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In This Issue:

**SITUATION REPORTS**

**BURUNDI: Leadership Accused of Crimes Against Humanity**

**GREAT BRITAIN: Planning to Reduce Migrant Workforce**

**IRAQ: Islamic State Attacks Power Plant**

**RUSSIA: Chechens Rally Around Embattled Rohingya**

**BRIEFS**

**CHINA: Implements Highly Secure Quantum Communication**

**COLOMBIA: FARC Continues Transition to Politics**

**IRAN: Still Compliant with Nuclear Deal**

**ITALY: Mafia Boss Fugitive Arrested in Uruguay**

**KENYA: Date Set for Presidential Election Re-Run**

**RUSSIA: Military Exercises in Belarus**

**SYRIA: Government Forces Break Siege of Deir Az Zor**

## SITUATION REPORTS

### BURUNDI: Leadership Accused of Crimes Against Humanity

On 4 September, the UN Commission of Inquiry accused Burundi officials, including President Pierre Nkurunziza and the National Intelligence Service, of committing crimes against humanity beginning in April 2015. The UN investigated the crimes, which include executions, torture, and rape, by interviewing over 500 witnesses and victims. Officials committed these crimes in response to political opposition protests following President Nkurunziza's decision to run for a third term.

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### GREAT BRITAIN: Planning to Reduce Migrant Workforce

Documents obtained by *The Guardian* on 5 September reveal Britain's Home Office's plans to cut the number of low-skilled EU citizens working in the UK. The plans include reducing the number of low-skilled migrant workers, granting shorter term work permits, and requiring EU nationals to show a passport when entering Great Britain. The documents were met with mixed reactions, with the right-wing UKIP praising the proposals while the Labour Party called the proposals confusing.

[Zach Coffee]

### IRAQ: Islamic State Attacks Power Plant

Three Islamic State operatives disguised as soldiers attacked a power plant in Samarra, a town about 62 miles north of Baghdad, on 2 September. Police killed two of the three attackers while the third detonated a suicide belt. The attack killed seven and wounded 13 others.

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### RUSSIA: Chechens Rally Around Embattled Rohingya

Local authorities estimate 1.1 million people gathered in Grozny, the Chechen capital, on 4 September to show solidarity with Rohingya Muslims, a persecuted minority group in Myanmar. Ramzan Kadyrov, head of the Chechen Republic, previously stated in a video that he would "go against Russia" should the Russian government support Myanmar's military. Demonstrations have also occurred outside the Myanmar embassy in Moscow, where authorities detained 20 persons identified as being from the northern Caucasus region. Later in the day on 4 September, Russian President Vladimir Putin condemned Myanmar's actions, which was praised by Kadyrov.

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## BRIEFS

### CHINA: Implements Highly Secure Quantum Communication

**Summary:** China finished testing of a quantum communication network that may provide perfect encryption for government communications.

**Development:** Chinese state media is reporting that China finished construction and testing of a quantum communication network on 4 September. The network connects Beijing, Jinan, Hefei, and Shanghai. Construction began in 2013 and a specialized quantum satellite was launched in 2016. China's network marks the first real world application of quantum communication technology.

**Analysis:** Quantum communication is considered "unhackable" because of the means used to transmit information. By using entangled photons as the encryption key both the sender and receiver can theoretically notice whenever an attempt is made to alter or listen to the communication. Thus, quantum communication is designed to replace standard encryption methods. Such technology will theoretically provide the Chinese government and military with perfectly secure lines of communication. If successfully implemented, the Chinese would likely gain a significant advantage over high tech adversaries, namely the US. Additionally, quantum communication could be marketed to banks and other private sector entities, boosting China's economy.

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### COLOMBIA: FARC Continues Transition to Politics

**Summary:** FARC's appointment of Luciano Marin to party leadership shows promise for FARC's ability to work within the Colombian political system.

