundary line (ABL) 15 April, freed next day by entity officials. Georgia continued to complain of “provocative” Russian helicopter, plane and drone over-flights over villages on side of SO and Abkhaz ABLs that it controls. Defence minister warned of threat from “anti-state organisations” in Armenian-populated Javakheti area, attempting to create atmosphere of instability; analysts say almost no real separatist threat in area, or support in Armenia for such aspirations. Defence minister 30 April called on NATO to deploy “defensive assets” in Georgia.

- [“Interview: Georgia feels less secure after Russian move in Ukraine”](#), Reuters, 15 April 2014.

➡ **North Caucasus (Russia)** Following March reports of his death, Federal Security Service 8 April announced “neutralisation” of Caucasus Emirate leader Doku Umarov’s activities. Caucasus Knot reported 133 killed or injured in NC conflict in first quarter of 2014, mostly in Dagestan. In Dagestan, attacks included: Imam shot dead by 2 unknown gunmen in Kizil-Yurt district; security forces killed several suspected militants during operation in Makhachkala 15 April; lawmaker shot dead by unknown assailants 17 April; 6 militants, including woman, killed in Derabent 26 April; 4 militants killed in Khasavyurt 24 April. In Chechnya, 4 police killed in mine explosion 3 April. 2 suspected militants killed in Stepnovsky district, Stavropol Krai 28 April. Some 400 Ingush attended protest rallies over illegal detentions in Prigorodny district, North Ossetia 10-11 April; rallies saw clashes with police, several detained.

- [“Obituary: Who was Doku Umarov?”](#), RFE/RL, 8 April 2014.

Eastern Europe

➡ **Belarus** In interview with Russia’s NTV television channel President Lukashenko voiced support for Ukraine’s territorial integrity, said he recognised legitimacy of Ukraine’s interim president and “categorically opposed” federalisation of country.

- [“Lukashenko urges Belarusians to learn from Ukraine’s ‘mistakes’”](#), RFE/RL, 22 April 2014.

➡ **Moldova** Breakaway Transnistria’s Supreme Council 16 April urged Russia, UN and OSCE to recognise its independence. Russian FM Lavrov told Moldovan FM that Russia respects Moldovan territorial integrity. Country granted visa-free travel to EU; set to sign association agreement with EU in June.

- [“Tiny Moldova faces its East-West moment of truth”](#), RFE/RL, 23 April 2014.

➡ **Ukraine** Pro-Russian separatists seized control of over a dozen towns and cities in east leading to deadly clashes with Ukrainian troops as Kyiv struggled unsuccessfully to reassert control, continuing fears of Russian intervention and tensions between Russia and West. Protesters early April occupied govt buildings in Donetsk, Luhansk, Kharkiv, demanding referenda on greater autonomy, right to join Russia; interim PM Yatsenyuk offered to devolve more powers to eastern regions. Pro-Russian gunmen 12 April began taking control of state buildings in cities in east; Moscow denied allegations of Russian forces’ involvement. Kyiv govt’s “anti-terrorist” operation fizzled out. Several killed in clashes between separatists and security forces during month. U.S., Russia, EU and Ukraine 17 April reached agreement at talks in Geneva on steps to de-escalate crisis; accord quickly broke down after separatists occupying govt buildings refused to leave, seized OSCE military observers, journalists, security personnel in Sloviansk and govt buildings elsewhere in SE. Russia accused Kyiv of breaking terms of agreement; U.S. and EU blamed Russia, introduced new sanctions on Russian individuals and companies. NATO 16 April announced it was strengthening eastern members’ defences. Russian defence minister Shoigu said no plans to invade Ukraine or intervene in SE Ukraine along lines of Crimea. Igor Strelkov, alleged by Kyiv to be Russian intelligence officer, presented to press as commander of Donbass separatist militia 26 April, 29 April

said Ukrainian volunteers with whom he had worked in Crimea during Russian annexation asked him to “help carry out the same thing as in Crimea” in SE. Separatists 29 April seized regional govt HQ in Luhansk. Acting president Turchynov 30 April announced that govt no longer controlled Donetsk, Luhansk oblasts, expressed concern over instability spreading. 9 May WWII commemoration and 25 May elections both seen as potential flashpoints; unrest in SE could complicate polls. IMF 30 April approved \$17.1bn bailout.

