

Europe and Central Asia

Balkans

➔ **Bosnia and Herzegovina** High representative warned of Bosnia's possible break-up, while U.S. and Germany threatened sanctions in bid to forestall separatist moves. In report submitted to UN Security Council on 2 Nov, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina Christian Schmidt warned that Bosnia could face biggest "existential threat of the post-war period" and that "prospect of further division and conflict are very real"; Schmidt 6 Nov warned situation in Bosnia threatened unrest in region and that "there is a risk that the country will break apart". UN Security Council 3 Nov unanimously renewed mandate of 600-strong EU-led peacekeeping force EUFOR to Bosnia and Herzegovina for one year. Hungarian PM Orbán and FM Peter Szijjarto same day met Bosnian Serb leader Milorad Dodik and Republika Srpska PM Radovan Visković to discuss "current situation in Bosnia". Dodik 8 Nov met U.S. Deputy Assistant Sec State Gabriel Escobar, who said parties agreed "there will be no war". German FM Heiko Maas 12 Nov threatened to suspend financial support for Bosnia and said Germany would consider "individual measures against those who question the territorial integrity" of country. Likewise, U.S. Sec State Antony Blinken 16 Nov announced U.S. may impose sanctions for "moves to unilaterally withdraw from state-level institutions or otherwise destabilize" Dayton Peace Agreement; Dodik reacted saying: "We are sticking with our policy" and that Bosnian Serbs "no longer cared" about threats.

➔ **Kosovo** PM Kurti expressed dissatisfaction with ruling Vetëvendosje party's performance in second-round municipal elections. 21 municipalities 14 Nov voted in second round of municipal elections; EU Electoral Observation Mission 16 Nov described elections as "well administered and competitive". Opposition Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) candidate Perparim Rama won in capital Pristina in run-off against Vetëvendosje party; Vetëvendosje won four of 12 municipalities it competed in, which PM Kurti described as "unsatisfactory" results for his party. Serb Srpska Lista party won ten municipalities, most in second round. Following Sept arrest of Kosovo Liberation Army Veterans' Association leaders Hysni Gucati and Nasim Haradinaj for allegedly revealing confidential information about protected witnesses, Haradinaj 8 Nov accused Kosovo Specialist Court, located in Netherlands's capital The Hague and with mandate over crimes commenced or committed in Kosovo in 1998-2000, of bias; court 17 Nov confirmed trial next month for possible offences against administration of justice. Electricity network system operator KOSTT 23 Nov announced end to subsidies for electricity supply to four Serb municipalities; Pristina Basic Court in Oct annulled Energy Regulation Office decision to pay Serb municipalities' bills.

Caucasus

↓ **Armenia** Deadly escalation erupted at international border with Azerbaijan, prompting international diplomatic efforts to facilitate dialogue. At undemarcated Azerbaijani-Armenian border near Sev Lich Lake,

Azerbaijan 10 Nov raised concerns over increased number of Armenian soldiers. Armenian defence ministry 14 Nov reported Azerbaijani forces surrounding two Armenian positions; related videos showed Azerbaijani soldiers expelling Armenian military from area. Azerbaijani forces 16 Nov reportedly began organised advance toward Armenian positions, with videos purportedly showing use of tanks and artillery from inside Azerbaijan for first time since Autumn 2020 war, leading to clashes before Russian defence ministry brokered ceasefire same day; Azerbaijan next day reported seven soldiers killed and ten wounded, and Armenia 19 Nov reported at least six soldiers dead, and over 30 either detained or missing. Armenia 22 Nov accused Azerbaijan's armed forces of opening fire and killing one Armenian soldier in Gegharkunik province; Azerbaijan same day rejected "false" accusation. Separately, in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone, tensions remained high amid security incidents (see Nagorno-Karabakh). Following clashes, European Council President Charles Michel 19 Nov proposed bilateral meeting in Dec between Azerbaijani and Armenian leaders, reportedly confirmed by both sides, and reported agreement on direct communication line between defence ministers. Russian President Putin 26 Nov met with both leaders in Russian city of Sochi to discuss situation one year after ceasefire to 2020 war; Sochi summit finished with no progress on establishment of Russia-mediated commission to define state border and instead Armenia and Azerbaijan declared readiness to see prospects to launch bilateral commission; Putin reported progress on unblocking regional transport/communication links with final agreement reportedly expected by end of 2021. Following resignation of former Defence Minister Arshak Karapetyan following escalation, PM Pashinyan 15 Nov introduced former Deputy Suren Papikyan as replacement.

