

*"Discovering International Relations and Contemporary Global Issues"*

# Cultural Relations Policy

## News and Background

# November 2013





## About CRP News & Background

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## Contents

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- 
- 01** Growing Chinese presence divides Africans

---

  - 03** Credibility of UN Human Rights Council undermined

---

  - 05** Albania is continuing the EU process

---

  - 07** Ukraine is getting further from Europe

---

  - 09** Key step forward over Iranian nuclear program

---

  - 12** Growing violence in Iraq

---

  - 14** Kurdish declaration of autonomy

---

  - 16** Armenia and Azerbaijan are working on peace

---

  - 18** Death of Pakistani Taliban leader renews rivalries

---

  - 20** East Turkestan Islamic Movement claims responsibility

---

  - 22** ICC trial of of Kenyan President will not delay

---

  - 24** Islam in Angola – not banned, not recognised

## Growing Chinese presence divides Africans

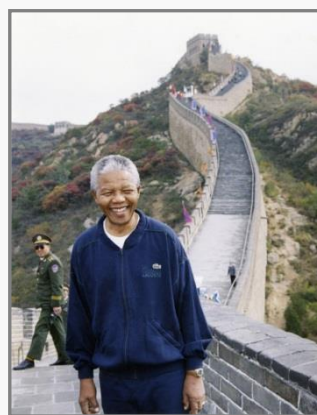
**China's** continuously expanding investments in Africa has left Africans wondering whether the sudden economic boost that the Chinese have fostered by pumping billions of dollars into several countries over the continent would be beneficial for them or not on the long run.

billion people with rising purchasing power and a potential army of low-wage workers. Chinese officials claim that the country's large-scale investments in a continent that the West has long gave up on might very well work out for both the resource-hungry China and the development-hungry Africa.

This year only, for example, China has lent to Tanzania \$10 billion (€7.4 billion) available for the construction of a modern container terminal near the coastal town Bagamoyo, with an additional plan to fund the establishment of a special economic zone in the hinterlands behind the city's seaport. The investors and the heads of the Chinese construction companies, of course, claim that this is a huge step forward for a poor country.



Asia's economic superpower is in the need of natural resources, energy, food and new markets where it can sell its products. China considers Africa as the perfect candidate for all of these things as the continent can offer about 40 percent of global reserves of natural resources, 60 percent of uncultivated agricultural land, about a



Nelson Mandela on the Great Wall of China during a visit to China. Photo: ANC archives



Some Tanzanians though fear that their cultural heritage is being threatened by the Chinese modernization efforts. Similar voices can also be heard in other countries where China has made investments. While a quite big sum of Africans welcome China's money and find the investments beneficial for both sides, a considerable minority claim that the Asian country's Africa-policy is completely opportunistic, even calling it a form of "new colonialism."



*African children waving Chinese flag.  
Photo: The China Africa Project*

### **Gambia breaks off diplomatic relations with Taiwan**

On 14th November, the Gambian president announced that his country had broken off diplomatic ties with Taiwan after 18 years. He said the decision was based on Gambia's "strategic national interest." Taipei was reportedly shocked by the unforeseen Gambian announcement, as Taiwan had proven to be a very supportive ally of the African country, pouring millions of dollars into the health, education, agriculture and infrastructure sectors of resource-poor Gambia over the past two decades. China, using its immense measure of investments in Africa as a tool of pressure and persuasion, has in recent years convinced multiple African countries that had sided with Taiwan in 1949 to switch their support.

### **China vows to support UN anti-piracy efforts off Somalia**

The UN has adopted a renewed resolution for fighting piracy off the coast of Somalia. Liu Jieyi, China's permanent representative to the UN said the resolution has set up an important framework that will prolong the member states' cooperation on the Somalian piracy issue. In the resolution, the UN praised individual countries, including China, Russia, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia and Pakistan for conducting counter-piracy missions in the region.

“Asia’s economic superpower is in the need of natural resources, energy, food and new markets where it can sell its products”



## Credibility of UN Human Rights Council undermined

**14 new members** were elected for a three-year term to the UN Human Rights Council by the General Assembly. The Geneva-based Council has together 47 member states, that have the major responsibility for the worldwide protection of human rights and prevention against human rights abuses through adoption of binding resolutions. It is committed to monitor countries that regularly abuse human rights of their own citizens.



According to human rights groups, some of the newly elected states are countries where the major human rights issues are confronted. Therefore, their election ridicules the work of the organization and the rest of member states that truly attempt to effectively fight against human rights violation.

These problematic states include in particular China, the Russian Federation, Vietnam, Algeria and Saudi Arabia. The mentioned states failed to fulfil their duties to Human Rights Council in the past and still have some unresolved cases regarding human rights violation. Specifically China, Russia and Algeria have repeatedly refused to let the UN experts to investigate the alleged violations. According to Human Rights Watch, some of the requests of the UN for providing necessary information and permission for UN experts to enter contested areas arose already in 2000. "Countries that haven't allowed U.N. experts appointed by the council to visit have a lot of explaining to do. It's like hiring someone, then not allowing them to enter the office," Peggy Hicks, the global advocacy director of one of the human rights organizations claimed.

The Human Rights Watch sharply opposed the result of the UN General Assembly election, considering it the worst possible, as the elected countries not only violate the human rights of their own people, but they even undermine the UN objectives to prevent the abuse of human rights in other states.





The UN Watch executive director Hillel Neuer was especially against the membership of Saudi Arabia. He was disappointed about the indifferent attitude of Western states towards voting results. “Regrettably, so far neither the US nor the EU have said a word about hypocritical candidacies that will undermine the credibility and effectiveness of the UN human rights system. By turning a blind eye as human rights violators easily join and subvert the council, leading democracies will be complicit in the world body’s moral decline.”

He further added that the rest of member states will have to double their work on central issues, but fortunately, desired



*Navanethem Pillay, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights*

outcomes can still be achieved as no countries have a veto in Geneva-based institution.

Other states elected to the Council were the UK, France, Namibia, South Africa, Morocco, Mexico, Macedonia and the Maldives.

### **Jordan to be new member of UN Security Council, after rejection by Saudi Arabia**

Saudi Arabia was elected to be the new member of the UN Security Council representing the Arab world. However, only few hours after election, Saudi authorities unexpectedly declared Saudi Arabia’s rejection of the seat. Saudi justified its step by the argument that the organ constantly fails to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the ongoing civil war in Syria. Jordan is the only candidate to replace Saudi Arabia’s seat which means that the General Assembly will only formally have to approve its election.

“some of the newly elected states are countries where major human rights issues are confronted”



## Albania is continuing the EU process

**Štefan Füle**, European Union Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy visited Tirana on 11 November. It was the first session of the High Level Dialogue that is aiming to set up closer cooperation and to clarify the common priorities of Albania and the EU. It was one of the most important steps of Tirana towards the European integration in the recent years.



Albania is currently recognised by the European Union as a Potential Candidate Country. After years of successful cooperation and talks she applied for membership in April 2009. The country has already done a lot to express her intentions to be a part of the European integration – admitted the Eastern European Countries in 2004 and got a full membership in the NATO in 2009. She is also really engaged in EU institutions and serves as a stability factor in the region of the Balkans – that is often a source of conflicts.

The most current issues in Albania are the rule of law, the fight against corruption and organised crime. All these problems are planned to be solved by close cooperation between Tirana and the EU.

