



Europe and Central Asia

Balkans

➔ **Bosnia and Herzegovina U.S. sanctioned Bosnian Serb leader's family and patronage network.**

U.S. 20 Oct imposed sanctions on two children of Bosnian Serb leader Milorad Dodik and four companies under their management. Washington accused them of facilitating Dodik's "ongoing corruption" in Bosnia and Herzegovina's (BiH) Republika Srpska (RS) entity, enabling him "to siphon public funds from the RS and enrich himself and his family at the expense of BiH citizens and functional governance in the country".

➔ **Kosovo NATO reinforced peacekeeping force following deadly clashes in northern Kosovo; Serbia and Kosovo leaders met in Brussels amid intense international pressure.**

Tensions ran high in northern Kosovo as NATO bolstered troop presence. NATO reinforced its peacekeeping mission in Kosovo following deadly attack on Kosovar police officers in northern Kosovo late Sept. Notably, UK 1 Oct announced deployment of around 200 soldiers, Romania 3 Oct promised some 100 troops and Germany 6 Oct pledged 155 troops. Meanwhile, U.S. 2 Oct welcomed Serbia's announcement to withdraw some troops from border but emphasised continued concern about "cycle of rising tensions and sporadic violence in northern Kosovo".

EU and U.S. urged Pristina and Belgrade to resume dialogue. Leaders from EU and Western Balkans nations 16 Oct held ninth Berlin Process summit in Albanian capital Tirana, aimed at boosting cooperation and reconciliation to advance EU integration. During summit, European Council President Charles Michel and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz urged Pristina and Belgrade to return to EU-mediated dialogue on normalisation. Serb President Aleksandar Vučić did not attend, instead travelling to China for Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation. PM Kurti and Vučić 26 Oct met on margins of European Council in Belgian capital Brussels, but were unable to reach agreement; France, Italy and Germany 27 Oct called on Kosovo to launch procedure to create Association of Serb-majority Municipalities and on Serbia to "deliver on de facto recognition" of Kosovo.

Caucasus

➔ **Armenia** PM Pashinyan expressed hope for peace deal with Azerbaijan in coming months amid flurry of international diplomacy; Yerevan ratified Rome Statute.

Various international actors stepped up efforts for peace deal with Azerbaijan. Following Azerbaijan's one-day military offensive in Nagorno-Karabakh (see Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)), EU prepared for 5 Oct talks between PM Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in Granada, Spain, moderated by French, German and EU leaders; Baku day before announced Aliyev would not attend, citing French bias toward Armenia and France's refusal to include Türkiye in discussions. Meeting in Belgian capital Brussels slated for late Oct postponed. FMs from Iran, Türkiye and Russia 23 Oct met Armenian and Azerbaijani counterparts in Iran. Participants reiterated respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and "non-interference in internal affairs" after Iranian and Russian FMs criticised Western intervention in region. Speaking from Georgian capital Tbilisi, with Azerbaijani and Georgian PMs in attendance, Pashinyan 26 Oct announced sides were working on deal that could be signed "in coming months".

Fears of new war between Armenia and Azerbaijan persisted. Baku's successful military operation in Nagorno-Karabakh raised fears of another offensive, this time into Armenia's Syunik region, to establish transport corridor linking Azerbaijan with its exclave, Nakhchivan. Azerbaijan's chief negotiator Elchin Amirbayov 16 Oct sought to assuage fears and emphasised that Baku's primary concern was safety of Azerbaijani passengers travelling through corridor. Azerbaijan 23 Oct began military drills with Türkiye, including near border with Armenia and in Nakhchivan. France same day announced sale of weapons to Armenia as Pashinyan signalled plans to reduce reliance on Russia for security. Meanwhile, escalation 3 Oct in Vardenis town bordering Azerbaijan's Kelbajar district left one Armenian soldier dead and two wounded; sides traded blame for incident.

In other important developments. Yerevan 26 Oct adopted decree granting refugee status to over 100,000 people who fled Nagorno-Karabakh. Parliament 3 Oct ratified founding treaty of International Criminal Court, known as Rome Statute.

➔ **Azerbaijan** Armenia's leader expressed hope for peace deal with Azerbaijan in coming months amid flurry of international diplomacy.