↓ **Azerbaijan Deadly escalation erupted at international border with Armenia, prompting international diplomatic efforts to facilitate dialogue.** At undemarcated Azerbaijani-Armenian border near Sev Lich Lake, Azerbaijan 10 Nov raised concerns over increased number of Armenian soldiers. Armenian defence ministry 14 Nov reported Azerbaijani forces surrounding two Armenian positions; related videos showed Azerbaijani soldiers expelling Armenian military from area. Azerbaijani forces 16 Nov reportedly began organised advance toward Armenian positions, with videos purportedly showing use of tanks and artillery from inside Azerbaijan for first time since Autumn 2020 war, leading to clashes before Russian defence ministry brokered ceasefire same day; Azerbaijan next day reported seven soldiers killed and ten wounded, and Armenia 19 Nov reported at least six soldiers dead, and over 30 either detained or missing. Armenia 22 Nov accused Azerbaijan's armed forces of opening fire and killing Armenian soldier in Gegharkunik province; Azerbaijan same day rejected "false" accusation. Separately, in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone, tensions remained high (see Nagorno-Karabakh). Following clashes, European Council President Charles Michel 19 Nov proposed bilateral meeting in Dec between Azerbaijani and Armenian leaders, reportedly confirmed by both sides, and reported agreement on direct communication line between defence ministers. Russian President Putin 26 Nov met with both leaders in Russian city of Sochi to discuss situation one year after ceasefire to 2020 war; however, no progress made on establishment of Russia-mediated commission to define state border, Armenia and Azerbaijan instead declared readiness to launch bilateral commission; Putin reported progress on unblocking regional transport links with final deal reportedly expected by end of 2021. Following

recent tensions with Iran, Azerbaijani Deputy PM Sahin Mustafayev 21 Nov travelled to Iranian capital Tehran, announcing joint commission on economic cooperation and agreements on oil, gas and transport; Iranian FM same day declared Iranian companies' availability for Azerbaijani reconstruction in territories regained in 2020 war, while Iranian roads and urban development minister announced creation of "corridor from the Persian Gulf to the Black Sea".

➡ **Nagorno-Karabakh Insecurity continued in conflict zone, while Armenia and Azerbaijan held second FMs meeting since 2020 war and established hotline to prevent flare-ups.** In worrying incident, small group of ethnic Armenian plumbers near Azerbaijani-controlled Shusha were reportedly targeted in shooting, leaving one dead and three wounded 8 Nov; local media attributed shooting to Azerbaijani soldier while Russian peacekeepers next day launched investigation into attack. Local ethnic Armenian resident 13 Nov threw hand grenade at Azerbaijani soldiers at checkpoint near Shusha town; Baku reported three Azerbaijani soldiers lightly injured. Azerbaijan 10 Nov strongly condemned "provocative" visit by Armenian defence minister to Nagorno-Karabakh. On diplomatic front, FMs of Azerbaijan and Armenia 10 Nov met in French capital Paris for second post-Autumn 2020 war meeting under mediation of Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group co-chairs; Armenian foreign ministry same day said FM expressed position to "fully resume the peace process". Following clashes, European Council President Charles Michel 19 Nov proposed bilateral meeting in Dec between Azerbaijani and Armenian leaders, reportedly confirmed by both sides, and reported agreement on direct communication line between defence ministers. Russian President Putin 26 Nov met with both leaders in Russian city of Sochi to discuss situation one year after ceasefire to 2020 war; Sochi summit finished with no progress on establishment of Russia-mediated commission to define state border and instead Armenia and Azerbaijan declared readiness to see prospects to launch bilateral commission; Putin reported progress on unblocking regional transport/communication links with final agreement reportedly expected by end of 2021. On disputed international border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, deadly escalation 16 Nov erupted between armed forces (see Armenia and Azerbaijan).

➡ **Georgia Imprisonment of former President Mikheil Saakashvili continued to fuel political tensions and protests, prompting international concern.** Amid growing concerns over Saakashvili's health, on hunger strike since early Oct, United National Movement (UNM) party 6 Nov organised protests demanding Saakashvili's release in capital Tbilisi; at least 3,000 people reportedly gathered, authorities arrested dozens. Authorities 8 Nov transferred Saakashvili to prison clinic, which he next day claimed was enforced with physical violence; Saakashvili demanded transfer to civilian hospital. Tbilisi City Court 10 Nov began trial against Saakashvili; former president's lawyer same day refused participation citing court ban on Saakashvili's attendance, after which court adjourned trial until 29 Nov. Demonstrators 23 Nov gathered in Tbilisi to express solidarity with Saakashvili. Protesters 29 Nov rallied outside Tbilisi City Court; police used pepper spray to clear crowds and arrested 15 people. Situation prompted international concern. European Court of Human Rights 16 Nov ruled in interim decision that Saakashvili must end hunger strike and ordered authorities to provide "appropriate medical care"; U.S. and EU ambassadors to Georgia 19 Nov called for

authorities to take steps to protect Saakashvili's health. Saakashvili 19 Nov announced end to hunger strike if govt transferred him to civilian hospital; govt 20 Nov agreed to proposed transfer to special hospital. Ten opposition MPs early to mid-Nov started solidarity hunger strike, which 20 Nov ended with former president's transfer to hospital. Meanwhile, de facto Abkhaz authorities 17 Nov appointed former Kremlin adviser Inal Ardzinba new de facto FM.

