Kosovo

Coronavirus row helps topple Kosovo government
The government of Kosovo has collapsed after a vote of no confidence in Prime Minister Albin Kurti was backed by a majority of MPs. The vote was brought by a junior coalition partner angered by Mr Kurti’s approach to tackling the coronavirus outbreak. It comes only two months after the government was sworn in.
Read full article: BBC (03/26)

EU and US in opposite camps as Kosovo government toppled
Kosovo’s government was toppled by a no-confidence vote Wednesday (25 March) less than two months after coming to power, plunging the unstable democracy into political uncertainty as it tries to halt the spread of coronavirus. ... While the US ambassador welcomed debate over the no-confidence motion, France and Germany spoke out against it, urging “political unity” to combat the health crisis.
Read full article: EurActiv (03/26)

Republic of North Macedonia

After years of delay, North Macedonia, Albania get OK to begin EU accession talks
European Union ministers say they have approved beginning membership talks with North Macedonia and Albania, with a top German official calling it "good news in these gloomy times."
Read full article: RFE/RL (03/24)
Ukraine

EU demands access to Donbas for international organisations during coronavirus restrictions
Russian-backed armed formations in the breakaway Donbas region have since Saturday (21 March) denied access to the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe’s (OSCE) mission monitoring the conflict, Ukraine’s State Border Guard Service reported on Tuesday.
Read full article: EurActiv (03/25)

OSCE SMM Chief Monitor welcomes extension of mission mandate
The Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine, Y. Halit Çevik, welcomed today the extension of the SMM’s mandate for another year.
Read full article: OSCE (03/20)

AFRICA

Boko Haram affected areas

Boko Haram kills troops in 'deadliest' Chad raid
Boko Haram Islamist militants have killed 92 Chadian soldiers in attack on an island in Lake Chad. President Idriss Déby said on a visit to the area that Monday's raid was the jihadists' deadliest yet in Chad. Lake Chad is the region where forces from Chad, Nigeria and Niger have been fighting the insurgents in a joint campaign for the last five years.
Read full article: BBC (03/25)

Burundi

Complaint filed with UN over Burundi 'reprisals' on lawyers
A legal complaint against Burundi was filed with a UN rights body on Thursday, over punitive actions taken against lawyers and activists who cooperated with a UN review of the country's rights record.
Read full article: The East African (03/20)

Central African Republic

UN official applauds move by Central African Republic to prevent child recruitment
A senior United Nations official has welcomed the move by lawmakers in the Central African Republic (CAR) to criminalize child recruitment. The National Assembly in CAR recently adopted the Child Protection Code, which criminalizes the recruitment and use of children, among other crimes.
Read full article: UN News (03/19)
Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Secretary-General on MONUSCO

[...] MONUSCO has begun consultations with the Government on a strategic dialogue to ensure that the drawdown and exit are carefully sequenced, conditions-based and undertaken in accordance with agreed benchmarks.

Read full report: S/2020/214 (03/18)

Libya

UN welcomes response by Libyan parties to calls for humanitarian pause

The United Nations on Saturday welcomed the “positive responses” of Libya’s Tripoli-based government and the Libyan National Army (LNA) to calls for a pause to stop the fighting, in the hopes that this would allow humanitarian access throughout the crisis-torn country and head off the potential threat of COVID-19.

Read full article: UN News (03/21)

Austria and Hungary derail EU naval plan on Libya arms

Austria and Hungary have for the moment derailed EU plans to tackle breaches of the UN arms embargo off the Libyan coast, over objections to possible migrant rescues. Also known as Operation Irene, the proposal entails deploying European warships in the Mediterranean as part of a broader effort to stop arms from reaching the country.

Read full article: EU Observer (03/20)

Mali

EUTM Mali: Council extends training mission with broadened mandate and increased budget

The Council today decided to expand the scope of the mandate of the European Union military mission contributing to the training of the Malian Armed Forces (EUTM Mali). The mission will be able to provide military assistance to the G5 Sahel Joint Force and to national armed forces in the G5 Sahel countries through military advice, training and mentoring. The Council also prolonged the mission’s mandate until 18 May 2024.