After the first session of talks EU Commissioner Füle noted about the results: "What is European's Commission reaction to more efforts from Albanian side? More engagement on our side. Albania and its citizens should be given clear sense of the road towards the EU and to see concrete results on this road. I expected a good start and good discussion, but it was actually excellent start and excellent discussion with commitment of all those who participated in the meeting."

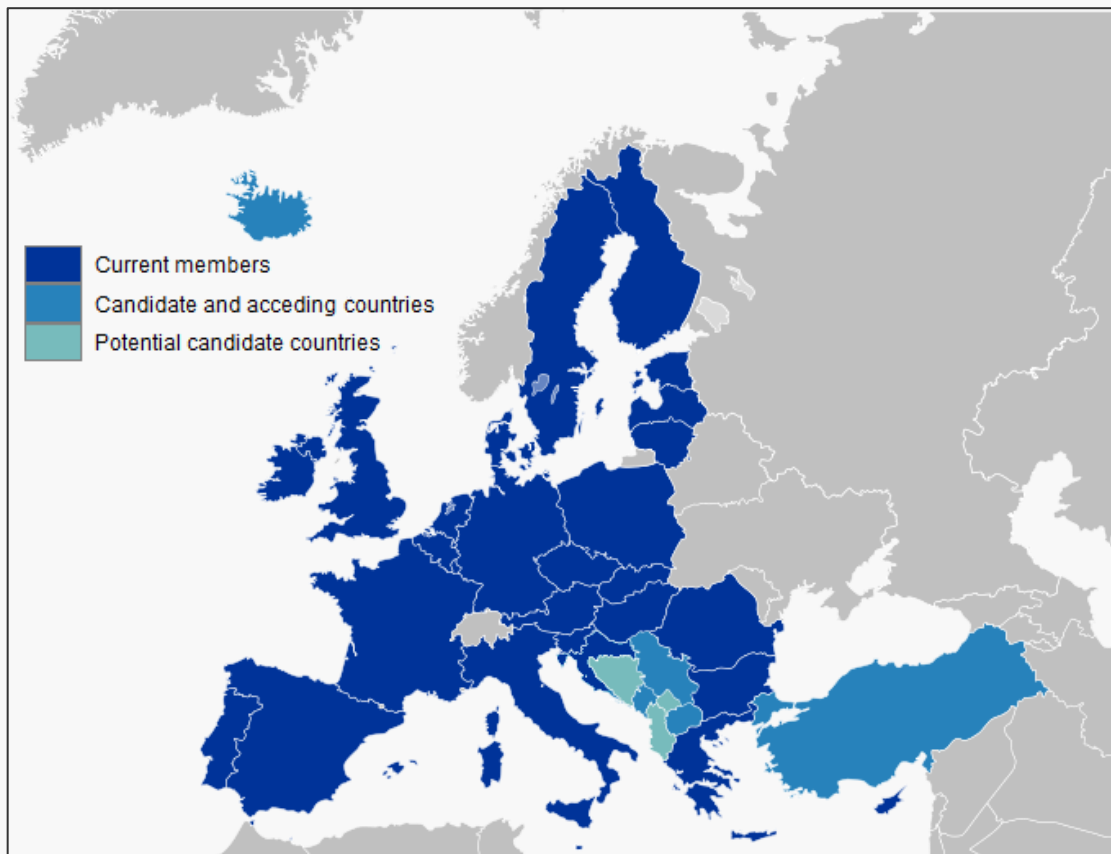




At a joint press conference with Edi Rama they said that they came to some final conclusions during the negotiation. First of all, now they could clarify the most important aim of these meetings: the support of the integration process with transparency and inclusiveness having a vital part in it. To assure the realisation of all these goals, an action plan was accepted that can assure the real cooperation. The Albanian and European civil society will also have a huge role; they will be informed about everything in progress reports.



Stefan Füle.  
Photo: EU Info center[Flickr]



“Albania and its citizens should be given clear sense of the road towards the EU”



## Ukraine is getting further from Europe



*Pro-EU-Demonstration in Kiev. Photo: Evgeny Feldman [Wikimedia Commons]*

**Political tensions** seem to get higher in Ukraine. After years of negotiations and talks Viktor Yanukovich Ukrainian president suspended the cooperation with the European Union by rejecting a landmark association agreement. The important document was due to be signed in Vilnius, Lithuania at the November 28–29 Eastern European Partnership summit.

The decision was indicated by numerous previous events. According to some rumours Yanukovich had several meetings with Vladimir Putin and apart from this Moscow repeatedly warned Kiev about possible economic restrictions if it signs any agreement with the EU.

Now that Ukraine temporarily suspended the negotiations it is unlikely that they will

get the needed financial aid from western organisations – for example from the IMF. Washington has already warned Kiev about these possible outcomes. Association with the EU could have been a sign that they try to be a modern and democratic country that is reliable and predictable enough to get financial aid and credits. This way the suspension of talks means that Ukraine will not get a 610 million euro loan from the EU and approximately 10–15 billion dollars from the IMF. Even though it may make Russia to give a significant financial aid, but this has not been confirmed yet officially.

Despite the rejection Yanukovich noted that he would still like to continue the European integration – but he has not explained in what way. He simply does not consider Ukraine ready economically for the closer EU ties and able to sacrifice the trade with Russia.

Some experts and main part of the media says that Kiev's decision was the result of direct Russian blackmailing to make them join the Moscow-led Customs Union. The same method was used when Armenia was forced by Russia to stop negotiations with the EU in September. In Ukraine's case Moscow denied the fact of blackmailing. It



admitted that there would have been several restrictions towards Ukraine but only because without it high-quality European products would have flooded the Russian market. And at the point of high talks between Kiev and the EU it was very important to clarify the possible consequences.

The national attitudes in Ukraine towards the decision are fundamentally different as the country is basically divided into two political parts. The richer and industrially better developed southern and eastern regions are on Yanukovich's side and favour a tighter Russian than European cooperation- mainly because most of them speak Russian in their everyday lives. But mainly among the younger generation in the central and western parts the number of pro-EU voters is really high.



*A massive pro-EU rally in Kiev on 24th of November, attended by over 100,000.  
Photo: Ivan Bandura [Flickr]*

This difference led to several demonstrations from both sides after the suspension. Even on 21 November more than 1,000 people gathered up immediately on the Independence square in Kiev carrying flags with the slogan "Ukraine is Europe".

On 24 November the Ukrainian capital faced the largest demonstration since the ones during the so-called Orange Revolution in 2004–2005. According to some sources the number of protesters reached nearly 50,000. The demonstrations were followed by strong police response that included even tear gas.

The next day the number went down to 5,000 or 7,000, now intentionally protesting for the release of the politically captured Yulia Tymoshenko former Ukrainian Prime Minister. As it is also a demand from the European Union, the release would be a symbolical step to show that Ukraine is ready to join.

The protesters declared infinite protests until the European integration is achieved. What makes the situation difficult is that Yanukovich will stay in power until 2019 and as some EU officials said without trust the integration process is not likely to continue.

“Yanukovich noted that he would still like to continue the European integration”





## Key step forward over Iranian nuclear program

Despite tense atmosphere, diplomacy wins and Iran and world powers achieve a historical deal

**Iran and six world powers** achieved a significant deal that should block Tehran's nuclear policy for six months and thus provide sufficient time for signing an agreement safeguarding Iran will afterwards not be capable to construct a nuclear weapon. The deal is considered a historical success, as it is the first significant sign of Iran's will to cooperate with international community and slowdown its nuclear program.

