

Europe and Central Asia

Balkans

➡ **Bosnia** Tensions continued between majority Bosnian Serb entity Republika Srpska (RS) and Bosniak-Croat Federation entity over RS parliament's proposed bill to form reserve police force. In response to new RS parliamentary discussions over draft legislation in RS parliament 11 June, Federation entity announced plans to introduce its own reserve police force. RS 24 June withdrew bill under international pressure, including reportedly from U.S. envoys; instead interior ministry announced it would form gendarmerie that would include young police recruits. In response, lawmakers from Federation entity dropped plans for its own force. Office of the High Representative, international overseer of implementation of 1995 peace agreement, and several European embassies 7 June released joint statement condemning alleged misconduct of president of High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council who faces accusations of bribery.

➡ **Kosovo** After Kosovo police arrested two UN officials for allegedly impeding security operations in 28 May raid in ethnic Serb-dominated part of Mitrovica in north, head of UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Zahir Tanin, 10 June told UN Security Council that Kosovo police had violated UN officials' immunity, and that UN would continue to investigate matter. Constitutional court 27 June ruled that negotiating team, which parliament tasked with leading negotiations in EU-led dialogue with Serbia, was unconstitutional, citing overlap with existing institutions. U.S. continued to urge govt to end custom tariffs on Serbian imports, with U.S. Dep Assistant Sec State 10 June calling them "an obstacle" to normalising relations between Kosovo and Serbia. Serbian President Vučić tried to shore up international support for talks with Kosovo; in letter to U.S. President Trump 14 June urged Washington to pressure Kosovo to lift its tariffs in order to advance "a compromise" solution.

➡ **North Macedonia** European Council 18 June delayed decision on whether to hold EU accession talks on North Macedonia and Albania to "no later than October 2019" after vote requiring unanimous decision by all 28 EU member states failed to pass. NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg during visit to North Macedonia 3 June said alliance was "ready to welcome" country into alliance once all 29 NATO members ratify accession protocol signed in Feb.

Caucasus

➡ **Armenia** Court 25 June ordered arrest of Robert Kocharyan, country's second president, first arrested in July 2018 for overturning constitutional order in 2008 but released in May after state prosecutors appealed for his pre-trial release at constitutional court.

➡ **Azerbaijan** Judicial proceedings targeting journalists continued. Court in Baku sentenced Ikram Rahimov, chief editor of independent news site Realliq, 12

June to five and a half years in prison for extortion. Sabil district court 14 June ordered Polad Aslanov, chief editor of independent news site Xeberman, to remain in detention on charge of high treason. In unexpected reshuffling in key security institutions 20 June, Interior Minister Ramil Usubov was appointed secretary of presidential security council, and replaced by his first deputy Vilayet Eyvazov; head of state security service Madat Guliyev became minister of defence industry and was replaced by Ali Nagiyev, his former deputy chief. Police briefly detained Ali Karimli, leader of opposition Popular Front Party 28 June on charges of trying to undermine public stability.

↓ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** Killing of four soldiers in conflict zone raised tensions between Azerbaijan and Armenia and talks between govts in U.S. yielded no significant progress. Two Azerbaijani and two Armenian soldiers reportedly killed at Line of Contact 30 May-13 June. Both Azerbaijan and Armenia voiced strong concerns about killings and blamed each other for failing to sustain environment conducive for talks. Armenian and Azerbaijani troops 17-20 June conducted drills close to conflict region, prompting concerns on both sides. Both FMs met in Washington 20 June and discussed range of issues including common humanitarian projects; OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs reportedly proposed plans for projects' implementation. Azerbaijani FM 24 June told press that conversations were taking place with Armenia "on substance" along suggestions by OSCE Minsk Group's co-chairs and that draft agreements considered "withdrawal of armies and possible deployment of peacekeepers". Armenia and Azerbaijan 28 June exchanged one detainee from each side with support from International Committee of the Red Cross.

↓ **Georgia** Russian MP's perceived insult to Georgia during 26th General Assembly of the Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy prompted thousands to protest in capital Tbilisi and raised tensions between Georgia and Russia. Russian MP, Sergey Gavrilov, provoked outrage 20 June when, broadcast live on various Georgian TV channels, he addressed Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy held in Georgia's parliament building in Tbilisi from seat of Georgian parliament speaker and spoke in Russian. Group of Georgian opposition MPs rushed to parliament building to demand suspension of session. Protesters same day gathered outside parliament and Russian delegation's hotel prompting Russian delegation to return to Russia; thousands took to streets in Tbilisi demanding resignation of senior officials whom they held responsible for Russian MP's appearance in parliament; that night opposition MPs and supporters stormed parliament leading to clashes with riot police; police forcibly dispersed protesters hospitalising over 240 and arresting about 300. Protests continued till end month and were set to continue in July, with demonstrators calling for resignations of top officials, electoral reform and early elections. Parliamentary speaker and MP who had organised 20 June event resigned 21 June and ruling party agreed to initiate electoral reform. Russian President Putin 21 June temporarily banned passenger flights to Georgia from 8 July and ordered evacuation of Russian citizens from Georgia. Russian FM 24 June blamed West for "engineering" protests. Abkhaz security forces 27 June announced restrictions for crossing into breakaway region in response to Tbilisi protests.

