

September 2014

INTERNATIONAL

Balkan war crimes

Sept. 29—In closing arguments in The Hague before the UN International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, prosecutors call for a life sentence for former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic. He faces 11 charges, including genocide, for his involvement in the 1992–95 Bosnian War, which left more than 100,000 dead. Karadzic is accused of responsibility for war crimes such as the siege of Sarajevo and the 1995 execution of more than 7,000 Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica.

Ebola epidemic

Sept. 16—US President Barack Obama announces that he will send 3,000 troops to Liberia and Senegal to build field hospitals to help cope with a West African outbreak of the Ebola virus. He urges other nations to send more aid.

Sept. 26—The World Health Organization reports that the total number of probable, suspected, and confirmed cases in the West African epidemic has risen to 6,574, with a death toll of at least 3,091. Liberia is the worst-hit country, with 1,830 deaths to date, about 3 times as many as in Guinea and Sierra Leone. The epidemic had also spread to Nigeria and Senegal, but neither country is currently reporting new cases.

Sept. 30—US health officials report the 1st case of Ebola to reach the US during the epidemic—a man who developed symptoms after traveling to Dallas, Texas, from Liberia.

AFGHANISTAN

Sept. 29—Former Finance Minister Ashraf Ghani is sworn in as president, replacing Hamid Karzai. His opponent in the June runoff election, former Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah, is sworn in as chief executive officer, in accordance with a national unity agreement signed Sept. 21. Abdullah's allegations that the election was rigged in Ghani's favor prompted a UN-supervised audit and recount.

Sept. 30—Ghani oversees the signing of a bilateral security agreement with the US, permitting up to 9,800 American troops to remain in the country. Karzai had refused to sign the pact, blaming US forces for numerous civilian casualties.

CHINA

Sept. 23—Ilham Tohti, a prominent advocate for the Uighur ethnic minority group, is sentenced to life in prison for allegedly inciting separatism in western Xinjiang province.

Sept. 28—After a week of large-scale student protests in Hong Kong, police use tear gas, pepper spray, and batons in an attempt to disperse demonstrators outside the government headquarters. The protests are against new electoral rules that would effectively require candidates for the top political position in Hong Kong, the chief executive, to be approved by a committee loyal to China's central government. The protesters call the new rules a betrayal of a Chinese promise to grant free elections to the semi-autonomous territory starting in 2017.

Sept. 29—In response to the use of force by police, 10s of 1000s of citizens join the protests, occupying downtown locations and demanding the resignation of Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying.

INDIA

Sept. 18—At a summit in New Delhi, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping sign agreements for China to invest \$20 billion over the next 5 years in Indian infrastructure projects and to expand cooperation in other areas

including trade and nuclear energy. However, Modi warns that improving relations will depend on resolving ongoing border disputes; 100s of Chinese troops have allegedly made an incursion over the past week into the Ladakh region of Kashmir, leading to a standoff with Indian forces.

Sept. 26—India and China agree to end the border confrontation and withdraw their forces to previous positions.

LIBYA

Sept. 1—A coalition of militias seizes control of Tripoli, the capital. The recently elected parliament has fled to the eastern city of Tobruk.

MEXICO

Sept. 23—The National Human Rights Commission opens an investigation into the deaths of 22 civilians killed by soldiers on June 30 in the rural southern town of San Pedro Limón. Soldiers claimed that they opened fire after being attacked by suspected gang members, but a witness claims that most of the dead were executed by the soldiers after surrendering. Several human rights groups earlier in September filed complaints with the International Criminal Court alleging "systematic and widespread" abuse and corruption on the part of the army and the police.

Sept. 30—Attorney General Jesús Murillo Karam says 3 soldiers have been charged with homicide in the San Pedro Limón killings.

NIGERIA

Sept. 2—The jihadist group Boko Haram captures the town of Bama in the northern state of Borno, raising concerns that the group is positioned to attack the state capital of Maiduguri after seizing a number of other towns surrounding the city.