- [“Ukraine’s government has lost control of east, says acting president”](#), *Guardian*, 30 April 2014.

Western Europe/Mediterranean

➡ **Cyprus** Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot negotiators 15 April completed screening and reviewing phase of reunification talks; coming stage will focus on bridging proposals, next meeting 6 May. Despite no evidence to suggest imminent breakthrough, Turkish Cypriot leader Eroglu 21 April suggested settlement could be reached in 2014.

- Hugh Pope and Scott Malcomson, [“Fresh Thinking Needed on Cyprus”](#), Transatlantic Academy, 1 April 2014.
- [“Turkish Cypriot: Cyprus accord possible in 2014”](#), AP, 22 April 2014.

➡ **Turkey** No tangible progress towards govt-PKK settlement; jailed PKK leader Öcalan met pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) delegation 26 April, warned against new clashes, urged govt to enact new laws including for militants’ return. BDP-organised protests against military outpost constructions in SE turned violent: 3 protesters wounded in Tunceli province 27 April; PKK same day kidnapped 2 soldiers in Diyarbakır. Parliament 17 April approved controversial law increasing powers and immunity of National Intelligence Agency (MIT); criticised by opposition for turning Turkey into “intelligence state”, law also potentially provides legal grounds for ongoing Öcalan-MIT negotiations. EU Enlargement Commissioner Štefan Füle 10 April expressed concern about independence of judiciary and freedom of expression. Turkey 23 April sent army relief and resupply convoy to Turkish exclave Süleyman Şah tomb 30km inside Syria, area controlled by Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

- [“Election protests in Turkey as opposition cries foul”](#), Reuters, 1 April 2014.

New Crisis Group Europe Report N°230, [The Rising Costs of Turkey’s Syrian Quagmire](#), 30 April 2014. Continuous refugee flows from Syria are stretching Turkey’s capacities and necessitate long-term adjustments as well as stronger international engagement to better share the burden.

Central Asia

➡ **Kazakhstan** Amid anxiety over relations with Russia and potential economic impact of Russia-West split, Karim Massimov, PM from 2007-2012, reappointed 2 April. Oil and gas minister 7 April publicly discussed options to divert oil export routes from Russia towards China, Iran or through Azerbaijan, Georgia. Military early April conducted drills in NE and near Almaty. Rights groups criticised wide ranging changes to criminal code, including death penalty for terrorism, jail terms

for unregistered NGOs and religious organisations, decree restricting press freedom in case of state of emergency.

- [“Kazakhstan nervous of tougher Russia/Ukraine oil sanctions”](#), Reuters, 8 April 2014.

➡ **Kyrgyzstan** Amid worsening energy and food insecurity, agriculture minister warned food security at critical point; energy minister 2 April said country will be unable to export energy in 2015 due to low water levels. Uzbekistan shut off gas to Osh and Jalalabad provinces after Russia’s Gazprom 10 April took over state-owned Kyrgyzgaz. Kyrgyz-Tajik border tensions over water and land continued; tensions also reviving around Kyrgyzstan’s Sokh enclave in Uzbekistan. Opposition protest in capital 10 April passed peacefully; violent anti-mine protest in Talas early April prompted president to visit province. Parliament 16 April approved amendments to criminal code outlawing spreading of false information via media, raising concerns about freedom of press. Newly-appointed PM Otorbayev 17 April said joining Russia-led Customs Union will help country tackle economic and social challenges. Osh regional TV station sold to Russian businessman.

- [“The post-imperial chessboard”](#), *Economist*, 1 April 2014.