After one of the first rounds of discussions between Iran and six world powers, namely the United States, the United Kingdom, the Russian Federation, China, France and Germany – regular meetings with Iranian experts were held in Vienna in order to take detailed decisions about the Iranian nuclear program, particularly referring to its temporary suspension and moderation of Iranian sanctions. The six negotiating powers concluded they want Iran to suspend its nuclear program for the half year in order to gain sufficient time for reaching an adequate permanent agreement that would involve all the aspects of the Iranian nuclear operations, including international monitoring and Iran's uranium enrichment. "What we're looking for is a first phase, a first step, an initial understanding that stops Iran's nuclear program from moving forward and



*Iran concluded negotiations about the country's nuclear capabilities in November 2013.*  
Photo: US Department of State [Flickr]

rolls it back for first time in decades. We're looking for ways to put additional time on the clock," the US official claimed. That would be in exchange for easing Iranian sanctions.

According to US officials, preliminary easing of sanctions would help to go markedly forward with the negotiations with Iran. The US negotiator also mentioned that diplomacy is the preferred way in this case and imposing additional sanctions on Iran would be counterproductive, as it might undermine the efforts of American diplomats to settle best possible conditions for the agreement.

Israel and Persian Gulf states were regularly informed about the development of talks by the chief of the US negotiating team Wendy Sherman. Regarding the recently occurred disagreements between the US and Israel over Iranian nuclear program,



the White House assured that the dispute was rather tactical and was not referring to crucial issues. As the National Security Council spokesperson Bernadette Meehan said, the main aim of the agreement is to increase transparency in Iran's nuclear operations and prevent Iran from constructing an atomic bomb by diplomatic means.



*P5+1 Foreign Ministers and Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif listen as European Union High Representative Catherine Ashton speaks at the United Nations Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, after the group concluded negotiations about Iran's nuclear capabilities on November 24, 2013. Photo: US Department of State [Flickr]*

Subsequently, France was the one that blocked the next round of talks with Iran by refusing an initial accord. The root cause was the French determination about the need for more controls from Iranian side. The global reaction on this controversial political act from the French side was dual, both positive and negative. American conservatives welcomed the French attitude calling the potential agreement bad and disadvantageous. On the other hand, Tehran was angered by the blocking of the accord, calling the act of France as sabotage. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei: "A wise man, particularly a wise politician, should never have the motivation to turn a neutral entity into an enemy." Shortly after these statements, the US emphasized close friendly relations between Washington and Paris. Presidents of both states called Iran to finally assure the international community that its nuclear program has exclusively peaceful intentions. They further expressed their full support for the text of an

agreement and called Iran to accept the proposal initiated by the power states.

However, after Iran and six power states did not achieve wanted positive results during negotiations in Geneva, many senators from both US parties proposed to reinforce sanctions on Iran. The US Secretary of State John Kerry called the US lawmakers, who were determined that tighter sanctions would prevent Iran from constructing a nuclear weapon, not to continue in their efforts to accept new sanctions on Tehran. He stressed that such step would not bring about a desired long-termed solution, but "could trigger a march to war".

President Obama declared that imposing new sanctions on Iranian nuclear policy would probably lead to an open armed conflict between Iran and its opponents. The US president aimed to resume high-level talks with Iran over its nuclear program. However, even these arguments



*U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry takes notes on the back of a piece of paper as Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov speaks with him about policy matters after the P5+1 member nations concluded a nuclear deal with Iran in Geneva, Switzerland, on November 24, 2013. Photo: US Department of State [Flickr]*



were not weighty enough to advert Republican politicians. Republican Senator Mark Kirk argued that “the American people should not be forced to choose between military action and a bad deal that accepts a nuclear Iran.”

Talks between Iran and world powers were resumed at the end of November in Geneva in a tense atmosphere, as one day before the meeting at least 23 people were killed during suicide bomb explosions near the Iranian embassy in Beirut. Iran accused

Israel of the attack that was later claimed by al-Qaeda. Despite the complicated course of negotiations and tense atmosphere among opponent states, Iran and six power states at last succeeded in achieving a historic deal that is believed to build a path for a final agreement. The nuclear deal is considered a victory by both negotiating sides and will likely alter Iranian foreign policy, which has been isolationist for nearly three decades.

### **Netanyahu vehemently against the reached deal with Iran**

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu expressed its great disappointment and condemned the achieved deal with Iran calling it a “historic mistake”. Israel is further convinced the deal will in no case prevent Iran from producing a nuclear weapon; it will actually only slow down a process for some time. “Today the world became a much more dangerous place because the most dangerous regime in the world made a significant step in obtaining the most dangerous weapons in the world.” He also stressed that the accord endangered Israel which has a right to defend itself and is not obliged to follow conditions set out in the deal.

“imposing new sanctions on Iranian nuclear policy would lead to an open armed conflict between Iran and its opponents”





## Growing violence in Iraq

**The security situation** in Iraq has been aggravating as deadly blasts hit the country every day. During October, 979 Iraqi civilians were killed and at least 1,902 injured in terrorism attacks according to the UN. The victims are mostly Shiite Muslims targeted by the Sunnis. The acts of violence have been held in public places such as parking lots, restaurants, shopping areas or worship places, with the aim to target the greatest number of people.



*Car bomb in Iraq in 2005. Photo: SPC Ronald Shaw Jr., U.S. Army*

Sunni terrorism has considerably intensified recently because of the Ashura feast, which is the most significant commemoration ceremony for Shiite Muslims. Roughly two million worshippers gathered in Karbala, which is the place of the Imam Hussein mausoleum. Despite the fact that

the security measures were reinforced with more than 35,000 soldiers and policemen, the armed forces failed to prevent the violence to strike.

The worst of the attacks during Ashura came in a Diyala province north of Baghdad, when a suicide bomber exploded and killed 30 worshippers. Actually, it has already been the third similar attack of that day. Previously, nine people were killed by coordinated blasts in the south of Baghdad and five were wounded in the city of Kirkuk. However, the first wave of violence in November came earlier and has left together seven killed and approximately 50 people wounded. The deadliest aggression has continued in the form of bombings and caused mayhem of dozens across the country.

The bloodshed came into the point, that Iraqi authorities were forced to appeal for international support in fighting insurgency. Shortly after that, France offered help to Iraq in order to solve the crisis by providing weapons, training and intelligence cooperation. The fact is that since the US forces withdrew from Iraq, the country has been struggling to fight against terrorism. Foreign politicians, human rights institutions and analysts claim the Iraqi officials are not



doing enough to tackle the problem, especially regarding to Sunni discontent over Shiite-led government.

Contemporary security crisis is more serious, the closer is Iraqi first general election in four years. Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has recently travelled to Washington in order to accelerate the stream of new weapons systems to Iraq and support the idea of more effective intelligence sharing.

According to experts, militant groups, especially those linked to al-Qaeda, have probably been encouraged by the ongoing conflict in neighbouring Syria, from where the violence partly spread. Not only civilians, but also soldiers have been wounded during attacks, including Kurdish security forces that were watching the Kurdish-majority neighbourhood in the North of Iraq. North of Baghdad, one soldier was killed and three others were wounded in an army patrol that was targeted by insurgents.

One of the deadliest incidents occurred in Diyala province and caused 25 dead and 45 seriously injured civilians. The attack was caused by a minibus with more than 100 kg of bombs, that exploded in Sa'diyah town.



