

PROGRAMME ON CONFLICT AND PEACEBUILDING MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Nº 17, June 2007



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HEADLINES OF THE MONTH

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worsening

- **AFGHANISTAN:** The Secretary General Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict expresses its concern for the increase in the number of minors that are dying in the country as a consequence of the war.
- **DR CONGO (SOUTH KIVU):** Rasta militia, integrated by Rwandese members of the FDLR responsible for the 1994 Rwanda's genocide, perpetrate a massacre in Kaniola, in the East of the country, fact that rises the concern on a new violence escalation.
- **GEORGIA (SOUTH OSSETIA):** Offensive actions between central Government and pro-independence region increase, linked to the recent establishment of a pro-Georgian administration in the conflict area.
- **KENYA:** A police operation against the Mungiki sect in the Mathare slum, in Nairobi, provokes an escalation of the tension and clashes with a death toll of dozens.
- **LEBANON:** The clashes between the army and the Fatah al-Islam militia in a Palestinian refugee camp near Tripoli causes at least 180 deaths.
- **MYANMAR:** The Military Junta prorogues for another year the home detention of the opposition leader and Peace Nobel Prize Aung San Suu Kyi.
- **NIGER:** The Nigerians for Justice Movement claim new attacks against the army in Agadez (North), while several humanitarian organizations state that they will not withdraw in spite of the increasing insecurity in the North of the country.
- **PAKISTAN:** Police arrest hundreds of political opposition members while the demonstrations in favour of the judicial independence and democracy remain active.
- **SRI LANKA:** 100 LTTE members could have died as a consequence of the contra insurgency operations of the Army.
- **TURKEY (KURDISTAN):** The Government keeps taking into consideration the option of attacking the PKK in Northern Iraq and establishes security areas in the southeast, while the armed group renews its ceasefire.

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- **ARMENIA-AZERBAIJAN (NAGORNO-KARABAKH):** The bilateral presidential meeting on the territorial dispute ends without advances, questioning the previous optimism over its resolution.
- **CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC:** The death of a MSF member after an attack of the APRD rebel movement leads to a humanitarian agreement between the insurgency and the NGO present at the North of the country.
- **INDIA – PAKISTAN:** The Government of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir postpones the previously announced reduction of troops because of the increase of violence in the last weeks.
- **KAZAKHSTAN:** The President announces early elections to implement the recent changes to the Constitution, which increase parliamentary power but allow an indefinite re-election of current Head of State.
- **LAO:** Several people are arrested in the USA accused of organising a coup d'état against the Government of Lao in complete connivance with the Hmong armed groups.
- **NIGERIA (NIGER DELTA):** A MEND historical leader is freed after the request by the governors of the Delta Niger states, giving an answer to one of the main demands of the armed group.
- **PALESTINE:** The violence between Fatah and Hamas partisans culminates with the proclamation of a new Government by Mahmud Abbas that excludes Hamas and that has received the support from Israel and the international community.
- **SERBIA (KOSOVO):** The future status of the province keeps being under question following the Russian rejection to the Security Council draft resolutions.

- **THAILAND:** The Government anticipates the elections in view of the protests by dozens of thousands of people demanding the return of democracy and the coming back of the former Prime Minister, deposed by a coup d'état.
- **ZIMBABWE:** The Government begins talks with the opposition party MDC, while hundreds of opposition members keep being detained and attacked by the security forces and pro-governmental militias.
- **BURUNDI:** The Government promises to free war and political prisoners of the FNL, fact that unblocks the peace process.
- **INDIA (ASSAM):** New attempt to relaunch the peace process between the Government and the opposition armed group ULFA.
- **MACEDONIA:** Opposition Albanese party DUI returns to Parliament after more than four months of boycott due to disagreement with the mechanisms for the participation of the Albanese minority.
- **MOROCCO – WESTERN SAHARA:** After a first round of negotiations between delegations of the Morocco Government and the POLISARIO Front, both parts agree to meet again.
- **NEPAL (TERAI):** The Government and the Madhesi minority group MJF begin talks about the province of Terai.
- **PERU:** The Government begins a reparation programme for the victims of the armed conflict between 1980 and 2000, as was recommended by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- **SIERRA LEONE:** The Special Court for Sierra Leone publishes its first verdicts finding three members of the AFRC guilty of 11 of the charges of war crimes that were attributed to them, amid which was the recruitment of children.
- **SUDAN (DARFUR):** The Sudanese Government approves the deployment of the joint UN-AU peace force in Darfur after the hardening of the USA sanctions and a meeting with members of the UN Security Council.
- **YEMEN:** The Government and the Shii rebels from the North of the country reach a ceasefire agreement that intends to put an end to the conflict initiated three years ago.