**Development:** Luciano Marin has been nominated as FARC's new leader following the organization's first party congress on 1 September. Luciano Marin, known by his alias of Iván Márquez, will oversee the 111 members of the leadership organization as campaign preparations begin for Columbia's 2018 elections. The peace agreement signed between FARC and the Colombian government guarantees three percent of the total congressional seats, but FARC can acquire additional seats if it receives enough votes.

**Analysis:** Luciano Marin's accession to party leadership is very likely the latest in a series of efforts at rebranding by FARC as it prepares for the 2018 congressional elections. Marin is largely seen as the most politically savvy of the FARC leadership, and his work as the chief negotiator between FARC and the Colombian government resulted in the creation of the FARC-run ECOMUN organization. Marin also negotiated terms that kept many of FARC's economic and political institutions intact. By preserving FARC organizational structures, albeit via party programs, FARC will likely be able to more effectively transition its criminal membership into an effective political base. While FARC faces an uphill battle in winning over Colombia's

general population, Marin's skill in negotiations provides FARC with a viable political leader who has the potential to further the group's transition.

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### **IRAN: Still Compliant with Nuclear Deal**

**Summary:** The IAEA certified that Iran is upholding the terms set by the JCPOA, potentially dampening US criticism of the deal while boosting President Rouhani's credibility.

**Development:** On 31 August the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) indicated Iran is still in compliance with the 2015 nuclear deal. This report is the eighth consecutive certification from the agency since the deal went into effect in January 2016. United States Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley has requested the IAEA conduct further inspections, particularly into undeclared and military-affiliated sites.

**Analysis:** Protection of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) nuclear deal remains a key goal of Iranian President Rouhani's pro-reform agenda, which has faced increasing pressure from the country's hard-line leadership in recent months. Despite President Rouhani's landslide election victory in May earlier this year he faces a potential threat from Iran's more conservative judiciary. The JCPOA is a key component of Rouhani's foreign policy and is also critical to his domestic policy because of the reduction in sanctions negotiated in the deal. If the US were to back out of the JCPOA, then hardliners such as Ayatollah Khomeini would likely have an easier time ousting Rouhani despite his popular support. The publication of the IAEA's latest report limits the ability of the Trump Administration to pull out of the deal, but a US withdrawal cannot be discounted. Iran under Rouhani's leadership is likely to stay the course of compliance with the deal in the coming months as Rouhani seeks to use his re-election mandate to implement domestic reform efforts.

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### **ITALY: Mafia Boss Fugitive Arrested in Uruguay**

**Summary:** One of Italy's most notorious mafia bosses was arrested in Uruguay which may give Italian authorities greater insight into transnational organized crime.

**Development:** Uruguayan police arrested Rocco Morabito, one of Italy's most wanted men, at a hotel in Uruguay on 4 September. Morabito has been wanted since 1995 when he was charged with several crimes related to his organization, the Calabrian 'Ndrangheta, which controls a large portion of the global cocaine trade. Morabito's whereabouts became known when he used his real name to register his child for school. He has been living in Punta del Este, Uruguay since approximately 2002. When authorities raided his house they discovered 13 cell phones, 12 bank cards, and 150 passport photos of himself in various disguises.

**Analysis:** The arrest of Morabito represents a major victory for Italian authorities. Morabito is known as the "cocaine king of Milan", a title that placed him among the top five most wanted

organized criminals in Italy. In 1994, he attempted to import nearly a ton of the drug into Italy. His arrest could provide Italian authorities with insight into the 'Ndrangheta. In addition, the arrest also sends a message to other organized crime fugitives that authorities are capable of, and willing to, arrest them.

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### **KENYA: Date Set for Presidential Election Re-Run**

**Summary:** Following several questionably corrupt presidential elections, the Kenyan Supreme Court has ordered a re-run, which could encourage other African countries to combat voter fraud and corruption.

**Development:** On 4 September, the Kenyan Independent Electoral Boundaries Commission (IEBC) announced the 17 October re-run date of the recently nullified presidential election. This follows a Supreme Court ruling which stated some IEBC members aided President Uhuru Kenyatta's August win by committing fraud at the polls, furthering the heavy corruption presence in Kenya.