*Nouri al-Maliki, Prime Minister of Iraq*

“What happened in the Sa'diyah is an atrocious crime and a security breach that led to the deaths of dozens of innocent people”, governor of Diyala Omer al-Hemiyari stated after a disaster. The police said that the explosion caused the burn of eight cars, ten shops and several other buildings.

Iraq has been facing the deadliest attacks since 2006–2007, when the sectarian struggle between Sunni and Shiite Muslims reached its peak. As the frequency and brutality of attacks has been continuously rising, there are concerns that the worsening security situation in Iraq may get to the same level as it was years ago.

“the acts of violence have  
been held in public places”



## Kurdish declaration of autonomy divides both local and international actors

**On 11th November**, the Democratic Union Party (PYD) unilaterally declared the autonomy of Syria's lands in the Northeast region of the country that are mostly populated by Kurds, who form no less than 10 percent of the whole country's population. The newly claimed autonomous region was declared to be modelling neighbouring Iraq, where the

PYD is the main Kurdish party in Syrian Kurdistan and its armed units successfully seized control of most Kurdish areas after regime forces decided to withdraw last year. Ever since last summer the People's Protection Units (YPG) has engaged in fierce battles with al-Qaeda-related militants fighting in the Syrian civil war. In July 2013, when the PYD made a similar



*Kurdish areas of Syria, which the PYD has now dubbed Rojava. Map: Institute for the Study of War*

Kurds have had nominal autonomy from Baghdad since 1970. Kurdish parties closer to Turkey or opposed to Iran were unsupportive towards the plan, while Kurdish parties having good relations with Iran and Syria were more positive. The announcement raised international voices as well.

move to declare autonomy and suggested it would draw up a constitution and hold elections within six months, Turkey had rejected the move.

Ankara, in its reaction to the November event, said that Turkey totally opposed and rejected the Kurdish declaration of autonomy. "Such autonomy cannot be



declared unilaterally," said Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu on the Turkish national television. "It's not possible to accept any de facto declaration of an autonomous entity in Syria, and that could only lead to further crisis," he added.



*Salih Muslim Muhammad, leader of PYD. Photo: TrackingTerrorism*

Inside Kurdish circles, the main line of tension is between the PYD, backed by the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), and the Kurdish National Council (KNC), affiliated with the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). The former coalition is accused of working

with the Syrian government aiming to create even larger rifts within the Syrian opposition, while the latter is condemned by the PKK and its affiliates for supposedly supporting Turkey against Kurdish autonomy in Syria. In order to ease the differences between themselves, the Kurdish parties arranged a national congress for 25-27th November, which was, however, indefinitely postponed for the third time as a result of external pressure and internal Kurdish rivalry.

In accordance with the point of view of the KNC-KDP side, the Iran-related Kurdish parties highlighted that the PYD and its Kurdish affiliates should work together with all Kurds and other opposition groups for regime change, and should not exclude any parties from the process. The simple fact that not all of the major Kurdish groups have signed the declaration may in itself very well undermine the durability of the announcement.

### **Syrian chemical weapons are to be destroyed at sea**

The United States volunteered to destroy Syria's arsenal of chemical weapons seized by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons earlier this fall. The OPCW has set 31st December as the deadline for removing and destroying the Syrian toxic substances. After Belgium, Albania and other countries rumoured to be the destination for the chemicals have firmly rejected taking them, the US finally decided to ferry the arsenal out of Syria and destroy it at sea.

### **UN report: Syrian refugees reach 3 million mark**

Since the beginning of the civil war in Syria, over 3 million Syrian nationals have fled their home country in order to seek refuge abroad, the United Nations said on 28th November, adding that there are thousands more who have fled Syria and have gone unregistered. There have been reports that potential host countries, such as Jordan and Lebanon, have begun restricting entry to the estimated 7,000 Syrians fleeing their homeland each day. The UN called for "massive" support to help host countries cope with the growing influx.

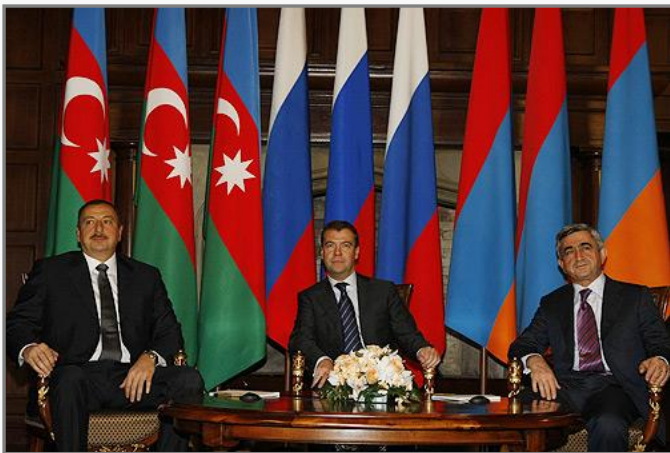




## Armenia and Azerbaijan are working on peace

**The relations** between Armenia and Azerbaijan may come to a turning point in the next few months. Serzh Sargsyan president of Armenia and Ilham Aliyev president of Azerbaijan will continue talks over disputed areas on 19 November in Vienna. This can be a historical meeting as the last negotiations took place in January 2012 in Russia. The mediation role will be played by the OSCE Minsk group that has helped to negotiate a solution for more than a decade.

In the first half of the twentieth century the relation between the two countries were mainly peaceful. There were some smaller clashes but these were kept away from the publicity – as both were part of the former



*Ilham Aliyev and Serzh Sargsyan with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev in 2008.  
Photo: Presidential Press and Information Office [kremlin.ru]*

USSR, such events had to be kept in secret. The turning point was a war between 1988 and 1994 when they fought over the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO). Previously, the Armenians voted to secede and join Armenia that resulted one of the bloodiest war in this region with presence of massacres.



*The two presidents with Dmitry Medvedev in 2009.  
Photo: Presidential Press and Information Office [kremlin.ru]*

In 1994 a cease-fire was signed and both sides accepted to cooperate with the mediation of OSCE Minsk Group. Despite of the tries the relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan remained very tense, there are smaller clashes every year and the political trust still has not returned. This is even more threatening considering the fact that technically the war is still on – as no peace treaty has been reached yet.