➡ **North Caucasus (Russia)** Ingush leader Ynus-Bek Yevkurov 24 June resigned amid tension over controversial Sept 2018 border delineation deal between

Ingushetia and Chechnya. Security operations against militants continued: police 23 June killed Chechen resident in Grozny after he stabbed one policeman and shot and wounded another, Islamic State (ISIS) claimed responsibility; same day, National Anti-terrorism Committee in Dagestan said security officers killed two suspected ISIS-linked militants in Khasavyurt district. Russian court mid-June granted early release to Oyub Titiyev, director of Chechnya office of human rights organisation Memorial, after nearly 18 months behind bars; Titiyev was sentenced in March to four years in penal colony on drug charges. Dagestan court in Makhachkala 18 June ordered Dagestani reporter to pre-trial detention on accusations of financing terrorism, which he denies. Tensions continued along border between Dagestan and Chechnya after Dagestan residents in Kizlyar 10 June dismantled Chechnya road sign.

Eastern Europe

➡ **Moldova** New coalition govt formed, unblocking three months of deadlock since no party or coalition won absolute majority in Feb legislative elections. Pro-European integration Party of Action and Solidarity (ACUM) and pro-Russian Socialist Party 8 June formed coalition, enabling it to form govt during extraordinary parliamentary session and nominated ACUM leader Maia Sandu to prime minister. Former ruling Democratic Party same day appealed against move to constitutional court, which declared new govt invalid, arguing that deadline to form govt had passed 7 June, 90 days after certification of elections. Court 9 June temporarily suspended President Igor Dodon, Socialist Party leader, reportedly to allow then interim PM Filip to dissolve parliament and issue decree calling for snap election; Dodon and ACUM leader Maia Sandu, however ignored verdict. PM Filip resigned 14 June; VP of his Democratic Party, Vladimir Cebotari, said decision was made to “avoid an escalation that could lead to violence”. Constitutional court next day overturned its earlier decision and recognised new govt led by PM Sandu; all six judges of constitutional court resigned 26 June.

➡ **Ukraine** Fighting continued in Donbas, Ukrainian delegation to Minsk peace process proposed way to break deadlock, and constitutional court removed remaining barriers to snap parliamentary elections in July. At 6 June Trilateral Contact Group meeting in Belarusian capital Minsk, Ukraine envoy proposed both sides’ full withdrawal of forces near civilian checkpoint at Stanytsia Luhanska, lifting of Kyiv’s economic blockade on areas held by Russian-backed separatists, and renewed ceasefire that would prohibit return fire. President Zelensky’s opponents, including former President Poroshenko, characterised proposals as capitulatory; head of far-right National Corps party called subsequent troop deaths “the price of prohibitions on shooting at the enemy”, prompting military command to clarify that troops were still returning fire. Conflict in the East 1-27 June left at least ten Ukrainian Armed Forces and National Guard soldiers and at least fifteen members of Russia-backed separatist groups killed; at least two civilians dead, 22 injured. In victory for head of National Corps party, parliament 6 June approved law granting foreign fighters path to citizenship. Constitutional court 20 June ruled in favour of Zelensky’s May order to disband parliament, paving way for early elections scheduled for 21 July. Dutch prosecutors 19 June announced three Russians and one Ukrainian would be tried for murder of all 298 passengers of flight MH-17, shot down

over Donbas in 2015. Russia 25 June announced it would free Ukrainian sailors captured in Nov 2018 Black Sea attack, provided Ukraine try them for violating Russian law; Ukraine 26 June refused. Ukrainian delegation to Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly 25 June announced it would suspend activities in body after council voted 24 June to reinstate Russia's membership. Drawing condemnation from Kyiv security establishment, opposition leader and family friend of Russian President Putin, Viktor Medvedchuk, 27 June met leaders of self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics.

