

CrisisWatch

A monthly bulletin by the ICG on current and potential conflicts around the world



1 January 2004, N°5

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** ICG reports and briefing papers that have been published in the last month.

CrisisWatch is compiled by ICG's Brussels Research Unit, drawing on multiple sources including the resources of our more than 90 staff members across five continents, who already report on some 40 of the situations listed here. Comments and suggestions as to how the bulletin might be improved (addressed to crisiswatch@crisisweb.org) would be much appreciated.

December 2003 Trends



Deteriorated Situations

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January 2004 Watchlist



Conflict Risk Alert

Côte d'Ivoire
Georgia
Haiti
Sudan



Conflict Resolution Opportunity

The International Crisis Group

is an independent, non-profit, multinational organisation, with over 90 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict. ICG's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts are located within or close by countries at risk of outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict. Based on information and assessments from the field, ICG produces regular analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international decision-takers, and backed up with high level advocacy. ICG is chaired by former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari, and its President and Chief Executive is former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans.

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Africa

CENTRAL AFRICA

- Burundi Outlook most promising for many years as leaders of largest Hutu rebel group, FDD, worked with government to implement November peace agreement, although remaining Hutu rebel group, FNL, continued fighting. Disarmament and reintegration of FDD fighters commenced, but progressing slowly. Return of estimated 800,000 refugees in Tanzania and 300,000 internally displaced people could lead to renewed conflict if not handled properly. Vatican's ambassador to Burundi shot dead 30 December in ambush blamed on FNL. Human Rights Watch criticised immunity for fighters from prosecution for war crimes provided in peace agreement.
 - ["Burundi: War crimes may go unpunished"](#), Human Rights Watch report, 22 Dec. 2003.
 - ["Peace process reaches crucial phase with launch of DDR process"](#), IRIN, 19 Dec. 2003.
 - ["UN sees hope for democratic Burundi"](#), *The Washington Times* (UPI), 15 Dec. 2003.
 - ["Burundi rebel leader heads to capital to join government"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 6 Dec. 2003.
 - For background, see ICG Africa Report N°70, [Refugees and Displaced Persons in Burundi – Defusing the Land Time-Bomb](#), 7 Oct. 2003.



ICG Africa Briefing, [Refugees and Internally Displaced in Burundi: The Urgent Need for a Consensus on Their Repatriation and Reintegration](#), 2 December 2003 (in French: executive summary also in English). Burundi's new peace deal is likely to bring very large numbers of refugees back home within three months, but there are no preparations for their repatriation and reintegration. This omission endangers the peace process overall. It is crucial that the ceasefire accord reached in November not be implemented at the expense of refugees and the internally displaced.

- Central African Republic President Bozize sacked Prime Minister Goumba and government 11 December, and appointed new government with Goumba as vice-president. Changes made after demonstrations in capital against human rights violations by security forces and Bozize's former fighters. Bozize also sacked number of soldiers for lack of discipline.
 - ["Bozize urged to discipline his former fighters"](#), IRIN, 19 Dec. 2003.
 - ["New premier forms government, Goumba appointed VP"](#), IRIN, 15 Dec. 2003.
 - ["Bozize dismisses Goumba's government"](#), IRIN, 11 Dec. 2003.
- Democratic Republic of Congo New national army formed from existing government soldiers and 2 main rebel groups, RCD and MLC, in accordance with peace agreement. New troops to be deployed in eastern DRC. Donors pledged \$3.9 billion for period 2004-2006.
 - ["World Bank donors pledge \\$3.9 bln to Congo"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 19 Dec. 2003.
 - ["Rebels join new army in DR Congo"](#), BBC, 8 Dec. 2003.

- ["Congo's political cleanup"](#), *The Washington Times*, 4 Dec. 2003.
- ["An oasis of hope in eastern Congo"](#), *The Economist*, 4 Dec. 2003.
- For background to the conflict in Ituri, see ICG Africa Report N°64, [Congo Crisis: Military Intervention in Ituri](#), 13 June 2003.