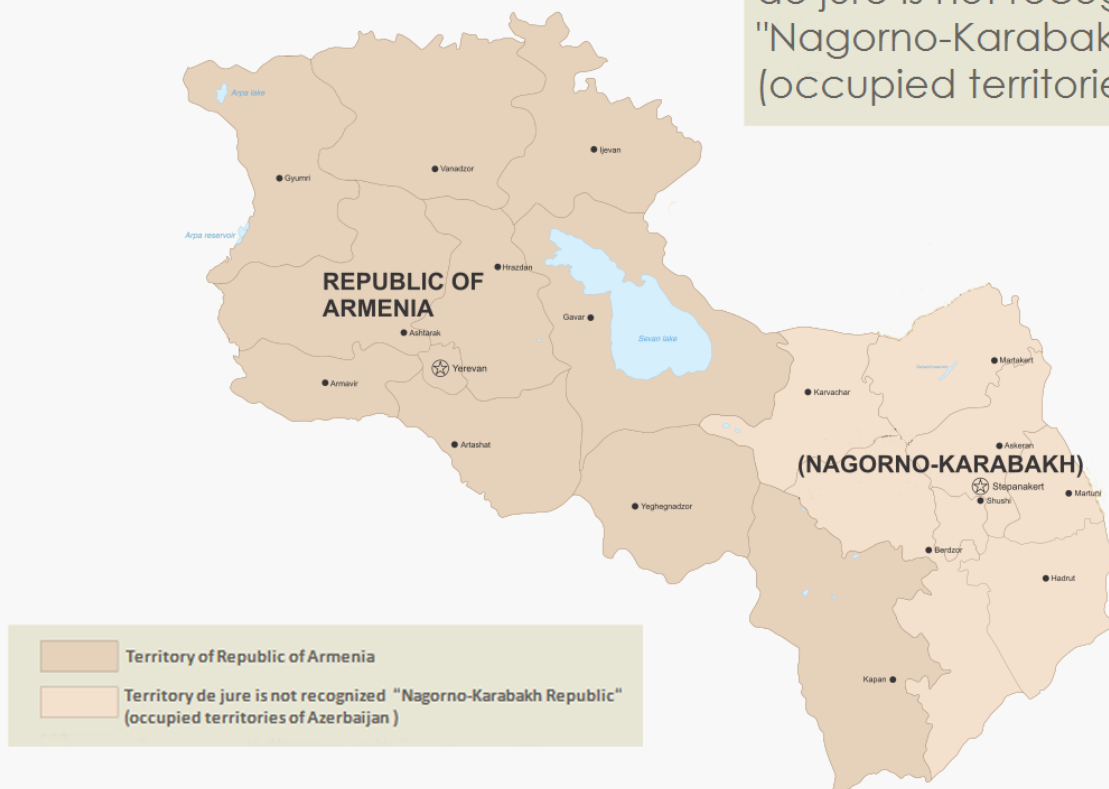


Only in the nineties more than 33,000 people died as a consequence of the war. But even now in “peaceful times” every year there are new victims of this conflict. The solution is getting to be urgent as Azerbaijan threatened to occupy Nagorno-Karabakh if the negotiations are not successful and Armenia indicated that it would react with military forces for the attack. As experts say the international community needs both countries to cooperate and to give up some of their strict and concrete ideas.



The two presidents with Dmitry Medvedev in 2009.  
Photo: Presidential Press and Information Office [kremlin.ru]

Map of Republic of Armenia and de jure is not recognized "Nagorno-Karabakh Republic" (occupied territories of Azerbaijan )



“technically the war is still on – as no Peace treaty has been reached yet”





## Death of Pakistani Taliban leader renews rivalries within the group

**Hakimullah Mehsud**, chief of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan group and one of Pakistan's most wanted militants was killed in a US drone strike on 1st November in the tribal region of North Waziristan. He was reportedly shot in his car on his way home from a meeting. Five members of the group, including Abdullah Bahar Mehsud and Tariq Mehsud, key commanders and close aides of the chief, were also killed during the ambush.



The Pakistani government condemned the US for taking lethal action on their soil without consulting with Pakistani officers prior to the attack. According to the

Pakistani leadership, the US continually violates the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity with these "unauthorized" drone strikes. Foreign Office Spokesman Aizaz Ahmed Chaudhry insisted that the US immediately ended these drone strikes as they highly threaten to ruin the government's efforts towards establishing peace with the TTP.



With the former leader out of the picture, the influential members' battle for the role as new chief begun within the TTP. A week after Hakimullah's death, a tribal council declared a senior commander, Mullah Fazlullah, chief of the Swat Taliban, as the new leader of the Pakistani Taliban. The election of the new chief instantly elevated tense and unnerve within the group as some commanders from a rival clan did not hesitate to express their furiosity about the decision. "When Fazlullah's name was announced, they [...] walked out saying, 'The Taliban's command is doomed'," said one commander who attended the "shura" meeting in South Waziristan on 7<sup>th</sup> November.



Under former leader Hakimullah, the TTP was open to the idea of peace talks with the government, even though no significant negotiations took place. Newly elected chief Fazlullah, however, has ruled out the possibility of talks and declared the start of a new campaign to attack government and security installations in Punjab, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's political base. The one thing that remains to be seen is how serious the new chief's threats are.

### **17 Taliban militants killed during joint Afghan-NATO operations**

Over the duration of merely 24 hours, at least 17 Afghan Taliban militants have reportedly been killed during joint military operations by Afghan and NATO forces in four different provinces of Afghanistan. Forces from the Afghan police, army and intelligence all participated in the operations during which the joint forces also detained 8 further militants. The Afghan interior ministry's statement about the successful military operation also mentioned that Afghan security forces discovered and seized some weapons, ammunition and explosives during the procedure.

### **Pakistan and Somalia are to be given British counterterror aid**

The British government has decided to offer \$7.7 million from the budget to boost counterterrorism efforts in Pakistan and Somalia. British Foreign Secretary William Hague said the government is about to give approximately three quarters of the sum to Pakistani security forces in order to support them in countering the threat of improvised explosive devices, while one quarter of the proposed amount will be sent to the semiautonomous Somali region of Somaliland, aiming to enhance the capabilities of the local police and border authorities.



## East Turkestan Islamic Movement claims responsibility for terrorist attack

**Five people** were killed and other 38 injured in the terrorist attack at the end of October on Tiananmen Square in Beijing. The attack was described by the police as a suicide terrorist attack in which a car with three passengers inside crashed into a crowd of people and started to burn near the portrait of Mao Zedong on the mentioned Square. From five people that died, three were suicide attackers burnt inside the car and the rest two were tourists, one from the Philippines and the other from Guangdong province. The incident was labelled as the “first terrorist attack in Beijing’s recent history.”

Almost one month later, on 24 November, the Turkistan Islamic Party called East Turkestan Islamic Movement claimed responsibility for the suicide assault. Consequently, the Movement warned of more similar terrorist attempts. In order to prevent attackers from committing more assaults, Beijing hotels were warned by the police to be extremely vigilant of suspicious hotel guests. Hotels were also asked to report about all guests who have registered since October 1, as well as provide

available information about their car number plates. Later on, the police was trying to get information about two suspects from China’s Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.



*Uyghurs protest in Washington in 2009. Photo: Malcolm Brown*

Uyghur is a Muslim minority group in China that has its roots in a Xinjiang region famously known to be the location of an ongoing separatist conflict. The Xinjiang region, which is located in the Northwest of China, is believed by its indigenous inhabitants to be a separate part of China called East Turkestan. The region was allegedly invaded in 1949 and since that time has been occupied by the Chinese government. On the other hand, China has conflicting arguments, claiming that the



territory has been a legal part of China since ancient history. Therefore the Xinjiang struggle is based on the separatist effort of the Uyghur Muslims to make the region independent from the Chinese government.

The latest terrorist attack committed by Uyghurs happened in June and was



*Location of Xinjiang province in China*

accompanied by the death of 30 victims. At that time, Meng Jianzhu, the top Chinese security official declared that the East Turkestan Islamic organization was responsible for the crime. The incident was committed in Shanshan County, from which one of the suspects of the October attack comes from, as the investigation showed.

Regarding the reaction of Chinese authorities, public and media, the typical Chinese censorship was reflected in the case. Chinese social media that informed about the attack was apparently checked and incriminating pictures were deleted. The BBC staff that was taking pictures of the attack was detained and the incident was in Chinese State media reported only slightly in brief reports. The White House refused to call the case a terrorist attack and expressed its support to China's investigation.