Western Europe/Mediterranean

➡ **Cyprus** Tensions persisted between Republic of Cyprus and Turkey over hydrocarbon exploration in east Mediterranean. After Ankara 4 June announced it would soon start drilling north east of Cyprus, Turkish President Erdoğan 7 June vowed not to allow Nicosia to proceed with gas exploration without including Turkish Cypriots. Cypriot authorities 14 June confirmed arrest warrants against companies, company executives and crew involved in exploration activities of the Turkish drilling vessel "Fatih" off Cyprus coast, in what Nicosia says is its exclusive economic zone. Erdoğan 16 June threatened to deploy navy if Nicosia attempted to arrest crew, and Turkey 20 June sent second drilling vessel, Yavuz, to east Mediterranean Sea. Nicosia 28 June issued reserve for early-July naval exercises, covering area where Turkish vessel is anchored. French President Macron 14 June reiterated his "solidarity with Cyprus" and called Turkey to "respect its [Cyprus'] sovereignty". At EU Council meeting in Brussels 20 June, European Council endorsed Greek PM Tsipras's invitation to EU Commission and European External Action Service "to submit options for appropriate measures [against Turkey] without delay".

➡ **Northern Ireland (UK)** Amid growing concerns over possible escalation of dissident violence following UK's planned departure from EU, police 1 June reported finding bomb under car belonging to off-duty police officer at a golf club in east Belfast; police defused device without causing casualties or damage; republican dissident group New IRA (Irish Republican Army) 6 June claimed responsibility for the bomb device, pledged to carry out future attacks.

➡ **Turkey** Main opposition party's candidate won re-run of Istanbul mayoral elections, military continued operations against Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) insurgency, and tensions increased with U.S. over Ankara's purchase of Russian missile systems. Opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) candidate Ekrem İmamoğlu won 23 June re-run of Istanbul's mayoral election with 54%; following appeal by ruling party Justice and Development Party (AKP), High Election Board had cancelled results of first vote in March, which opposition won with 48.8%. AKP's candidate Binali Yıldırım and President Erdoğan conceded defeat. Military continued to carry out operations against PKK in south east, along Black Sea in north, and near Iran border in east: insurgents killed fifteen security force members in June and two civilians 10 June. Crackdown continued against members of pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) and activists supporting Kurdish movement. In northern Iraq, Turkish warplanes hit PKK targets in several regions. In north west Syria, Turkey and Russia 12 June announced they had brokered

ceasefire between Syrian govt and opposition forces in Idlib, but fighting continued. Next day Syrian pro-govt forces attacked Turkish observation post, injuring three soldiers; followed by 27 June attack, killing one Turkish soldier (see Syria). President Erdoğan reiterated 4 June that govt would go ahead with purchase of S-400 missile defence systems from Moscow. In response, U.S. 7 June said it would “suspend indefinitely” training of Turkish pilots on F-35 fighter jets and discontinue F-35 material deliveries unless Ankara cancelled deal. Erdoğan met U.S. and Russian presidents during G20 summit in Japan 28-29 June and discussed Turkey’s purchase of Russian S-400s. Court in Istanbul 25 June released from house arrest U.S. Consulate employee being tried on terrorism charges. Authorities 21 May-27 June detained 119, and arrested at least 35 suspected Islamic State (ISIS) members in more than ten different cities, including Mersin, Adana, Kilis, Urfa. Tensions rose between Turkey and Republic of Cyprus over gas exploration off island (see Cyprus).

Central Asia

↓ **Kazakhstan** Interim President Tokayev, who took office in March after former president resigned, won snap presidential elections 9 June amid widespread repression of anti-govt protests. Tokayev named winner with 71% of vote and 12 June took oath of office. UK-based organisation NetBlocks reported several social networks blocked 12 June. Election monitors from Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe same day said “lack of regard for fundamental rights, including detentions of peaceful protesters, and widespread irregularities on election day, showed scant respect for democratic standards”. UN Human Rights Office for Central Asia 12 June called on authorities “to respect freedoms of peaceful assembly, expression and right to political participation”. Interior Minister Turghymbayev 18 June said authorities had released most of almost 4,000 people arrested around poll. Major explosions at ammunition warehouse in Arys, near Shymkent in south 24 June killed two, wounded dozens.

➡ **Kyrgyzstan** Amid ongoing tensions between President Jeenbekov and his predecessor former President Atambayev, authorities continued to take steps undermining Atambayev. State Committee for National Security 3 June arrested Manasbek Arabayev, Atambayev’s former chief of office, on corruption charges. Parliament 20 June voted to strip Atambayev of his immunity amid claims that he abused his power; Atambayev 21 June called move “politically motivated”. At summit of Eurasian regional bloc Shanghai Cooperation Organization in capital Bishkek 14 June, leaders called for greater cooperation among members and reaffirmed intent to ensure security in region. Former prosecutor-general Aida Salyanova detained 3 June over allowing “illegal early release” of crime boss Aziz Batukayev in 2013; Batukayev was released and left for Chechnya after he was diagnosed with leukaemia, but diagnosis was later found to be falsified.

➡ **Tajikistan** President Rahmon and Chinese counterpart Xi 15 June signed eighteen agreements bolstering bilateral ties.