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► **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan) President Aliyev visited Nagorno-Karabakh following military offensive in September, Baku unveiled reintegration plan for ethnic Armenians, and speculation mounted about future of Russian peacekeepers.**

Azerbaijani leader raised national flag in empty towns across Nagorno-Karabakh. Following Azerbaijan’s one-day military offensive in Sept that ended Nagorno-Karabakh’s (NK) de facto self-governance, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev 15 Oct visited enclave. He raised Azerbaijani flags in various abandoned towns and delivered speech from main city of Stepanakert, known as Khankendi to Azerbaijanis, proclaiming nation had “fulfilled the decades-long wish of the Azerbaijani people” and announcing appointment of Maj Gen Sardar Safarov as new commandant.

Baku’s integration plans for ethnic Armenians rang hollow amid mass exodus. Baku 2 Oct unveiled plan for integrating NK’s ethnic Armenian population into Azerbaijan, promising to ensure equal rights regardless of ethnicity, religion or language; document also outlined plans for governance, security, taxation and cultural rights, and vowed to protect Armenian cultural and religious sites. Almost all residents had fled enclave by early Oct, however, leaving virtually no one left for Azerbaijan to integrate.

Future of Russian peacekeepers remained uncertain. Mass exodus from NK triggered speculation about future of Russian peacekeepers stationed in enclave. Moscow continued to insist that any decision about their future would be made with Baku and denied any intent to exit prematurely; 11 Oct it clarified that peacekeepers’ activities “will be adapted” given that “conditions under which the Russian peacekeeping contingent was deployed to the region have changed”. Armenian PM Nikol Pashinyan previous day dismissed possibility of Russian redeployment to Armenia amid mounting concern in Yerevan.

Armenia condemned arrest of former NK officials. Armenia 4 Oct condemned Azerbaijan’s late Sept arrests of several former NK leaders; Azerbaijan same day justified actions, saying detainees were accused of serious abuses, including war crimes. Military court in Baku 17 Oct began trial of NK resident Vagif Khachatryan, arrested late July for alleged war crimes.

➡ **Georgia** Ruling party did not secure enough votes to impeach President Zourabichvili; de facto leadership in breakaway Abkhazia announced Russian plans for naval base in region.

Ruling Georgian Dream party's attempt to impeach president failed. Constitutional Court 16 Oct ruled in favour of Georgian Dream's claim that President Zourabichvili violated constitution when she travelled to EU countries late Aug-early Sept, though three of nine judges dissented decision. Georgian Dream 18 Oct initiated impeachment hearings in parliament, but was unable to secure 100 votes needed to remove her from office. Impeachment attempt triggered criticism from European countries, notably France, and threatens Georgia's prospects for candidate status.

Russian plans to build naval base in breakaway Abkhazia drew condemnation. Following 4 Oct meeting between leaders of Russia and breakaway Abkhazia, region's de facto president Aslan Bzhania 5 Oct said Moscow is planning to construct naval base in Ochamchira town along Black Sea coast; announcement came after satellite images 1 Oct showed Moscow had withdrawn bulk of its Black Sea Fleet from Russian-annexed Crimea to safeguard it from Ukrainian attacks (see Ukraine). Tbilisi 5 Oct said move would constitute "flagrant violation of Georgia's sovereignty", which number of Western countries echoed; several civil society activists in Abkhazia warned region risks becoming entangled in Ukraine conflict.

➡ **Russia (Internal)** Antisemitic attacks left dozens injured in North Caucasus, Moscow moved to withdraw from nuclear test ban treaty, and Ukrainian strikes continued.

Antisemitic violence erupted in North Caucasus. Amid worrying escalation in Israel-Palestine (see Israel/Palestine), several hundred residents 28 Oct demonstrated outside hotel in Dagestan Republic's Khasavyurt city following rumours Israeli refugees were staying there; crowd dispersed but notice appeared at hotel saying "entrance is strictly prohibited for foreign citizens of Israel (Jews)". Hundreds 29 Oct stormed airport in Dagestan's Makhachkala city to search for Jewish passengers arriving from Israeli city Tel Aviv, clashing with security forces and leaving over twenty injured; authorities arrested 60 people. In Kabardino-Balkaria Republic, unknown assailants 29 Oct set fire to Jewish cultural centre in capital Nalchik and wrote "death to Jews" on wall. President Putin 30 Oct blamed West and Ukraine for helping stoke unrest.