### **Police arrested a suspect for attacking the Chinese Communist Party**

A 41-year old Feng Zhijun was detained by the police for being suspected of the bomb attack on the Communist Party leaders in northern China. The bombing with fatal consequences happened several days before the Third Plenum of senior Chinese leaders in Beijing at the beginning of November, where the Chinese President Xi Jinping was supposed to speak about his plan referring to the state's economy. The police informed that in the suspect's home it had detected "home-made explosive devices [and] large amounts of criminal evidence". There was one man killed and at least eight people were injured during the attack.

“China claims that Xinjiang has been a legal part of the country since ancient history”



## ICC trial of of Kenyan President will not delay

**Kenyan President** Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy William Ruto were accused of grave crimes against humanity for their roles in an ethnic violence in which approximately 1,100 people were killed and more than 600,000 displaced after controversial elections in 2007. Kenyan authorities that were elected in March have denied accusations.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) trial was supposed to be held at the beginning of November, but was postponed until February 5 at last. The African Union (AU) has called on the ICC to delay the Kenyan representative's trials in order to prevent country to become more fragile to criminals from terrorist groups. The AU states have been convinced that Kenyatta and Ruto were better to stay in the country because their absence would definitely negatively affect their capability to combat terrorism.

The AU concerns have particularly grown after the al-Shabab terrorist attack on a Nairobi exclusive shopping mall Westgate that left behind more than 60 brutally massacred people. The AU proposed to delay disputed cases for a year and its resolution was brought to a vote despite

the high probability that it will not be approved by the UN Security Council. The expectations have been fulfilled since the voters rejected the resolution to delay ICC trials. The resolution required nine positive votes, but only seven of 15 members voted in favour. Rwanda, Togo and Morocco were African states that voted for the deferral of trials.



*Uhuru Kenyatta*

After announcement of the verdict, Rwanda's ambassador Eugene-Richard Gasana said: "His excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta and the deputy president, William Ruto, should be respected, supported, empowered, not distrusted and





undermined in this time. That is why, after this morning's vote, Rwanda expresses its deep disappointment." Eight members of the Security Council abstained advocating their decision by the fact that the ICC trials with Kenyatta and Ruto will not threaten international peace and security which is the rule permitting a trial delay.

The US was among the abstainers, as well. The US diplomat Samantha Power said to the case: "The families of the victims of the 2008 post-election violence in Kenya have already waited more than five years for a judicial weighing of the evidence to commence. We believe that justice for the victims of that violence is critical to the country's long-term peace and security. It is incumbent on us all to support accountability for those responsible for crimes against humanity."

Kenya's ambassador to the UN Macharia Kamau has criticised the US attitude towards ICC trials already previously, calling it "peculiar". On the other side he expressed his belief that the US will not oppose to the resolution at last and will moreover support the deferral of trials. Kamau claimed that the ICC trials indeed are matter of international peace and



*William Ruto, Deputy President of Kenya*

security and voters should be aware of it while taking their final decision.

However, the US ultimate decision did not bring any surprise. On the other hand, one of the resolution's open resolute supporters was China. China's ambassador to the UN Liu Jieyi said: "We fully understand the concerns of the African Union and also the concerns of the Kenyan government."

Regardless of the verdict made by the Security Council regarding Kenya's trials, the ICC also investigates cases in other African states including Sudan, Congo, Libya, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, Ivory Coast and Mali.

“an ethnic violence in which 1,100 people were killed and more than 600,000 displaced”





## Islam in Angola - not banned, not recognised

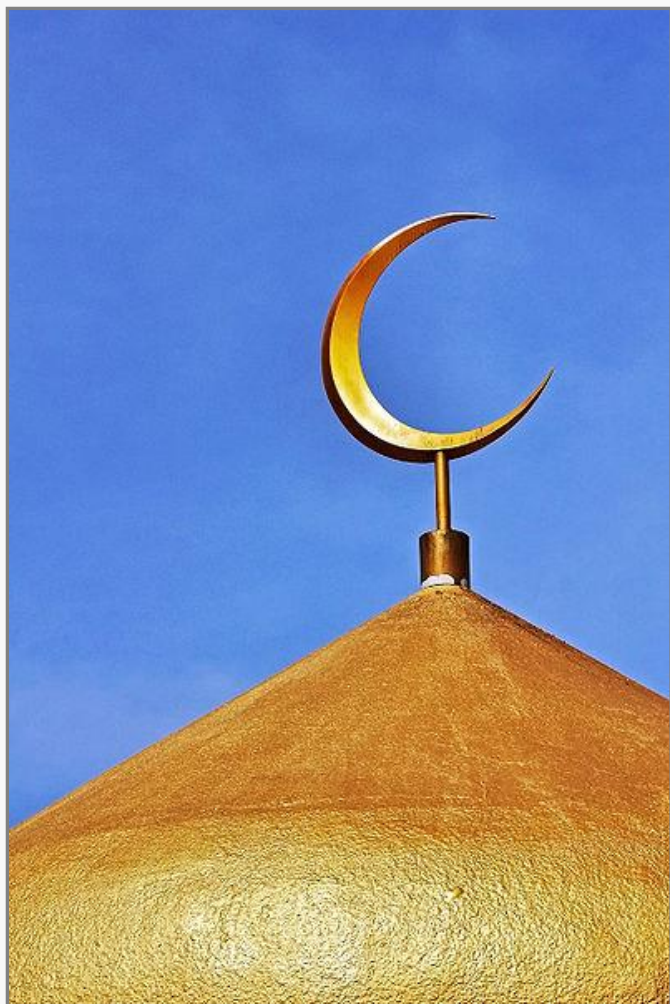
**Angola's government** has come under fire from international media and human rights organisations following reports claiming that it has “banned” Islam. The Islamic Community of Angola (ICA) has complained that all 78 mosques in the country – except for the one in the capital, Luanda – have been closed and several were destroyed. The organisation has also added that Angola's government controls strictly the wearing of veil. As David Já, President of the ICA said: “Most recently, young girls were prohibited from wearing the veil in Catholic schools and, when we went there to confront the nuns, they simply said they could not allow it. Although there is not an explicit written law prohibiting the use of veil in Angola, government has prohibited the practice of the faith and women are afraid to express their faith in that sense.”

Although the government's communication was poor on the issue, officials have refused all accusations, denied any persecutions of Muslims and insisted that the problem has been exaggerated. Manuel Fernando, Director of the National Institute for Religious Affairs – part of the Ministry of Culture – said that there is no war against Islam and “there is no

official position that targets the destruction or closure of places of worship, whichever they are”. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Georges Chikoti has declared that there had been “misunderstandings” about his government's action. The only reason why some mosques have been closed was the fact that they had been functioning practically without legal authorisation. They have been lack of official documents, such as necessary building licenses or land titles. “There are eight Islamic denominations [...] which requested registration, but none fulfilled legal requisites, so they cannot practice their faith until concluding the process”.

Indeed, the problem lies in the state's legal system. Although the current Angolan Constitution – adopted in 2010 – guarantees freedom of religion to all of its citizens, religious organisations are required to apply for legal recognition which allows them to build places of worship and schools. To be so, a religious group needs more than 100,000 members and must be present in 12 of the 18 provinces of the country. Just in October, the Justice Ministry rejected 194 applications, including one from the ICA because there are only an estimated 90,000 Muslims among Angola's





18-million population. Currently, the state recognises 83 religious organisations, however all of them are Christians which means that Islam is not even legally recognised as a religion in the traditionally Christian-majority country. As David Já's criticism says: "We can say that Islam has been banned in Angola. You need 100,000 to be recognised as a religion or officially you cannot pray".