- Republic of Congo Rival rebel militia factions exchanged gun and rocket fire in capital Brazzaville 13 and 18 December. Police announced 3 month crackdown on "trouble makers" in capital.
 - ["Police to crackdown on 'trouble makers'"](#), IRIN, 23 Dec. 2003.
 - ["Feuding militias clash in Congo Republic"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 18 Dec. 2003.
- Rwanda Three Rwandan media executives convicted of genocide and crimes against humanity by International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda for inciting slaughter of Tutsis in 1994. Two jailed for life, other for 27 years.
 - ["3 in media convicted of genocide in Rwanda"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 3 Dec. 2003.
 - For background to recent elections, see ICG Africa Report N°53, [Rwanda at the End of the Transition: A Necessary Political Liberalisation](#), 13 Nov. 2002. For background to ICTR, see ICG Africa Report N°69, [The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda: Time for Pragmatism](#), 26 Sept. 2003.
- Uganda Signs that government may launch offensive against LRA soon. Government to amend amnesty law to exclude leaders of Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels. Law currently provides immunity and resettlement for all rebels who surrender.
 - ["Searching for hope in Uganda"](#), BBC, 28 Dec. 2003.
 - ["New amnesty law to exclude top LRA leaders"](#), IRIN, 16 Dec. 2003.
 - ["Children suffer during Ugandan war"](#), *The Washington Times*, 11 Dec. 2003.

HORN OF AFRICA

- Ethiopia/Eritrea Border tension eased. Armed forces leaders of both countries pledged to maintain military stability between their countries – agreed in principle to set up joint military commissions to prevent incidents on disputed border from escalating. Former Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy appointed UN special envoy to help resolve stalled peace process. But at least 50 killed in Ethiopia in clashes over land near Sudan border, with government accusing Eritrea of backing rebels who incited violence.
 - ["UN special envoy appointed to help stalled process"](#), IRIN, 29 Dec. 2003.
 - ["Ethiopia says over 50 killed in Gambella unrest"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 24 Dec. 2003.
 - ["Ethiopia/Eritrea agree new scheme to calm border"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 18 Dec. 2003.
 - For background see, ICG Africa Report N°68, [Ethiopia and Eritrea: War or Peace?](#), 24 Sept. 2003.
- Somalia More than 60 killed and thousands displaced in fighting between rival clan militias in central Somalia mid December. UN Security Council to set up unit to investigate breaches of arms embargo. Increased tension between self declared autonomous republic Somaliland and self declared autonomous region Puntland over territory claimed by both.

peacekeepers in Monrovia 10 December – militia demanding cash to surrender arms. UN responded by suspending disarmament from 17 December to 20 January 2003, to upgrade camp for former combatants. Peacekeepers deployed to rebel-held town 27 December for first time. UN and US to co-host international donors conference in February 2004. Only 5,900 peacekeeping troops had arrived mid-December out of 15,000 authorised.

- [“UN peacekeepers secure Liberian town”](#), *The Guardian* (AP), 28 Dec. 2003.
- [“More international troops and equipment needed in Liberia – UN report”](#), UN News Centre, 18 Dec. 2003.
- [“UN suspends disarmament in Liberia”](#), *The Guardian* (AP), 15 Dec. 2003.
- [“Street battles kill nine in Liberia”](#), *The Guardian*, 10 Dec. 2003.
- For background, see ICG Africa Report N°71, *Liberia: Security Challenges*, 3 Nov. 2003

➤ Mauritania Opposition leader Mohamed Haidalla convicted of treason charges, but given 5 year suspended sentence and fine, and released from jail.

- [“Mauritania opposition leader freed”](#), Reuters, 28 Dec. 2003.

➤ Nigeria Handed over 32 border villages to Cameroon 16 December, in accordance with International Court of Justice ruling. Oil-rich Bakassi peninsular still to be returned to Cameroon. Continued fighting between ethnic militias in oil rich Warri region - Human Rights Watch claimed conflict essentially over oil money.


- [“Nigeria hands Cameroon villages”](#), BBC, 19 Dec. 2003.
- [“Delta violence a fight over oil money”](#), Human Rights Watch report, 17 Dec. 2003.
- [“Tension mounts in Warri over fresh militia attack”](#), IRIN, 9 Dec. 2003.
- [“Freedom of expression under attack”](#), Human Rights Watch report, 2 Dec. 2003.

➤ Sierra Leone Government troops on alert to prevent Liberian militias moving weapons into Sierra Leone to escape disarmament process in Liberia. Interpol issued warrant for arrest of ex-President Taylor at request of Special Court for Sierra Leone. Unlikely to be accepted by Nigeria, where Taylor remains in asylum.