➡ **Tajikistan** Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) defence ministers met in Dushanbe 1 April, discussed Ukraine, Syria, Afghanistan, military-technological cooperation and joint anti-terrorism military exercise to be held in China. Deputy head of U.S. Special Operations Command Central same day met with high-ranking officials, discussed bilateral security cooperation. During visit to Kabul President Rahmon 26 March signed cooperation agreements with Afghanistan including on customs, transport. In 23 April annual address president stated political and economic ties with Russia a priority; vowed to continue construction of Roghun Dam, opposed by Uzbekistan. Security services said they prevented terrorist act against aluminium plant in Tursunzade early April.

- [“Tajik president calls on nation to be ‘vigilant’”](#), RFE/RL, 23 April 2014.

➡ **Turkmenistan** Turkmen, Azerbaijani officials discussed cooperation on possible gas transport routes for exports to Europe.

- [“Russia-Ukraine crisis spurring Azerbaijani-Turkmen gas export partnership?”](#), Eurasianet, 10 April 2014.

➡ **Uzbekistan** Army 22 April held military exercises near Kyrgyz border. Comes amid increased tensions as govt 10 April ended gas deliveries to Kyrgyzstan’s Osh and Jalalabad provinces (see Kyrgyzstan). President Karimov 17 April signed law giving PM right to nominate regional governors, Tashkent mayor; granted parliament right to control cabinet’s activities, approve nomination of PM, express confidence in govt via vote, role in formation of election commission. Govt 19 March issued regulation ordering Internet cafés to install CCTV, store records of visited websites. Shanghai Cooperation Organisation’s Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure 28 March met in Tashkent, discussed extremist website database, regional security, Afghanistan.

- [“Russia, Uzbekistan floating plans to create ‘buffer state’ in Afghanistan”](#), Eurasianet, 4 April 2014.

Latin America

➡ **Bolivia** Clashes erupted late March-early April between govt and mining cooperatives over modifications to mining bill; at least 2 dead, scores more injured. About 1,000 soldiers went on strike 22-25 April demanding promotion opportunities; govt later dismissed 715 of them.

- [“Bolivia dismisses hundreds of protesting soldiers”](#), BBC, 25 April 2014.

➡ **Colombia** New round of peace negotiations between govt and FARC started 24 April amid increasing expectations of decisive progress on illegal drugs, 3rd substantial issue under consideration. FARC rallied behind process when Rodrigo Granda, member of FARC negotiating team, 6 April told press that “never before now have existed real conditions” for successful peace process. President Santos 10 April said he would “think twice” before ordering killing of FARC leader Timochenko, causing uproar in Uribe opposition circles who accuse Santos of being weak with guerrillas. Alleged ELN kidnapping victim found dead 20 April in Saravena (Arauca). News network Noticias Uno 13 April revealed that leaders of New Illegal Armed Group (NIAG) Urabeños and organised crime group Envigado Office reportedly willing to engage in negotiations with govt; Justice Minister Alfonso Gómez Méndez 13 April responded that only a “surrender” to justice could be acceptable. Upon judicial order, Santos 23 April reinstated Bogotá Mayor Gustavo Petro, removed from office in March over alleged mismanagement. New agrarian “strike” started 28 April, seen as likely to have less impact than 2013 protests; Interior Minister Aurelio Iragorri 28 April claimed protests in some regions infiltrated by FARC.

- [“Colombia president reinstates ousted Bogota mayor Petro”](#), BBC, 23 April 2014.

➡ **Peru** Security forces 10 April arrested 28 people suspected of links to Shining Path militant group, issued 6 arrest warrants against Peruvians living abroad, in operation involving over 300 police and army personnel. Detainees include 2 attorneys representing jailed Shining Path leader and rebel group’s political wing Movement for Amnesty and Fundamental Rights (MOVADef). President Humala’s cousin also detained.

- [“Peru Shining Path arrests: 24 seized”](#), BBC, 10 April 2014.

➡ **Guatemala** Civil society leaders 9 April called for more transparent process in selection of next attorney general, warning that nominating commissions under pressure from powerful interest groups. Guatemala City archbishop warned selection process provoking “bitterness and polarisation”, mobilising “political, economic and other interests, even organised crime”. Newspapers 4 April reported commission charged with sending list of nominees to President Pérez Molina validated 11 of 32 challenges filed against current Attorney General Paz y Paz, more than those accepted against any other candidate.