According to the International Religious Freedom Report for 2012 made by the US Department of State, over 2,000 Muslim

groups and organisations are operating without legal status in Angola. Although the government denies that it has a policy to close Muslim facilities, several news were come out from local authorities in the past few years reporting shutting down mosques or preventing their construction. Some of the alleged incidents, without completeness:

- In July 2010, a group set fire to the mosque in Huambo. The attack caused serious damages.
- In November 2011, local authorities with heavily armed men tore down a large tent being used as a mosque in Cacucaco.
- In January 2012, local police officers in Dundo prevented twice to build a mosque.
- In May 2012, the police chained the doors of a commercial building used by local Muslims as a mosque. Muslim leaders wrote repeated letters to the authorities, however they did not receive any feedback.

In response to the recent happenings – apart from the huge media coverage worldwide – Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, Secretary-General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) would send a fact-finding team to Angola in order to prepare a report on the current situation.

A final interesting fact should be noted: Angola is the second largest oil producer in Africa and a member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the oil cartel dominated by Muslim states.



## ■ News in Brief

# Domestic affairs affecting international relations

### **Georgian Parliament elects new Prime Minister**

■ On 20th November, the Parliament of Georgia voted confidence to new Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili with 93 votes to 19. Garibashvili succeeds Bidzina Ivanishvili after the former Prime Minister has voluntarily departed from office after filling the position for only a little bit over a year. Garibashvili, aged merely 31, thus became holder of the most powerful political office in Georgia as the country's recently accepted new constitution shifted power from president to Prime Minister and the government.

Asked about his foreign policy plans, Garibashvili said: "We believe that it is the only right path and Georgia future is only in the EU and NATO aspiration," indicating a firm stand against Russian influence.

### **Hollande warns French citizens of kidnapping**

■ Francois Hollande warned French citizens all around the world to avoid risking their lives in dangerous and war areas. A recent event has aroused the attention of the government when a French priest, Georges Vandenbeusch was kidnapped in Cameroon. Local powers had been threatening him before but he ignored most of these signs. Now all around the world eight French citizens are hostaged, in Syria, Nigeria and the Sahara dessert. Kidnapping is not a rare phenomenon in these areas, only in this year a family of seven was kept in captivity for more than two months.

### **Deadly tribal clashes in Central Darfur resulted in at least 50 casualties**

■ At least 50 people have been killed and dozens more seriously injured during inter-tribal clashes between Misseriya and Salamat people in Central Darfur. The violence stroke in Abuzar camp for displaced that is inhabited by members of both warring tribes. According to relevant resources, 104 shelters and two peace-building activity centres were completely destroyed during bloody fights and approximately 520 people are in need of humanitarian supplies. The tribal clashes between Misseriya and Salamat people have already caused together some 60,000 displaced since January in Central and South Darfur. Many refugees have also fled to neighbouring countries, mainly to Chad and Central African Republic.



### **Controversial Bangladeshi verdict sentences 152 soldiers to death and 157 to life imprisonment in a mass trial**

■ Bangladeshi special court in Dhaka sentenced 152 soldiers to death and other 157, mostly border guards, to life in prison because of a 2009 revolt in which 74 officers were killed by insurgents. On the other side, 271 people involved in mutiny were freed. The 2009 rebellion took only 30 hours but has had grave consequences. 74 soldiers were massacred by extraordinarily cruel means including hanging and burning alive and many of them were tortured. Reportedly 823 soldiers took part in a mutiny which broke out probably due to poor benefits and outrage of soldiers towards Bangladeshi Rifles senior officers. 23 civilians were charged with criminal conspiracy. Bangladeshi officials claimed it is probably the largest court case in the world's history. Human rights organizations protested against this mass trial and criticised Bangladesh that the case has not been in line with international legal standards.

### **New legislature elected in Falkland Islands**

■ An eight-member Legislative Assembly was elected by the residents of the South Atlantic archipelago. Five members are to represent Stanley, the capital of the Falkland Islands, and three members are from the Camp constituency, the rest of the Islands' populated territory. The members of the assembly must quit any other jobs, as their new positions are full-time and they will receive a salary. Two of the main issues that the legislators are to face is Argentina's claim to the British overseas territory, and the islands' developing oil exploration.

### **Justness of a deal on rebel's political participation signed between Colombian government and FARC highly questioned**

■ The ongoing peace talks between the government of Colombia and FARC, which is the country's oldest and largest rebel group, raised conflicting emotions. Top government negotiator Humberto De la Calle advocated mentioned peace discussions claiming that the deal on the base of which FARC will become an official political authority, is inevitable for Colombia. He described it as an effort to "secure the roots of peace [in the country]" and "amplify, modernize, and strengthen [Colombia's] democracy to make it more robust, more participatory, more pluralistic and more transparent." Consequently, the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon congratulated Colombia for significant progress in negotiations with FARC. On the other hand, Oscar Ivan Zuluaga, conservative presidential candidate who called FARC a "terrorist group" considers the agreement as an evidence of a "lack of respect for democracy in Colombia."



## ■ News in Brief

# Bilateral relations

### **Mysteries over Arafat's death**

■ A report of Swiss scientists has confirmed that specimens from late Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat's exhumed body contained levels of radioactive polonium-210 eighteen times higher than normal. According to Professor François Bochud, this finding means that Arafat did not die because of old age or ill health but "by definition it indicates third party involvement". Although it would be hard to prove categorically that the poisoning was the cause of death, Arafat's widow and other Palestinian investigators believes that the former leader was victim of an assassination committed by Israel. Yasser Arafat, who led the Palestine Liberation Organisation for 35 years and became the first president of the Palestinian Authority in 1996, fell ill in October 2004 at his compound in the West Bank. Israel has consistently denied all accusations and involvement in his death.

### **Kerry warns of third Intifada if Israel-Palestine peace talks fail**

■ US Secretary of State John Kerry gave a serious warning to Israel that failure to make peace with the Palestinians could lead to a new, bloody uprising. Kerry, aiming to put the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations back on track was speaking on his seventh trip to Israel and the West Bank. The two past intifadas (the first one lasted from 1987 to 1993, the second one from late 2000 to 2005) demanded the lives of multiple thousands of Israelis and Palestinians. Kerry expressed his firm belief and optimism about a near-future agreement between the two neighbours, although he did not rule out the possibility of first establishing an interim deal.

### **Egypt expelled Turkish ambassador, diplomatic relations between two countries remain cold**

■ Egypt's Foreign Ministry asked the Turkish ambassador to leave Egypt after announcing his expulsion from the country. The expulsion meant degradation of mutual diplomatic relations between two states. Egyptian authorities further claimed they considered Turkish diplomat "persona non grata" and clarified that diplomatic relations will be downgraded to the level of charge d'affaires. On the basis of Egypt's statement, the main reason of the expulsion was the Turkish continuing effort "to turn the international community against Egyptian interests." Turkey responded by the same action, downgrading diplomatic relations with Egypt to the same level. The tensions between Egypt and Turkey peaked in summer when military troops ousted Islamist president Morsi who is backed by the Muslim Brotherhood. Turkish Foreign Ministry has already more times declared its open negative attitude to the military-based leadership of Egypt.