PAKISTAN

Sept. 1—Protesters in Islamabad calling for the resignation of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif storm the headquarters of the state-run television network in a 3rd day of violent clashes with police. The protesters, led by the politician Imran Khan and the cleric Muhammad Tahir-ul Qadri, claim that the 2013 elections that returned Sharif to power were rigged. Parliament Sept. 2 holds an emergency session and several opposition parties say they support Sharif in order to defend democracy against the perceived threat of a military coup provoked by the protests.

RUSSIA

Sept. 12—Both the US and the EU tighten economic sanctions in response to Russia's continuing support for a separatist insurgency in Ukraine. The new sanctions hit Russia's banking, defense, and energy industries, restricting their access to Western capital markets.

SOMALIA

Sept. 6—The militant Islamist group Al Shabab confirms that its leader, Ahmed Abdi Godane, was killed Sept. 1 by a US airstrike.

SPAIN

Sept. 27—Catalonia's regional president Artur Mas signs a decree to hold a referendum on Nov. 9 to determine whether the region should declare independence from Spain. Catalonia has been an autonomously governed region and recognized nationality under the Spanish constitution since 1978.

Sept. 29—Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy says the constitution does not allow Catalonia to hold a referendum on secession. Spain's Constitutional Court that day issues an order suspending

Mas's decree until it delivers a definitive ruling on the matter. Catalan officials Sept. 30 halt their preparations for the referendum.

SWEDEN

Sept. 14—The Social Democrats win parliamentary elections, ending the center right's 8 years in power. The far-right, anti-immigration Swedish Democrats take nearly 13% of the vote, doubling their previous share.

SYRIA

Sept. 2—The jihadist group Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) releases a video of its beheading of Steven Sotloff, an American journalist kidnapped near Aleppo in August 2013. He is the 2nd American journalist executed by the group in 2 weeks. ISIS Sept. 14 puts out a new video showing its execution of British aid worker David Cameron Haines, whom it captured in March 2013. Sept. 10—US President Barack Obama orders airstrikes against ISIS in Syria, and calls for Congress to authorize increased efforts to train and equip moderate rebels fighting against the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to combat ISIS. However, Obama rules out sending US ground forces to Syria. In August, he had ordered an air campaign against ISIS in Iraq. Sept. 22—A US-led coalition—including Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain—launches its 1st airstrikes in Syria against ISIS and an al-Qaeda affiliate, the Khurasan Group, which Obama says was plotting terrorist attacks against Western countries. Strikes over the next week hit oil installations controlled by ISIS, which provide much of its black-market revenue.

TURKEY

Sept. 20—ISIS releases 46 Turkish and 3 Iraqi hostages it held for over 3 months. The hostages had been seized in June from the

Turkish consulate in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul. Among them were the consul general and a number of diplomats, as well as several children. Turkish officials do not reveal whether they agreed to pay a ransom or trade prisoners in exchange for the release.

Sept. 22—As ISIS advances on the town of Kobani near the Turkish border, more than 130,000 Kurdish refugees flee into Turkey, bringing the number of Syrian refugees in Turkey close to 1.6 million.

UKRAINE

Sept. 5—Following days of peace talks in Minsk, Belarus, led by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Ukraine, Russia, and pro-Russian separatists agree to a cease-fire after 5 months of conflict that recently saw direct military intervention in Ukraine by Russian forces.

Sept. 29—Renewed fighting breaks out around the rebel-held Donetsk airport, leaving 9 dead.

UNITED KINGDOM

Sept. 18—In a referendum, Scottish voters reject a proposal to become an independent nation. Despite a late surge in the polls by the pro-independence campaign, 55.3% vote to remain part of Britain. In the run-up to the vote, leaders of the major British parties jointly pledged to grant Scotland more autonomy if it rejected independence.

YEMEN

Sept. 21—Shia rebels from the north known as the Houthis seize control of Sanaa, the capital, following days of clashes with government troops that broke out after weeks of protests. President Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi announces that the rebels have agreed to a UN-brokered cease-fire and the installation of a new government. ■

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