- [“Cicig señala a 13 de 26 candidatos a fiscal general”](#), Prensa Libre, 12 April 2014.

➡ **Mexico** Federal envoy Alfredo Castillo 14 April announced deal with 20 “self-defence” leaders whereby vigilantes would disarm by 10 May or join legal security forces; unclear whether

groups will have to register or turn over weapons, but accord appears to bar open display of weaponry in armed patrols. Authorities 21 April reported they arrested dozens of criminals posing as members of vigilante groups. Security forces 15 April arrested Arnaldo Villa Sánchez, second-in-command of Beltrán-Leyva cartel, in Mexico City. Senate 24 April amended military justice code so that armed forces members who commit crimes against civilians can be tried in civilian courts.

- [“Mexican vigilantes protest against plans to disarm them”](#), BBC, 7 April 2014.

➡ **Venezuela** Govt 10 April began dialogue with delegation from opposition Democratic Unity (MUD) alliance to find solution to political and economic crisis, with session broadcast live; few concrete results. Subsequent closed-door session brought agreement to broaden govt’s parliamentary “truth commission” to include range of respected figures. Student movement and radical “la salida” wing of MUD yet to agree to talks; demands include release of political prisoners, including those arrested during protests, and end to “repression of peaceful demonstrations”. Clashes in major cities continued, though generally diminished in intensity late month, alongside presence of armed pro-govt colectivos and casualty rate. Talks continued behind closed doors. Following 25 March announcement that 3 air force generals arrested for coup-plotting, pro-govt newspaper 14 April alleged 30 more detainees, including at least one opposition leader, accused of involvement in “destabilisation effort”. 18 students and protesters arrested 26 April after massive rally in Caracas and other cities. Human rights NGO lawyer also detained on conspiracy charges.

- [“Venezuela president and opposition agree formal talks”](#), BBC, 9 April 2014.

Middle East and North Africa

Eastern Mediterranean

➡ **Israel-Palestine** Crisis in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations deepened: after Israel late March reneged on pledge to release 30 Palestinian prisoners and 1 April republished tenders for more than 700 housing units in E Jerusalem settlement, Palestinian President Abbas same day signed applications to join 15 international treaties/conventions including Geneva Convention; Israel cancelled cabinet meeting on prisoner release planned for later same day, threatened sanctions. U.S. said disappointed by “unhelpful, unilateral actions” of both parties; spent following weeks trying to broker extension of talks past 29 April deadline, appeared intent on continuing to try. Rival Palestinian factions Fatah and Hamas 23 April announced reconciliation deal, promised formation of unity govt; U.S. warned move could complicate efforts to extend negotiations, Israel suspended, rather than ended, talks. PLO quickly shifted to promoting govt of technocrats whose ministers would accept Quartet conditions. Several clashes between Israeli police and Palestinian protesters at E Jerusalem’s Al-Aqsa Mosque, including dozens wounded 16 April. Israeli killed in attack on car outside Hebron in W Bank 14 April. Gaza ceasefire, reactivated following breakdown in March, continued to hold

despite several violations by both sides; exchanges of rocket fire across border left several Palestinians wounded, including 12 wounded in Israeli strikes 23 April.

- [“ Hamas and Fatah unveil Palestinian reconciliation deal”](#), BBC, 23 April 2014.

➡ **Lebanon** Army 1 April started implementing “security plan” brokered by political factions to counter worsening violence, particularly in Tripoli and on Syrian border: set up checkpoints and patrols in tense areas, raided homes of militiamen, seized weapons, arrested several suspects. Reports indicated plan successful in calming violence despite some attacks including: gunmen 8 April shot dead 2 soldiers east of Tripoli; 1 killed in NE 2 April by rocket fire from Syria, claimed by Sunni militants targeting Hizbollah. Complaints against security plan as political elites allegedly protected favoured militiamen; some Sunnis demonstrated against army deployments claiming Sunni communities disproportionately targeted. Concerns also raised about fragility of political truce underpinning plan, failure to address deeper problems including socio-economic grievances, sectarian divisions, issues of political representation. At least 8 reported killed 7 April in fighting between rival Palestinian factions in refugee camp near Sidon. UN reported number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon passed 1 million.