**Analysis:** 17 October will mark the first re-run election in African history. With the Supreme Court ruling in favor of the re-run, Kenya has begun to address its significant corruption, possibly sparking a wave of similar decisions in other African nations. Like Kenya, many other African countries have faced election fraud, but none have yet to allow for a new election as a result. Should Kenya conduct the re-run smoothly and without fraud accusations, other African countries may follow and rule for re-runs in their future elections if fraud is discovered. Even if governments deny a re-run in the face of a corrupt election, citizens might revolt against the government, citing the Kenyan re-run as their motivation to challenge fraudulent elections. With such potential unrest, African governments may feel more compelled to allow re-runs on appropriate grounds.

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### **RUSSIA: Military Exercises in Belarus**

**Summary:** Russia will engage in joint military exercises with Belarus to prove its military strength both to domestic and international audiences.

**Development:** From 14 September to 20 September, Russia and Belarus will engage in joint military exercises to test responses to an attack by terrorists or separatists. The exercises, known as Zapad-2017, will take place in Belarus with additional, but nominally separate, exercises occurring in Russia's Kaliningrad Oblast and western areas of mainland Russia. The total number of troops taking part in the exercises is less than 13,000, meaning that Russia and Belarus are not required to alert other European countries of the drill and allow them to send observers per the Vienna Document. Ukraine has strengthened security measures along its borders with Russia and Belarus in response to the exercises.

**Analysis:** The Russian military is likely using Zapad-2017 to prove its strength and willingness to defend itself and its allies, and to act as a deterrent for potential attacks by other countries or NATO. Several adjacent states are concerned that, given Russia's history, these exercises may be used as a prelude to an invasion, or as a distraction from one. Russia previously conducted military exercises before invading Georgia in 2008 and on the Ukrainian border before and during its annexation of Crimea in 2014. However, it is unlikely that these exercises will result in any conflict with NATO or Ukraine, as Russia is not committing enough troops to the exercise to effectively engage NATO. However, the exercises reinforce Russia's commitment to Belarus. As one of Russia's lone allies in the region, and a neighbor to NATO, Belarus is aptly positioned to provide the backdrop for Zapad. In addition, Russia may leave troops and equipment in Belarus following the exercise's conclusion to continue the deterrent effect of an increased military presence bordering NATO.

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### **[SYRIA: Government Forces Break Siege of Deir Az Zor](#)**

**Summary:** Syrian forces broke the siege of Deir Az Zor, marking a key advancement in the struggle against the IS.

**Development:** On 5 September, Syrian forces broke the Islamic State (IS) siege of Deir Az Zor, marking an end to the three year struggle. The Syrian Army, with Russian air support, reached the outskirts of the city after IS defenses collapsed following the start of the offensive last month. Despite steady losses the IS still controls much of Deir Az Zor Province. Since February 2016, the World Food Programme (WFP) has sent 6,000 tons of food to the government-aligned factions within the city. The Syrian Army forces were reunited with their allies within Deir Az Zor and some of the 100,000 civilians stuck inside the government-held areas welcomed them with celebration.

**Analysis:** Deir Az Zor was considered the IS' last stronghold in Syria, apart from Raqqa and its liberation marks a significant military and psychological defeat for the IS. Continuing in its offensive against the IS, the Syrian military will almost certainly be supported by Russian air power. Yet despite steady military gains, the path to a Syrian government victory likely remains a long and arduous struggle. The IS is unlikely to surrender given its radical devotion to its goals and will most likely continue to counter-attack following Syrian/Russian victories. Beyond the struggle against the IS, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad is likely using the offensive to reunify Syria under his control and weaken the rebel factions that might otherwise hope for a renewed offensive against the government. Assad's efforts to regain control will likely depend on his ability to restore a sense of normalcy within liberated regions. With 100,000 people now liberated from the IS siege, Assad will almost certainly face another humanitarian crisis and will probably continue to need WFP assistance in order to maintain order.

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