Moscow moved to reverse nuclear test ban ratification and unveiled new missiles. Putin 5 Oct raised possibility of withdrawing ratification of Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, citing U.S. failure to ratify. Russia's envoy to Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization Mikhail Ulyanov next day confirmed plans, saying it "doesn't mean the intention to resume nuclear tests". State Duma and Federation Council 18, 25 Oct respectively approved bill to withdraw ratification. Meanwhile, Putin 5 Oct announced "successful" test of Burevestnik cruise missile and completion of Sarmat super-heavy intercontinental ballistic missile.

Ukrainian strikes into Russia persisted. Russia faced more Ukrainian attacks, particularly targeting border regions. Notably, military 4 Oct shot down 31 unmanned aerial vehicles in Belgorod, Bryansk and Kursk regions. Belgorod regional governor Vyacheslav Gladkov 12 Oct reported fallen drone killed three civilians in Belgorod city. Ministry of Defence 18 Oct announced air defences had shot down 28

drones over Belgorod, Kursk and Black Sea; Ukrainian media outlets same day claimed at least eighteen drones struck military camp near Khalino airfield in Kursk.

Authorities arrested Alexei Navalny's lawyers. Crackdown on dissent continued. Notably, authorities 13 Oct detained three lawyers representing imprisoned opposition politician Alexei Navalny on charges of participation in “extremist community”; 26 Oct charged Russian-American journalist Alsu Kurmasheva for violating “foreign agents” law.

Eastern Europe

➔ **Belarus** **Clampdown on dissent persisted, Lukashenko applauded Poland for voting out ruling party, and Minsk sought to deepen ties with friendly states.**

Repression of opposition continued. Rechytsa district court 9 Oct sentenced opposition activist Polina Sharendo-Panasyuk to additional year behind bars for disobeying prison authorities during two-year imprisonment. Barysau district court 19 Oct handed one-year sentence to another opposition figure, Zmitser Dashkevich, on same charge. EU 25 Oct expressed alarm at “ever-growing instrumentalisation of the national legislation to shrink Belarus’ civic space and silence any critical voices”.

Lukashenko praised Poles for voting out ruling party amid strained ties. Polish Defence Minister Mariusz Blaszczak 3 Oct announced further troop deployment to Belarus border to repel migrants that he claimed were “sent by [President] Alexander Lukashenko’s regime...to destabilise our country”. Lukashenko 6 Oct proclaimed hope for “reset” of relations if opposition wins 15 Oct Polish elections, 27 Oct congratulated Poland for voting out ruling Law and Justice Party.

Minsk engaged in flurry of diplomatic activity. Minsk hosted number of foreign representatives throughout month. Notably, top legislator Vladimir Andreichenko 16 Oct received Venezuelan FM to discuss collaboration against Western “blackmail, coercion and sanctions”. Lukashenko 17 Oct met with Iranian VP Mohamad Mokhber, 26 Oct met with Hungarian FM Peter Szijjarto. Meanwhile, Lukashenko 29 Oct warned that Ukraine and Russia are locked in stalemate and called for talks to end fighting.

➔ **Moldova** **Chişinău labelled Russia “security threat” for first time.**

President Sandu 11 Oct announced that Moldova’s new national security strategy refers to Russia as threat to its security for first time ever; document, which still needs parliamentary approval, said “Russian Federation and its proxies in the Republic of Moldova represent the most dangerous and persistent source of threat which, if not countered, can have severe effects on the statehood, democracy and prosperity of the country”. Meanwhile, authorities 30 Oct announced access to TASS website and other prominent Russian media outlets would be blocked amid upcoming local elections in Nov. Actions came amid growing concern about Russian destabilisation efforts in Moldova.

➔ **Ukraine** Russia launched new offensive in east and ramped up strikes on civilian targets, while Kyiv targeted Russian-held territory with new U.S. ATACM missiles.