- [“Fighting Syria spillover, Lebanese troops deploy in Bekaa Valley”](#), *Christian Science Monitor*, 6 April 2014.

➡ **Syria** Projecting increasing political and military confidence, regime announced presidential election for 3 June, paving way for re-election of President Assad and suggesting diminishing opportunities for compromise to end conflict following failure of Geneva II talks. Assad announced his candidacy 28 April. Regime renewed campaign to seize rebel-held areas of Homs amid steady trickle of rebel surrenders from city’s old quarter; other rebels fought back with numerous deadly car bombings, including at least 100 killed 29 April in twin suicide attack claimed by al-Qaeda-linked Jabhat al-Nusra, according to Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR). Regime continued Qalamoun offensive near Lebanese border seizing several towns, including Rankus and Maalula. Despite regime success in some areas, rebels held recently-captured ground in Latakia province; fought to stalemate in Aleppo; late-month advanced in Daraa province in south. Regime airstrikes and barrel bombings of Aleppo continued with scores of casualties, including at least 29 killed in single neighbourhood 20 April according to SOHR. Rebel infighting continued in east: Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) 10 April launched attack on Albu Kamal town on Iraqi border; SOHR reported 86 killed in fighting, ISIL’s assault rebuffed by rival rebels. UN mission 24 April said 92.5% of all declared chemical weapons (CW) removed from or destroyed in country; will investigate allegations of renewed CW use involving chlorine gas. Humanitarian situation continued to deteriorate: World Food Programme announced food deliveries reduced due to shortage of funds, less than half of \$2.3bn pledged at Jan donor conference delivered; UNSG Ban accused all parties to civil war of blocking aid deliveries, violating international law.

- [“Syria’s chemical weapons wild card: chlorine gas”](#), Reuters, 22 April 2014.

Gulf

➡ **Iran** Another round of talks between Iran and P5+1 seeking comprehensive agreement on Iran's nuclear program held in Vienna 7-9 April. Talks signalled end to first phase in which parties explained respective positions, ahead of second stage of negotiations; next round of talks to start 13 May. Iranian FM Zarif 9 April claimed Iran and P5+1 already in "50-60% agreement", but significant disagreements remain, including on number of centrifuges to be allowed in Iran, scope of inspections and Iran's ballistic missiles program. IAEA 17 April said Iran continuing to comply with Nov Joint Plan of Action (JPA), cutting stockpiles of 20% enriched uranium; construction of conversion plant needed for rendering uranium stockpiles unfit for enrichment to higher levels, as promised under JPA, delayed. Nuclear negotiations unaffected by other tensions including U.S. refusal to grant visa to Iran's UN envoy over role in 1979 hostage crisis, European Parliament resolution condemning human rights situation in Iran. 4 Iranian border guards, held hostage for months by Sunni insurgent group Jaish al-Adl in Pakistani border area, freed 4 April after March execution of fifth hostage.

- "Iran cuts sensitive nuclear stockpile, key plant delayed: IAEA", Reuters, 17 April 2014.

➡ **Iraq** Security situation continued to deteriorate in run-up to 30 April parliamentary election with Shiite militias operating openly, ongoing fighting between govt forces and Sunni insurgents in Anbar province. Jihadi Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) consolidated presence in Falluja, including staging military parade and organising basic services; early April pushed eastward toward areas closer to Baghdad, including establishing presence in Abu Ghraib city. Govt continued to use Anbar crisis to marginalise Sunni political opposition, secure domestic and international political support. Violence across country left hundreds dead. ISIL suicide bombers 25 April killed 33 at Shiite political rally in Baghdad; militants 28 April killed at least 50 as soldiers and police cast votes, including 30 in suicide bombing of Kurdish political rally. 14 reported killed on election day 30 April; officials reported over 50 attacks on polling stations, voters in north and west. Electoral commission cancelled balloting in parts of Anbar due to ongoing violence. Cabinet approved "national safety" bill enabling PM to declare state of emergency at will; awaiting deliberation in parliament.