### **Saudi minister plays down policy differences with US**

■ US Secretary of State John Kerry and Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal bin Abdulaziz al-Saud had a joint press conference in Riyadh on 4th November, 2013, during which the latter stated that the Saudi kingdom's recent policy differences with the United States were mostly about tactics rather than about goals, and that such disagreements are a normal element in any two countries' relationship. Prince Al-Faisal said that the Syrian conflict has to be ended as soon and as safe as possible.

### **Despite the security instability in Mali grows, France will not delay withdrawal of its troops**

■ Mali, a former French colony – that has been suffering from instability caused by Islamist groups for almost more than a year – was given support by France in January. France has attempted to tackle the growing security problem in the country by launching air strikes and providing French soldiers in order to drive back al-Qaeda-linked military groups. The situation has improved after France took action against Islamists and Ibrahim Boubacar Keita won a presidential election in August. The violence stroke again when two French journalists have recently been killed in the country. Malian authorities are concerned that military troops will try to destabilise Mali by the growing number of military attacks. Despite this fact, the French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius announced the withdrawal of French troops from Mali without any delay.

### **Peru and France signed defence agreements**

■ After French President François Hollande and his Peruvian counterpart, Ollanta Humala met in October 2013, relations of the two states seem to further deepen. In the framework of this partnership, two cooperation and defence agreements were signed by the countries' defence ministers – Pedro Cateriano Bellido and Jean-Yves Le Drian – during a ceremony held in the headquarters of the Peruvian Army. As a result, Peru agreed to conduct joint military operations with France which – in exchange – will support Peru in combating illegal gold mining. Peru also purchased a satellite and four helicopters from the European country, in order to fight against organised crime in Lima.



*Defence ministers of Peru and France sign agreements. Photo: Ministerio de Defensa*





### China, South Korea agree to intensify bilateral relationship

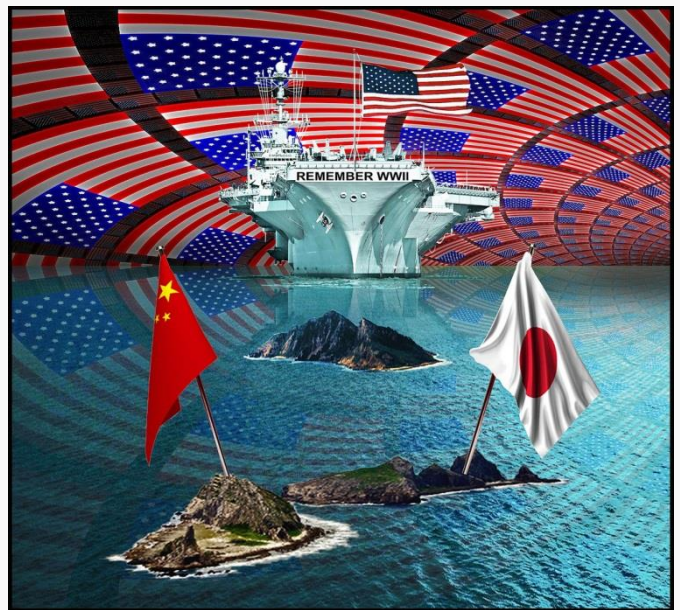
■ China and South Korea have reportedly entered a new dimension in their bilateral relations, after officials from the two countries met and discussed issues such as North Korea policies and a soon-to-be-established free trade agreement. South Korean President Park Geun-hye said that in order to extend the cooperation between the countries of Northeast Asia, North Korea must show sincerity in denuclearizing, willingness to reunite families separated by the Korean War back in the 1950's, and improvement in communications and transportation at the joint Kaesong Industrial Complex. The two countries have also expressed optimism about a possible resumption of the six-party talks among China, Japan, Russia, the US and the Koreans in the near future.



*Kaesong downtown. Photo: Nicor [Wikimedia Commons]*

### US slams China's Diaoyu air defence identification zone as "destabilising"

■ The USA expressed its deep concern towards China over the Chinese rhetoric and policy regarding the territorial debate over certain parts of the East China Sea. The United States opposed China's unilateral decision about setting up the air defence identification zone, which, according to Chinese officials, would guard against "potential air threats" over the sea. The White House said the "escalatory development" increased regional tensions and affected the interests of the US and its allies which have continuously stressed the need for the free flow of commerce, a reduction in tensions, and peace and stability in the region.



*Photo: Todd Benson [Flickr]*



## ■ News in Brief

# International relations

### **Russia calls on UN to take control of yellowcake uranium in Libya**

■ The UN Security Council was asked by Russian UN envoy Vitaly Churkin to deal with the badly-guarded stockpile of yellowcake uranium in the Libyan Desert. Al-Qaeda is allegedly interested in Libya's estimated 6,400 barrels of yellowcake uranium, which could serve as a potential component of nuclear weapons. According to Churkin, a special inter-ministerial committee was set up in Tripoli to deal with the matter.

### **Greek authorities capture ship with 20,000 Kalashnikovs on board**

■ A Sierra Leone-flagged cargo ship carrying a huge arsenal of Kalashnikov assault rifles was intercepted by the Greek coastal guard on 10th November. The Turkish captain and the seven-member crew of ship Nour M were arrested as it turned out that the cargo was way larger than the ship's manifest suggested and that the Nour M did not have the UN's authorization to deliver cargo to a conflict zone. While the ship's original destination remains unclear, sources told the media that it had set sail from Ukraine. The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry stated it was trying to determine whether the Nour M had in fact departed from their country.

### **EU to grant asylum to prosecuted homosexuals**

■ On 7th November, the European Union's high court in Luxembourg ruled that refugees who face prosecution in their home countries because of homosexual acts have the right to ask for asylum in any country of the EU.

The case was taken to the European Court of Justice by three African gay men who had previously unsuccessfully asked for refugee status in The Netherlands. The ECJ overturned the Dutch decision, stating that gays and lesbians represent "social groups" in accordance with the Geneva Convention on refugees' rights. The Court added that the violation of the homosexual asylum-seekers' fundamental rights "must be sufficiently serious" in order to be accepted as refugees in the EU.

According to Amnesty International, homosexuality is banned in the laws of 38 countries, in which gays and lesbians are heavily persecuted.



### **Germany can be a new prospect for Snowden**

■ German lawmaker Hans-Christian Ströbele had a three-hour long discussion with ex-CIA officer Edward Snowden in Moscow. He is the first politician that met Snowden during his temporary asylum in Russia. He wants to take him later to Germany for a more detailed investigation and even Snowden expressed his willingness to accept the offer. There are several doubts all around Germany whether it is a good idea or not, as it is an opened resistance against Washington's will. The other aspect is that Edward Snowden's asylum lasts for only one year in Russia and then maybe Germany would be the final destination to live.

### **500,000 refugees can be left without enough food in Kenya**

■ Due to the lack of funds the United Nations reduced the food rations in Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps for November and December. The two camps – located in Northern Kenya – have been giving shelter for mainly Somali refugees for more than 20 years. According to the recommendations of WHO, every person should have approximately 2,100 calories per day, but with the current restrictions it has been reduced to 1,680. The UN highly counts on the support of donors worldwide and is waiting for the donations to avoid further reductions in January. Monthly more than 10 million dollars would be needed to sustain the original programme.



*An outdoor school at the Dadaab Somali refugee camp in Kenya. Photo: whitehouse.gov*





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