➔ **Russia (internal) Authorities continued pressure on dissenting political voices and human rights groups, while counter-terrorism operation killed two suspects in North Caucasus.** Harassment of supporters of opposition leader Alexei Navalny persisted. Notably, on 9 Nov, police conducted house searches of several Navalny supporters including in Kemerovo and Bashkiria regions, and detained ex-chief of Navalny Support Group Lilia Chanysheva on charges of establishing an "extremist community"; international NGO Amnesty International 11 Nov dubbed arrest "arbitrary" and "beginning of a new, large-scale crackdown". Meanwhile, also on 9 Nov, authorities interrogated former State Duma candidate Denis Shakin and searched apartment of opposition activist Fyodor Reguzov in Novokuznetsk city in south-western Siberia. As Prosecutor General's Office notified human rights group Memorial that prosecutors had asked to liquidate it due to alleged violation of controversial foreign agents law, Memorial 11 Nov rejected any wrongdoings, said move "politically motivated"; Supreme Court 25 Nov began considering lawsuit, with new hearing planned on 14 Dec. In North Caucasus, amid longstanding dispute over border demarcation between Chechnya and Ingushetia, Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov 26 Nov warned peoples of both republics against confrontation over borders between republics, citing attempts of "a bunch of provocateurs from the neighbouring republic who are trying to drive a wedge between the two brotherly nations, using the issue of borders as a tool". Security forces 26 Nov reported killing two suspected militants during counter-terrorist operation in Karachay-Cherkessia. Southern District Military Court same day sentenced Astrakhan resident Artur Satemirov, accused of joining Islamic State and planning attack on police department in April 2020, to 13 years in strict regime colony.

Eastern Europe

↓ **Belarus Tensions surrounding migrants on Polish-Belarusian border escalated, while govt continued crackdown on opposition and civil society.** Migration dispute with Poland drastically worsened amid dire humanitarian conditions for migrants and refugees. Warsaw 8 Nov estimated 3,000-4,000 migrants seeking to reach its territory from border with Belarus, as Warsaw same day increased border troops to 12,000. Migrants and Polish forces 16 Nov clashed, as former threw stones and Polish authorities used tear gas; Poland same day claimed Belarus provided migrants with stun grenades. Clashes resurged 20-21 Nov as Lukashenko 22 Nov said: "We understand that if we go too far, war is unavoidable". Russia and Belarus 12 Nov held military exercise, including two Russian nuclear-capable bombers. President Lukashenko 12 Nov threatened to cut natural gas supply that transits via Belarus from Russia to EU; however, Russian President Putin 13 Nov reaffirmed respect of transit contracts. In response, EU 15 Nov included Belarusian transport operators in existing sanctions and agreed on

“5th package of sanctions”; U.S. special envoy for Belarus 22 Nov announced “more sanctions pressure is coming soon”. Poland and Lithuania 14 Nov reportedly considered consultations on NATO’s Article 4. German Chancellor Angela Merkel 15 Nov and 17 Nov held conversations with Lukashenko; govt 17 Nov moved migrants to shelters and began deporting hundreds of individuals back to Iraq. Meanwhile, authorities continued repression on dissenting voices. Minsk court 1 Nov reportedly sentenced opposition TV channel Belsat representative to 15 days prison; interior ministry 3 Nov labelled Belsat as “extremist formation”. Gomel City Court 3 Nov sentenced two Vyasna human rights centre members to imprisonment; Vyasna and 17 national and international human rights groups same day accused govt of “cleanup of civil society”. Authorities 10 Nov launched probe against “extremist” opposition group BYPOL, comprising former police officers. Minsk Court 23 Nov outlawed “extremist” Nasha Niva, oldest newspaper in country.