- "Iraqis vote in parliamentary polls in security clampdown", BBC, 30 April 2014.

New Crisis Group Middle East Report N°150, *Iraq: Falluja's Faustian Bargain*, 28 April 2014. An alliance between the local military council and ISIL is keeping the besieging Iraqi army at bay around Falluja, but unless Sunni alienation is addressed, the city risks a new round of devastating conflict.

➡ **Jordan** Warplanes 16 April hit vehicles crossing border from Syria which officials claimed carried armed Syrian rebels.

- "Jordanian warplanes destroy vehicles trying to cross from Syria: spokesman", Reuters, 16 April 2014.

➡ **Saudi Arabia** Unidentified gunmen killed 2 border guards on Yemeni border 10 April; another guard shot dead 14 April.

- "Gunmen kill Saudi guard near Yemeni border, wound another: media", Reuters, 14 April 2014.

➡ **Yemen** Tense stalemate between Huthis and Islah/al-Ahmar affiliated tribes continued, punctured by periodic clashes in Amran and Dhammar provinces. UN envoy Jamal Benomar 24 April said President Hadi and Huthis have agreed to discuss Huthi disarmament. Airstrikes 20-21 April killed some 55 reported al-Qaeda militants in south as part of reported major campaign backed by U.S. drone strikes; ground offensive launched 29 April. 15 soldiers killed 29 April in suspected AQAP ambush in Sabwa province; suicide bomb attack on Aden army base 2 April killed 11; suspected AQAP militants 15 April shot dead al-Bayda province governor; gunmen 21-22 April killed 4 senior security officials in several attacks in Sanaa. Thousands rallied in Sanaa 23 April in response to call by Feb 11 Movement, called for dismissal of govt, end to fuel shortages. UN humanitarian coordinator for Yemen 25 April said 47% of population in need of emergency humanitarian services. Friends of Yemen meeting in London began 29 April, urged Yemen govt to set clear timetable for constitution referendum and subsequent elections.

- "Yemen conflict highlighted after 55 killed in air raids and drone strikes", *Guardian*, 22 April 2014.

North Africa

➡ **Algeria** Presidential elections held 17 April, low turnout reported, especially in Kabylie (23%); President Bouteflika secured re-election with 81.53% of votes, 28 April pledged constitutional reform, said reestablishment of peace and security is priority. Runner-up and former PM Ali Benflis took 12%, decried massive fraud, accused Constitutional Council of cover-up. Police violently dispersed attempts by opposition activists to stage protests in capital ahead of vote. Jihadis reportedly killed 11 soldiers 18-19 April in Kabylie. Tensions between Chaambis (Arabs) and Mozabites (Berbers) in south continued: at least 35 injured, including 17 police, 5-6 April. Violent clashes between police and Kabyle Berber activists in Tizi Ouzou 20 April, day of celebration of Berber spring.

- "Abdelaziz Bouteflika sworn in for fourth term as Algerian president", *Guardian*, 28 April 2014.

➡ **Egypt** Former Defence Minister Abdelfattah el-Sisi and Nasserist Hamdeen Sabbahi only 2 candidates to register for 26-27 May presidential election by 20 April nomination deadline. Court 15 April banned Muslim Brotherhood (MB) members from running in any elections. Sabbahi campaign warned against use of state resources and media in favour of Sisi, complained of assaults on campaigners and arrests on false grounds. EU foreign policy chief Ashton visited Cairo 10 April, formally announced EU election monitoring mission, reportedly called Sisi's decision to run "courageous"; no meeting with MB representatives, who criticised visit. Attacks on security forces continued with militant group Ayn al-Sham claiming several bomb attacks: 2 killed outside Cairo University 2 April, including police brigadier-general; 1 police killed in Cairo 18 April; 2 police shot dead 20 April between Cairo and Suez. Several killed by govt forces, including in separate incidents 11 April: pro-MB demonstrator shot dead in Alexandria, 2 MB members reported killed in Nile Delta shoot-out, prominent Ansar Beit al-Maqdis militant killed in Sinai according to military officials. At least 25 killed early April in clashes between rival clans in Aswan. Court 28 April sentenced 683 defendants

