



CrisisWatch 2019

September Alerts & August Trends

In August, deadly clashes in **Yemen** between southern separatists and forces aligned with the internationally-recognised government dimmed prospects for ending the war. Suspected Israeli drone strikes on Iran-backed militias in **Iraq** and **Lebanon** ramped up regional tensions. Fighting intensified in **Libya**'s south, north west **Syria**, and **Myanmar**'s northern Shan State, and in **Colombia** senior FARC leaders returned to armed struggle. Security in **El Salvador** improved, but murder rates climbed in **Mexico**. In Asia, tensions rose in the **South China Sea**, clashes erupted in **Indonesia** over the treatment of Papuans, and India's change to **Kashmir**'s status could fuel violence. Presidential polls in **Somalia**'s Jubaland state deepened divisions, intercommunal

attacks rose in eastern **Chad**, and violence in **Cameroon**'s Anglophone west could increase in the coming month. Repression intensified in **Burundi**, authorities cracked down on protesters in **Zimbabwe**, and friction between opposition protesters and **Malawi**'s security forces could rise in September. In Europe, tensions rose between **Georgia** and breakaway region South Ossetia, while in **Kyrgyzstan** political rivalry led to a shoot-out. On a positive note, **Sudan**'s protagonists agreed on structures to rule until elections, **Mozambique**'s warring parties officially ended hostilities, dialogue initiatives reduced violence in **Mali**'s centre, and talks to end the U.S.-Taliban conflict in **Afghanistan** could lead to a framework agreement in the coming weeks.

In **Yemen**, southern separatists aligned with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) seized the city of Aden from the Saudi-backed internationally-recognised government of President Hadi on 10 August. The fighting left at least 40 dead. Violence could escalate in coming weeks as the two factions seek to gain the upper hand. To prevent this rivalry becoming a civil war within a civil war, Saudi Arabia, alongside the UAE and the UN special envoy, should mediate an end to the fighting, including by placing the southern question on the agenda of UN-led talks.

Suspected Israeli drone strikes on Iran-backed militias in **Iraq** and **Lebanon** sparked outrage in both countries and further strained Baghdad's policy of neutrality amid U.S.-Iran

tensions. Fighting intensified in north-western **Syria** as pro-government forces advanced into rebel-held Idlib, targeting the Turkish military. In **Libya**, the war dragged on in and around Tripoli between armed groups aligned with the UN-backed government and those supporting Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA). Hostilities escalated in the south, where clashes between militias aligned with the main rivals left over 100 dead.

In **Colombia**, three former senior FARC rebel commanders, including the group's former chief negotiator, announced their return to armed struggle, becoming the highest ranking guerrillas to have reneged on the 2016 peace deal. **El Salvador** recorded its lowest monthly

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Trends in August



Deteriorated Situations

Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Somalia, Zimbabwe, Indonesia, Kashmir, Myanmar, South China Sea, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Colombia, Mexico, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Syria, Yemen



Improved Situations

Mali, Mozambique, Sudan, El Salvador

Alerts for September



Conflict Risk Alerts

Cameroon, Malawi, Kashmir, Lebanon, Yemen



Resolution Opportunities

Afghanistan

murder rate this century, but **Mexico's** homicide rate continued to soar; 2019 is on course to become its deadliest year on record.

Fighting escalated in **Myanmar's** northern Shan State, as an alliance of ethnic armed groups launched coordinated attacks on strategic targets, including on a military academy, killing about fifteen. Tensions grew in the **South China Sea** as both Vietnam and the Philippines protested Chinese incursions into disputed waters, while a U.S. warship sailed near Chinese-claimed islands, angering Beijing. India revoked **Kashmir's** special constitutional status, deployed tens of thousands of troops, arrested Kashmiri politicians and put the region under lockdown. Its moves raised the risk that violence erupts, both within the region and between India and neighbouring Pakistan in coming months. In **Indonesia's** Papua region, large demonstrations against mistreatment of Papuans resulted in violent clashes with security forces.

Presidential polls in **Somalia's** Jubaland federal state deepened political divisions, as opposition candidates barred from running and the federal government in Mogadishu rejected the incumbent's victory. Communal violence

in eastern **Chad** left about 100 dead and prompted the government to impose a state of emergency. A military court in **Cameroon** handed down life sentences to ten Anglophone separatist leaders, sparking a rise in clashes in the Anglophone regions. Violence could escalate further in September if separatists seek to impose by force a promised lockdown.

As **Zimbabwe's** economic crisis deepened, the security forces cracked down on protests, while the frequency of attacks on opposition members and activists rose. In **Malawi**, protesters continued to push their claim that President Mutharika won re-election through fraud; violence between protesters and security forces could rise in September if the Constitutional Court dismisses the opposition's case to overturn the result. As **Burundi's** 2020 presidential elections approach, the government and ruling party's youth wing stepped up repression of the main opposition party, arresting and assaulting its members, killing one.

Tensions rose markedly between **Georgia** and its breakaway region of South Ossetia as Russian and de facto South Ossetian border guards resumed efforts to build a fence along the line between Georgia and South Ossetia.

In response, Georgia began building police stations in contested areas. Meanwhile, in **Kyrgyzstan**, supporters of former President Atambayev took up arms to resist special forces' attempts to arrest him, killing one.

Conflict resolution efforts took fragile steps forward in several corners of the globe. In **Sudan**, the ruling military council and opposition coalition signed a landmark constitutional declaration and power-sharing accord, beginning a three-year transitional period until elections. **Mozambique's** former armed

opposition group Renamo signed a peace deal with the government, formally ending decades of hostilities. Communal and militant violence fell in **Mali's** centre, thanks in part to a growing number of local dialogue initiatives. Finally, the U.S. and **Afghanistan's** Taliban made progress in talks and could announce a deal in September. But the conflict continued to exact an excruciatingly high toll on civilians.