

ALERT UNIT MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Nº 12, January 2007



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HEADLINES OF THE MONTH

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- **CHAD – CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC – SUDAN:** The serious situation in the region persists while United Nations studies the establishment of an international force in Chad and Central African Republic to slow down the violence coming from Darfur.
- **BOLIVIA:** Serious clashes take place between partisans and detractors of the autonomy in Cochabamba, provoke two deaths and a hundred of injured people, as well as a serious political and institutional crisis.
- **INDIA (ASSAM):** 61 people die in the Indian state of Assam after several simultaneous attacks perpetrated by the opposition armed group ULFA.
- **IRAQ:** United Nations states that the exodus of Iraqis constitutes the main population movement in the Middle East since the creation of Israel in 1948.
- **PAKISTAN – AFGANISTAN:** Pakistan announces its intention to fence the border with Afghanistan and to mine the area.
- **PALESTINE:** The death of Palestinian population by Israeli security forces triples during 2006 with regard to 2005, as stated by Israeli human rights organization *B'Tselem*.
- **SENEGAL (CASAMANCE):** The death of the historical leader of the MFDC raises concerns about the peace process in the region of Casamance, which is suffering new clashes and displacements.
- **UGANDA:** The peace talks between the Government and the LRA celebrated in Jartum continue at a standstill after the withdrawal of the LRA accusing the Sudanese mediation of not being impartial and reclaiming a change and a new place for the meetings.

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- **BANGLADESH:** The caretaker President resigns after violent protests following the announcement of the opposition that it would boycott the elections planned for the 22nd of January.
- **GEORGIA (ABKHAZIA):** Tension increases in the de facto independent region of Abkhazia after the death of three Abkhazian and one Georgian police officers and the exchange of accusations between the Georgian Government and the Abkhazian leaders.
- **GUINEA:** The President, L. Conté, promises to appoint a new Prime Minister after a general strike that provoked the death of 60 people and that threatened to destabilise completely the country.
- **GUINEA-BISSAU:** UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, shows its preoccupation for the increase of tension in the country after the murder of a former Head of the Armed Forces.
- **INDONESIA (SULAWESI):** Tension increases in the Indonesian region of Poso after two police operation in search of Islamic militants cause the death of 18 people.
- **MYANMAR:** UN General Assembly approves a resolution reporting human rights violations in the country.
- **LEBANON:** The incidents between Government partisans and the opposition provoke the death of at least seven people and injure more than 150 during the month of January.
- **SERBIA (KOSOVO):** The UN Special Envoy presents its proposal of limited sovereignty for Kosovo, opening the door for the negotiation period between the two opposed parties, amidst uncertainty in view of their antagonism and the Serbian Government formation process.
- **SOMALIA:** The AU demands troops for the African peace mission in the country while the violence against Ethiopian troops and the Transitional Federal Government in Mogadishu persists.
- **TURKEY:** The army increases its military offensive in the Southeast of the country, while the PKK Kurd armed group leader makes a new appeal to resolve the kurd conflict.
- **TURKMENISTAN:** The regime blockades the participation of the exiled opposition in February elections, while the official candidates promise continuity although with timid reforms.

- **DR CONGO:** The Tutsi dissident general, L. Nkunda, and the Government reach a preliminary peace agreement facilitated by Rwanda with the aim of ending the violence in the East of the country.
- **INDIA – PAKISTAN:** The coalition of pro independence parties in Kashmir, APHC, demands that the armed struggle ends with the aim of reaching a sustainable peace agreement.
- **NEPAL:** The Maoists appoint their MPs for the interim Parliament.
- **RUSSIA-GEORGIA:** The Russian Government announces several measures to normalise its relations with its neighbouring country and to overcome the crisis of the last months.
- **SYRIA – IRAQ:** Iraqi President shows its intention to promote the dialogue between USA and Syria after the interview with the Syrian President within the framework of the reestablishment of diplomatic relations between both countries.
- **SUAN (DARFUR):** The President of Sudan accepts the plan in three phases addressed to reinforce the AMIS with the aim of creating a joint UN-AU force.
- **TIMOR-LESTE:** The Government meets, separately, with the leader of the military that mutinied at the beginning of 2006 and representatives of the pro Indonesian militias with the aim of advancing in the reconciliation of the country.



ISSUE OF THE MONTH

Kosovo: the challenge to glimpse a future

The so reclaimed United Nations proposal for the Kosovo status has not offered magical formulas, but interesting elements with which overcome the last painful chapter of the recent Balkans history. As it was expected, M. Ahtisaari proposes the elements for a limited sovereignty for Kosovo, decentralized and governed by human rights respect, with special attention to the minorities. Without deepening here in the details (municipalities, constitution, army with only small arms, international supervision, UN presence, etc.), the proposal opens the doors to an eventual State in Kosovo, discarding at the same time new partitions or annexations. For the moment this is only a proposal, open to modifications, but it could seem that juxtaposing the debate between sovereignty and territorial integrity on the one hand, and the duty to protect and guarantee the rights of the population on the other, Ahtisaari's draft might emphasize the latter.

But there are quite a lot of difficulties in the resolution of the Kosovo status, and the following months are going to be key to move forward in the construction of an inclusive peace or, on the contrary, to breed the ground for the tensions to start again. The ideal scenario -that of certain agreement between the Governments of Kosovo and Serbia, and that would also facilitate the green light in the UN Security Council- does not seem very probable in view of the antagonism between Belgrade and Pristina. Anyway, the formation of the new Serbian Government will be key, and hence the urgency in its constitution.

In its final decision, the Security Council can also finally impose an option or head Kosovo towards a new limbo with the Russian veto. Even if the imposition to Serbia was seen as a minor problem or even necessary, because of its obstructionism, both scenarios –imposition or new limbo- will fuel frustrations and will generate new tensions. But, at the same time, some other substantive factors have to be taken into account. Kosovo continues being a territory without reconciliation, with its ethnic Albanian majority and its principal minority, Serbian, both separated and keeping alive suspicions and antagonisms. Specially worrying in that scenario is the lack of will by the elites of both populations to build mutual understanding: the Serbian leadership in Kosovo, loyal to the political Serbian elites, has not wanted to get involved in the Kosovo transitional Government –which it does not recognise-, who at the same time has not been able to create effective dialogue bridges. Significantly, the existence of common needs (mainly peace: human rights, democracy, socioeconomic development, stability, etc) has not been yet prioritised as a common base in front of an antagonism at a standstill in the rhetoric of the incompatibilities and the mystic of the borders, dressed with some international distrusts to create secessionist precedents. Taking into account all this, it is vital to glimpse the multiethnic and democratic Kosovo enunciated by Ahtisaari, even if the path for that seems complex and uncertain.



ARTICLES, REPORTS AND PRESS RELEASES

- Líbano, Palestina e Iraq: tres conflictos y una solución. Comunicado de prensa./ Lebanon, Palestine and Iraq: three conflicts and one solution. Press release, 1st February.
- The UAB School of Peace Culture expresses its support to the Basque women group Ahotsak and highlights their achievements. Press Release, 23rd of January.
- Lecciones y elecciones en Aceh. / Lessons and elections in Aceh. Published in AIS, 12th January.

AGENDA

Presidential elections in Turks and Caicos.	9th of February
Presidential elections in Turkmenistan.	11th of February
Local elections in the de facto independent republic of Abkhazia.	11th of February
Legislative elections in Lesotho.	17th of February
Presidential elections in Senegal.	25th of February

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