to death, including MB leader Mohamed Badie; another court banned April 6 Movement. Govt announced price increase for subsidised fuel, electricity, water, imposed ban on high-power air-conditioning units ahead of expected summer energy crisis.

- [“Ex-army chief, leftist to run for Egyptian presidency”](#), Reuters, 20 April 2014.

↳ **Libya** General National Congress (GNC) remained polarised despite March ouster of PM Zeidan. Interim PM Abdullah al-Thinni 12 April announced resignation after gunmen attacked his home and family. Gunmen 29 April stormed GNC, disrupted selection of new PM; several injured. Constitutional Drafting Assembly (CDA) convened 21 April, but 13 of 60 seats remain unfilled; president, VP and rapporteur for CDA appointed. Govt early April began direct negotiations with federalist movement leader Ibrahim Jedran on oil terminal crisis; Jedran reportedly agreed to lifting closure of 4 oil terminals in 2 stages in exchange for establishment of investigation into oil sector irregularities, disbursement of salaries to militiamen and dropping of criminal charges against them. Hariga and Zeutina ports reopened; reopening of Ras Lanuf and Es Sider terminals conditional on govt implementation of deal. Agreement opposed by some factions within GNC and govt as well as allied armed groups. Abductions continued including Jordan’s ambassador 15 April, Tunisian embassy adviser 17 April. At least 2 killed in suicide bomb targeting army camp in Benghazi 27 April. U.S. Deputy Sec State visited 24 April, promised help to tackle “rising violent extremism”.

- [“Libya rebels warn Tripoli oil ports to stay closed unless deal implemented”](#), Reuters, 24 April 2014.

↳ **Mauritania** President Abdel Aziz 23 April announced intention to stand for re-election in 21 June polls, despite continued opposition boycott.

- [“Présidentielle fixée au 21 juin, malgré un dialogue bloqué”](#), RFI, 22 April 2014.

↳ **Morocco** Initiative to encourage Salafi integration continued following King Mohamed VI’s 28 March participation in Friday prayers serviced by prominent Salafi Sheikh Mohamed Fizazi. Founder of al-Qaeda-inspired jihadi group Sham al-Islam fighting in Syria, Brahim Benchekroune aka Abu Ahmad al-Maghribi, reportedly killed 3 April in Syria; security forces 12 April dismantled cell recruiting for Syria.

- [“Morocco encourages Salafist integration”](#), Magharebia, 1 April 2014.

↳ **Tunisia** Salafis clashed with police 8 April in Rouhia (east) and 12 April in Menzel Nour (west), several police injured. Dozens of Salafis arrested, police raided mosque in Rouhia early April, evicted several self-appointed imams, notably in Baraket Essahel. Major military operation began late-April to rout militants from Chaambi mountains. MPs condemned clemency granted by military to former Ben Ali regime security officials involved in repression of 2010-11 uprising. Economic deterioration continued, several officials suggested short-term austerity measures necessary; PM Jomaa 29 April said reforms needed but ruled out severe cuts. French and German FMs visited, pledged financial aid.

- [“Tunisia MPs slam ‘light’ verdict for Ben Ali officials”](#), AFP, 15 April 2014.

↳ **Western Sahara** UNSC 29 April renewed MINURSO peace-keeping mandate for another year, called on all parties to respect human rights, but did not call for inclusion of component to monitor abuses, as advocated by POLISARIO, Algeria, rights groups.

- [“U.N. renews Western Sahara mission, but without rights monitors”](#), Reuters, 29 April 2014.

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