Russia launched offensive in east and intensified attacks on civilian targets. Russian forces 10 Oct launched offensive in east, coalescing around Avdiivka city (Donetsk region); fierce fighting ensued but Russia struggled to breach heavily fortified Ukrainian positions and incurred significant losses. Ukraine 14 Oct reported heavy Russian attacks on well-fortified positions around cities of Lyman (Donetsk) and Kupiansk (Kharkiv), 31 Oct warned Russia had bolstered its forces around Bakhmut (Donetsk). Meanwhile, aid agency International Rescue Committee 6 Oct warned of stepped-up Russian strikes on civilians and civilian infrastructure. Notably, Russian missile 5 Oct killed over 50 people in Groza village (Kharkiv); drones 12 Oct hit Danube port infrastructure; and President Zelenskyy 25 Oct warned of intensifying strikes on energy infrastructure.

Kyiv struck Russian-occupied territory with U.S. surface-to-surface missiles. Arrival of U.S. ATACM missiles bolstered Ukraine's ability to strike deep into Russian-held territory, with Kyiv 17 Oct striking airfields in occupied Zaporizhzhia and Luhansk regions that destroyed equipment and likely killed scores of Russian soldiers. In southern Kherson region, Ukrainian forces stepped up operations across Dnipro River, forcing Russia to divert troops from main prong of Ukraine's counteroffensive in Zaporizhzhia. Meanwhile, satellite images 1 Oct showed Moscow had largely withdrawn its Black Sea fleet from Russian-annexed Crimea base after series of Ukrainian strikes in Sept.

Israel-Gaza war raised concerns about Western backing. Amid dramatic escalation in Israel-Palestine (see Israel/Palestine), concerns rose in Kyiv about implications for Western support to Ukraine. Western leaders promised continued assistance, with U.S. President Joe Biden 19 Oct announcing plans to combine aid for Israel and Ukraine in single legislative package. Malta 28-29 Oct hosted Ukraine peace talks with representatives from over 60 countries, but not Russia. Meanwhile, Slovakia's newly elected PM Robert Fico 26 Oct announced halt to military aid.

In other important developments. According to Razumkov Center survey published 11 Oct, 64 percent of respondents are against holding elections before war's end. New Defence Minister Rustem Umerov 18 Oct unveiled Defence Ministry reforms.

Western Europe/Mediterranean

➔ **Cyprus** Tensions continued to diminish following agreement on disputed road constructed by de facto Turkish Cypriot authorities and intensified diplomatic efforts to appoint UN envoy.

UN brokered deal between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. UN Mission in Cyprus 9 Oct announced "understanding" between sides on road construction by Turkish Cypriots to connect Pile/Pyla village (located in UN buffer zone) to "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" ("TRNC"), which had contributed to upsurge in tensions in Aug that led to violent skirmishes in buffer zone; deal granted Turkish Cypriots permission to continue building road, while both sides confirmed

inviolability of Green Line demarcating boundary between sides. Republic of Cyprus President Nikos Christodoulides 17 Oct said agreement was “important” in restoring status quo in buffer zone, while “TRNC” de facto foreign ministry 18 Oct accused Republic of Cyprus of trying to portray agreement as “own victory” and as step to expand UN Security Council “authority and dominance”; Türkiye 9 Oct welcomed agreement, saying it exemplified “TRNC’s” “constructive attitude”. De facto Turkish Cypriot authorities 23 Oct resumed construction of road as per agreement.

Signs emerged of possible progress toward appointment of UN envoy. After “TRNC” last month refused further talks on UN envoy’s appointment, saying it would not compromise its sovereignty, Republic of Cyprus 16 Oct said it had not reached final decision on appointment, amid reports circulating about potential candidates for role; position has been vacant since 2017 and filling it could symbolise step toward return to formal talks. After meeting with UN Sec Gen António Guterres during Cairo Peace Summit, Republic of Cyprus President Christodoulides 22 Oct said he was more optimistic about prospects of resuming formal talks on Cyprus question; govt next day said appointment of UN Envoy to Cyprus as soon as possible would be important development for resumption of negotiations with Turkish Cypriots. Christodoulides 26 Oct said govt had given its consent for UN envoy appointment; Ankara and “TRNC” had not yet announced their consent.