➔ 🌐* **Ukraine Tensions ran high as Russian military build-up along Ukrainian border sparked concerns of potential invasion and renewed armed conflict in east.** Media 12 Nov reported that U.S. had warned EU countries that Moscow was preparing for possible invasion of Ukraine; head of Ukraine’s defence intelligence agency Kyrylo Budanov 21 Nov warned that Moscow was preparing attack “by the end of January or beginning of February”, while Ukrainian Ambassador in Germany Andriy Melnyk 17 Nov said Russia had amassed 146,000 troops near border, in Crimea and in Donbas. Russia’s deputy UN Ambassador Dmitriy Polianskyi 11 Nov said Moscow never planned invasion and will not unless provoked by Ukraine. Meanwhile President Zelenskyy 26 Nov claimed intelligence showed group of Russians and Ukrainians planning coup in Ukraine on 1-2 Dec. Meanwhile in Donbas conflict zone, ceasefire violations reached 4,403 explosions between 1-26 Nov 2021 compared with 3,750 in July 2020 according to data from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Ukrainian army reported six servicemen killed and 13 injured during month; Russia-backed armed groups reported six fighters killed and seven injured; shelling injured civilian in Luhansk region. On diplomatic front, Russia 11 Nov refused to hold ministerial meeting of Normandy Four (Russia, Ukraine, France and Germany) after France and Germany rejected Moscow’s text of joint conclusions it sent on 29 Oct; Russia called armed conflict “internal issue” of Ukraine, urging Kyiv to negotiate “with Donetsk and Luhansk”, halt the language and indigenous people laws, and withdraw draft law outlining the return and reintegration of non-govt controlled territories in Donbas. Paris and Berlin 4 Nov objected to Russian interpretation, citing omission of unfettered access of OSCE in Donbas, and urged Moscow to discuss stopping violence in Donbas and implementation of Paris Summit Conclusions. Turkish President Erdoğan 29 Nov expressed readiness to mediate tensions between Kyiv and Moscow, stressing his country maintains good relations with both sides. Govt and U.S. 10 Nov signed new Charter on Strategic Partnership that expands defence and security cooperation, supports Ukraine’s right to decide its own future “including with respect to Ukraine’s aspirations to join NATO”.

Western Europe/Mediterranean

➔ **Cyprus** UN Sec-Gen appointed new special representative, while tensions over sovereignty rights in disputed maritime zones remained high. Following months of diplomatic bickering, UN Sec-Gen António Guterres 4 Nov announced appointment of former Canadian diplomat Colin Stewart as his new special representative and head of UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). Tensions persisted in disputed waters. Republic of Cyprus 3 Nov hosted multinational search and rescue exercise with participation of Greece, Egypt, France, Israel, Italy, U.S. and UK. Turkish and Turkish Cypriot officials throughout month warned they would send vessels into designated maritime zones if Republic of Cyprus went ahead with drilling activities. After Greek Cypriot govt officials reiterated that oil companies ExxonMobil and Qatar Petroleum would resume drilling in area south west of island (Block 10), Turkish Deputy President Fuat Oktay 15 Nov warned Ankara will not be deterred from continuing drilling for oil and gas in disputed waters. Republic of Cyprus 19 Nov issued navigational advisory announcing “preparation works and drilling operations” by Exxon Mobil-Qatar Petroleum in its claimed exclusive economic zone until 30 Jan 2022. Republic of Cyprus Interior Minister Nicos Nouris 8 Nov described country in “state of emergency” due to “huge wave” of irregular migration coming across buffer zone on island. “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus” Parliamentary Advisory Board reached consensus to hold early general elections on 23 Jan 2022. Greek Cypriot leader Nicos Anastasiades and Turkish Cypriot leader Ersin Tatar 19 Nov announced agreement to introduce 5G mobile coverage across island.

➔ **Eastern Mediterranean** Turkey and Greece held high-level meeting to discuss migration-related issues, while tensions continued in maritime domain. Following series of irregular migration incidents in Oct, Turkish Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu and Greek Migration Minister Notis Mitarakis 2 Nov met in Turkish capital Ankara to discuss migration issues; Soylu reportedly requested Athens to end pushback of migrants in exchange for Turkey accepting more than 1,000 migrants, proposed communication line between Greek and Turkish coastguards, and requested extradition from Greece of Turkish citizens accused of links with Turkish Islamic preacher Fethullah Gülen and his network, which Ankara blames for carrying out 15 July 2016 coup attempt. Turkish FM Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu 4 Nov reiterated that Ankara would not backtrack from its current positions in Eastern Mediterranean. Similarly, President Erdoğan 9 Nov said that Turkey will increase number of drill ships in Mediterranean and Black Sea, adding that “whatever is found will be extracted”. After review of framework for “restrictive measures” in response to Turkey’s “unauthorised drilling activities” in Eastern Mediterranean, European Council 11 Nov adopted decision extending regime for one year until 12 Nov 2022; EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell agreed to Greek-Republic of Cyprus proposal to consider imposition of measures against Turkey at Foreign Affairs Council meeting in Dec.