- [“Sierra Leone army on alert over Liberian weapons”](#), Reuters AlertNet, 16 Dec. 2003.
- [“Interpol warrant for Taylor illegal, says defence lawyer”](#), IRIN, 5 Dec. 2003.
- [“Healing Sierra Leone’s scars”](#), BBC, 17 Dec. 2003.
- For background, see ICG Africa Report N°67, *Sierra Leone: The State of Security and Governance*, 2 Sept. 2003.



CENTRAL ASIA

 ICG Asia Report N°72, *Is Radical Islam Inevitable in Central Asia? Priorities for Engagement*, 22 December 2003. Western governments need to stand up more strongly for political and economic reform in Central Asia if they are to undermine Islamist extremism there. Public diplomacy and promotion of ...

(cont) religious tolerance are important, but if the region is not to become next breeding ground for radicalism, the U.S. and others must show they are serious about democracy and human rights, not merely interested in cooperation from authoritarian governments in the war against terrorism. Based on public opinion surveys and interviews in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, this report examines the attitudes of Central Asian Muslims to the West and offers a range of policy options for engaging with Islam and reducing support for radical alternatives to present regimes.

➤ Kazakhstan Parliament approved controversial draft media law, criticised by journalists as increasing state’s ability to control press.

- [“Consternation at media law”](#), IWPR, 4 Dec. 2003.
- Comment by David Lewis (ICG), [“Lessons in how to steal elections”](#), *Transitions Online*, 1 Dec. 2003.
- For background, see ICG Asia Report N°66, *Youth in Central Asia: Losing the New Generation*, 31 Oct. 2003.

➤ Kyrgyzstan Amendment placing restrictions on foreign media coverage of elections passed by parliament, drawing strong criticism, particularly from Russian press. In south, Uzbek police illegally crossed border 10 December in attempt to arrest Kyrgyz citizen. Raid thwarted by citizen’s neighbours. Uzbek raids into Kyrgyzstan reported frequently; targets usually Muslims suspected of extremism.

- [“Secret Uzbek raid ends in farce”](#), IWPR, 13 Dec. 2003.
- [“Election law amendment sparks debate among press”](#), RFE/RL, 12 Dec. 2003.
- Comment by David Lewis (ICG), [“Lessons in how to steal elections”](#), *Transitions Online*, 1 Dec. 2003.
- For background, see ICG Asia Report N°66, *Youth in Central Asia: Losing the New Generation*, 31 Oct. 2003; and ICG Asia Report N°37, *Kyrgyzstan’s Political Crisis: An Exit Strategy*, 20 Aug. 2002.

➤ Tajikistan Mamadrusi Iskandarov, head of Democratic Party of Tajikistan (DPT), dismissed as head of Tajikgas (a government post). Government blamed him for energy problems, but Iskandarov claimed decision political. Move part of continued pressure on opposition party members; DPT had been critical of June referendum on constitutional changes. Further controversy over decision by state publishing house not to print Ruz-i-Nav newspaper. Speculation that regime marking limits for opposition activity ahead of elections in early 2005.

- [“Tajik editor hopes publication ban ‘just a mistake’”](#), Eurasianet.org, 9 Dec. 2003.
- [“Tajik opposition fears firing might destabilize political situation”](#), Eurasianet.org, 5 Dec. 2003.
- For background, see ICG Asia Reports N°66, *Youth in Central Asia: Losing the New Generation*, 31 Oct. 2003 and N°51, *Tajikistan: A Roadmap for Development*, 24 Apr. 2003.

➤ Turkmenistan Authorities cracking down on NGOs. Harassment of staff reportedly increasing, and new law gives state effective control over all NGO activities. President Niazov runs region’s most repressive regime, limiting population’s access to information, restricting travel abroad, and stifling dissent.

- [“Turkmenbashi targets NGOs”](#), IWPR, 15 Dec. 2003.
- For background, see ICG Asia Report N°66, *Youth in Central Asia: Losing the New Generation*, 31 Oct. 2003 and ICG Asia Report N°44, *Cracks in the Marble: Turkmenistan’s Failing Dictatorship*, 17 Jan. 2003.