↓ **Türkiye** **Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) carried out first attack in capital Ankara since 2016, prompting retaliatory Turkish strikes in Syria and Iraq; govt engaged regional actors amid Hamas-Israel war.**

Military increased strikes on PKK-linked militants after Ankara bombing. After PKK militants 1 Oct conducted suicide bombing in front of interior ministry in Ankara and opened fire on guards, injuring two, govt same day began intensification of retaliatory airstrikes against PKK targets in northern Iraq and People’s Protection Units (YPG) targets in northern Syria (see Iraq and Syria). FM Hakan Fidan 4 Oct declared all PKK and YPG infrastructure are now “legitimate targets”, as subsequent Turkish airstrikes targeted facilities and infrastructure belonging to YPG as well as its members, exacerbating poor humanitarian conditions in Syria. Air campaign in northern Syria triggered tensions between Ankara and Washington after U.S. fighter jet 5 Oct shot down Turkish armed drone; President Erdoğan 10 Oct reacted harshly, accusing U.S. of “training and arming all terrorist groups”.

Govt pursued diplomacy amid Hamas-Israel war. Following outbreak of war between Hamas and Israel on 7 Oct (see Israel-Palestine), govt 10 Oct offered to mediate dispute. Fidan 17 Oct confirmed engagement with Hamas’s political wing for hostage release and held diplomatic talks on war with Egypt, Lebanon, Qatar, UAE, and Saudi Arabia. Following 17 Oct Al-Ahli hospital blast in Gaza, Ankara hardened stance: President Erdoğan 25 Oct said they will not tolerate Israel acting like “terrorist organisation”, while Fidan warned of “all-out massacre” amid Israel’s ground offensive. Ankara 30 Oct condemned “in the strongest terms Israel’s attack on the Gaza Turkish-Palestinian Friendship Hospital”.

Bilateral ties with Greece remained on track to improve. Deputy FM Burak Akcapar 16-17 Oct met Greek counterpart Konstantinos Fragogiannis in Greek capital Athens for talks, which included discussions on providing “concrete outcomes” for fifth High-Level Cooperation Council to be headed by Greek PM Kyriakos Mitsotakis and

Erdoğan on 7 Dec. Greece and govt 23 Oct agreed to cooperate against migrant trafficking.

Operations against Islamic State (ISIS) continued. Security forces in Oct detained at least 160 individuals with alleged links to ISIS during Oct.

Central Asia

➡ **Kyrgyzstan Parliament passed “foreign representatives” draft law in first reading amid human rights concerns; Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan made progress on border demarcation.**

Parliament passed contentious “foreign representatives” draft law in first reading. Parliament 17 Oct held first reading of “foreign representatives” draft law amid rising concerns. Notably, UN Special Rapporteurs 13 Oct warned about wide powers draft law grants, such as unscheduled inspections of NGOs, which “could be used against organizations that voice criticism or dissent against the Government”; High Commissioner for Human Rights 13 Oct said bill “would risk violating fundamental rights to freedom of expression and association”; and NGO Human Rights Watch 16 Oct cautioned it “would have a chilling effect on Kyrgyzstan’s vibrant civil society”. Despite warnings, parliament 25 Oct passed draft law in first reading, with just seven voting against legislation and 52 voting in favour.

Bishkek hosted CIS summit with Putin in attendance. Russian President Vladimir Putin 12-13 Oct visited Kyrgyzstan in first trip abroad since International Criminal Court issued his arrest warrant in March 2023 for alleged war crimes in Ukraine. Other leaders of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) – regional intergovernmental organisation comprising former Soviet republics – 13 Oct arrived in capital Bishkek for annual summit, aside from Armenian PM Nikol Pashinyan. According to Russian state news agency, Putin pledged to continue strengthening CIS’ “contacts with friendly states and international organisations”, and claimed Russia’s economic ties with CIS partners were expanding despite Western sanctions.

Bishkek and Dushanbe made progress on border delimitation and demarcation. Heads of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan’s security services 2 Oct reportedly signed protocol in Batken city on demarcation and delimitation of disputed border areas; neither side published details of protocol, but Chairman of Kyrgyzstan’s Committee for National Security Kamchybek Tashiev said it “provides a basis for resolving all border issues”. Kyrgyz and Tajik leaders 13 Oct met for further discussions on sidelines of CIS summit.

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➡ Uzbekistan President Mirziyoyev held talks with China's Xi Jinping.

President Mirziyoyev 17 Oct held talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping during Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Chinese capital Beijing; sides vowed to continue bolstering ties, with notable focus on economic cooperation. Meanwhile, Mirziyoyev 13 Oct attended Commonwealth of Independent States summit in Kyrgyzstan – regional intergovernmental organisation comprising former Soviet republics (see Kyrgyzstan).