➔ **Turkey** Military continued operations against Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), while security forces detained over 100 suspected Islamic State (ISIS) members. Military continued air and ground operations against PKK, specifically airstrikes targeting higher-ranking PKK members, in south east

and northern Iraq. Security forces continued operations against ISIS operatives. Police during month detained more than 115 individuals with suspected links to ISIS across country. Notably, police 2 Nov carried out simultaneous raids in 27 locations in Istanbul, Adana, Batman and Şanlıurfa, detaining 18 people. Police same day detained 18 Iraqi nationals in central Anatolian province of Kayseri accused of having joined ISIS in Syria and Iraq before entering Turkey. Leaders of major opposition parties Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu (CHP) and Meral Akşener (IYI) 17 Nov called on President Erdoğan to hold early elections; ruling alliance consisting of Justice and Development Party (AKP) and Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) however insisted on sticking to mid-2023 timeline.

Central Asia

➔ **Kyrgyzstan Security authorities claimed to have foiled coup plot ahead of 28 Nov parliamentary elections.** In lead-up to polls, State National Security Committee 26 Nov announced it had “exposed a criminal group plotting to violently seize power in the country” and arrested 15 suspects, including members of Supreme Council. Following vote, dozens of opposition protesters 29 Nov gathered in capital Bishkek to demand fresh election after four opposition parties previous day accused authorities of “stealing” votes and called for election to be annulled. Earlier, EU foreign policy chief 22 Nov met FMs of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in Tajik capital Dushanbe for 17th EU-Central Asia Ministerial meeting; parties same day issued joint communiqué that reaffirmed support for “strong, ambitious and forward-looking partnership”, noted “importance of progressing on the rule of law, democracy, governance, gender equality and universal human rights”, and cited concerns over “regional repercussions of developments in Afghanistan”. Ahead of meeting, NGO Human Rights Watch 19 Nov reported constitutional reforms in country “contradict international human rights”. Security Council Deputy Chairman Taalatbek Masadykov 24 Nov said country “will not be able to handle the inflow of refugees just like other countries of the Central Asian region”. Authorities said they had detained alleged leader of proscribed Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir in southern Osh region on 4 Nov; authorities 10 Nov announced detention of other leaders and members of group in northern Chui region. Amid reports of energy shortfall, energy ministry 11 Nov confirmed deal to import electricity from Turkmenistan.

➔ **Tajikistan Clashes with police in easternmost Gorno-Badakhshan region turned deadly, while govt participated in 17th EU-Central Asia summit.** Protests 25 Nov erupted in Khorugh city in Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region following police raid in which man sought by police was injured and later died; protesters same day rallied outside regional administration building, leading to clashes with police that left at least one dead and several wounded; protests continued 26-27 Nov before officials and protesters reportedly struck agreement 28 Nov. EU foreign policy chief 22 Nov met FMs of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in Tajik capital Dushanbe for 17th EU-Central Asia Ministerial meeting; parties same day issued joint communiqué that reaffirmed support for “strong, ambitious and forward-looking partnership”, noted “the importance of progressing on the rule of law, democracy, governance, gender equality and universal human rights”, and cited concerns over

“regional repercussions of developments in Afghanistan”. Ahead of meeting, NGO Human Rights Watch 19 Nov raised concern that “authorities harass and imprison government’s critics”. U.S. embassy to Tajikistan 9 Nov confirmed that 191 Afghan evacuees, including 143 pilots, would be relocated to U.S. after fleeing Afghanistan following collapse of Kabul govt in Aug; flight reportedly departed next day.

➔ **Uzbekistan President Mirziyoev was sworn in for second term, while govt participated in 17th EU-Central Asia summit.** Mirziyoev 6 Nov began his second presidential term after taking oath of office following last month’s election. EU foreign policy chief 22 Nov met FMs of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in Tajik capital Dushanbe for 17th EU-Central Asia Ministerial meeting; parties same day issued joint communiqué that reaffirmed support for “strong, ambitious and forward-looking partnership”, noted “the importance of progressing on the rule of law, democracy, governance, gender equality and universal human rights”, and cited concerns over “regional repercussions of developments in Afghanistan”. Ahead of meeting, NGO Human Rights Watch 19 Nov said govt “harassed political opposition figures in the lead up to elections and targeted outspoken and critical bloggers”. State security service 23 Nov announced detention of suspected members of proscribed group Katiba al-Tawhid wal-Jihad in Tashkent region.