ISSUE OF THE MONTH

Fatah vs. Hamas: more violence seeds in Palestine.

Last 14th of June the forces of Hamas entered in the Gaza offices of the Palestinian President and leader of Fatah, Mahmud Abbas, and staged the access to power in the Strip. Immediately, Abbas proclaimed a new emergency Government with headquarters in Ramallah (West Bank) that excluded any members of Hamas. The events were the culmination of months of clashes between both organisations in the political arena (threats of calling for anticipated elections; disagreements about the formation of a national unity government and the competition for certain posts in the government, mainly the Home Office that controls the security forces). But also, and mainly, they were the main exponent of months of armed violence with the result of some 600 deaths since May 2006 until June 2007.

The trigger of the confrontation was the unexpected (by both formations) Hamas victory in the January 2006 elections that, for the first time since the creation of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in 1993, ousted the historical formation of Fatah, led by Yasser Arafat until his death in 2004. Nevertheless, the result of the elections meant the evidence of the

Palestinians as a capitulation in front of Israel without any compensation.

Any evaluation on the current situation should take into account certain elements. First of all, the extreme difficulties faced by the population suffering occupation and international isolation should be considered. This is especially relevant in Gaza, where Hamas has strengthened itself and has been historically predominant: despite the Israeli retreat in the summer of 2005, the continuous attacks by the army and the economic strangulation left its 1.5 million inhabitants in an unsustainable situation. Secondly, it must be highlighted the boycott to the new formation coming from three fronts: from Fatah (aiming to regain the control on politics and on security forces); from Israel (seizing hundreds of Hamas' members of parliament); and from outside (through the rejection to any negotiation with their leaders and the offer of conditioned help), including not just the US and the EU but also Arab countries fearing a possible growth of Islamist opposition in their own territory.

The selected help, including military help, from the international community to the PNA controlled by

disagreements that go back further in time and that, given the circumstances, have vertebrated mainly, but not exclusively, around the relationship with Israel. Hamas or 'Islamic Resistance Movement' born during the outbreak of the first intifada in the Gaza refugee camps (1987), constituted as a confessional alternative to the secular nationalism of Fatah and prioritize its welfare character to the most needed population. Hamas soon opposed the peace process boosted in the nineties with the Oslo agreements (with the support of the PLO of Arafat) for implying a partition of the historical Palestine, in such a way that meant a boycott to the first Palestinian elections in 1996 and multiplied the armed attacks against Israel. In those years the forces controlled by Fatah carried out an implacable repression against Hamas that, in fact enjoyed the approval from Israel as it was a throwing weapon against the Arafat 'enemy'. Almost 20 years after its creation, the victory of Hamas in 2006 implied the crystallization of the popular discontent towards Fatah because of its appropriation of the power and the generalised corruption and, most of all, the failure of the peace process, perceived by many

Abbas has inevitably aggravated the Palestinian division. The wave of kidnappings, murders and mutual revenges for which Palestinian actors were responsible, has sowed more seeds for a violence that hardly benefits both sides and even less the whole of Palestinian population. Several Palestinian leaders have pointed for some time to the absurdity of an intra-Palestinian fight taking into account their convergence in just one but essential aim: to achieve the end of the Israeli occupation. A divided Palestine between territories such as Gaza, on one hand, and the West Bank, on the other, is hardly neither viable nor sustainable. Therefore, Palestinian leaders will have to reach an agreement soon, being aware that the isolationist strategy towards Hamas has not achieved positive results until now and risks strengthening the more radical branch of the Islamist formation. In that possible and necessary road of dialogue it will be essential to come up with more coherent positions than those hold until now by international actors as well as by Israel, which can be really badly affected after all by the situation.



ARTICLES, REPORTS AND PRESS RELEASES

- [The armed conflict in Algeria after years of oblivion.](#) Published in El Corresponsal (in Spanish)
- [Somalia, getting ready for peace or at war?](#) Published in La Vanguardia (in Spanish)
- [Turkish Kurdistan: missed opportunities and complications on the way.](#) Published in El Corresponsal (in Spanish)



AGENDA

Legislative Elections in Mali (first round)	1st of July
Legislative Elections in Turkey	22nd of July
Legislative Elections in Cameroon	22nd of July
Legislative Elections in Congo (second round)	22nd of July
Legislative Elections in Malí (second round)	29th of July
Presidential Elections in India	July
Presidential Elections in Kiribati	July
Presidential Elections in Albania	July

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