Read full article: EU Press Release (03/23)

Dozens of soldiers killed in Tarkint base attack

At least 29 Malian soldiers have been killed in an attack on an army base in the country's northeast, according to the armed forces. There was now immediate claim of responsibility for the attack, the deadliest against the Malian army this year, in the town of Tarkint, north of the city of Gao.

Read full article: Al Jazeera (03/20)
South Sudan

UN rights chief urges South Sudan authorities to address inter-communal violence
Authorities in South Sudan must address intercommunal violence if the nation is to achieve lasting peace, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights said on Friday, in response to a recent escalation in fighting in the east and central parts of the country. The increased number and range of weapons used by rival clans, as well as the "apparent failure" by the authorities to respond, has contributed to clashes which have left hundreds dead and thousands displaced, while women and children have been subjected to sexual violence.
*Read full article: UN News (03/20)*

Sudan (Darfur)

Sudan, Darfur groups to discuss security arrangements
Talks on the security arrangements between the Sudanese government and armed groups in Darfur begin on Wednesday, said the South Sudanese mediation spokesman Dhieu Matouk. ... The discussions are scheduled to continue for ten days.
*Read full article: Sudan Tribune (03/18)*

MIDDLE EAST

Israel / Syria

Report of the Secretary-General on UNDOF
During the reporting period, the ceasefire between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic was generally maintained, despite an increase in the number of violations of the Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces (Disengagement of Forces Agreement) of 1974.
*Read full report S/2020/219 (03/20)*

Yemen

Houthis welcome Saudi support for ceasefire amid pandemic
Mohammed Ali a-Houthi "welcomed* the Saudi-led coalition's decision to support a ceasefire. The ceasefire proposal was a response to a UN call amid the coronavirus outbreak.
*Read full article: DW (03/26)*

UN chief calls for ceasefire as Yemen braces for possible COVID-19 outbreak
Echoing his 23 March appeal to warring parties across the globe for an immediate ceasefire, UN Secretary-General António Guterres has called on those fighting in Yemen to end hostilities and ramp up efforts to counter a potential outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.
*Read full article: UN News (03/25)*
CENTRAL ASIA

Afghanistan

Afghan government, Taliban to discuss prisoner release ‘face to face’
Afghan government officials are set to meet with a Taliban delegation in the coming days to discuss an initial release of militant prisoners, Afghanistan's National Security Council says. ... The development could help break a deadlock that has held up negotiations between the Taliban and the Afghan government under a U.S.-brokered peace process.
Read full article: RFE/RL (03/25)

US urges end to Afghan political rift to advance peace, COVID fight
The United States on Friday urged Afghan leaders to end a lingering political dispute and work together to advance peace-building efforts, with officials stressing the emerging coronavirus threat required a “coordinated, proactive response.”
Read full article: VOA News (03/20)

Report of the Secretary-General on UNAMA
Uncertainties surrounding the electoral process and the resumption of talks between the United States of America and the Taliban were at the forefront of political developments in Afghanistan during the reporting period. ... The security situation remained volatile.
Read full report: A/74/753–S/2020/210 (03/17)

OTHER PEACEKEEPING RELEVANT NEWS

COVID-19

Pentagon orders freeze on all overseas movement of US military
US Defence Secretary Mark Esper has issued a stop movement order to the US military halting travel and movement abroad for up to 60 days in an effort to limit the spread of the coronavirus through the ranks, the Pentagon chief told Reuters on Wednesday.... The defence secretary said one exception to the order would be the withdrawal under way in Afghanistan, which will continue.
Read full article: Middle East Eye (03/26)

COVID-19 and conflict: seven trends to watch – special ICG briefing
Deadly and disruptive as it already is, and terribly as it could yet worsen and spread, the 2020 coronavirus outbreak could also have political effects that last long after the contagion is contained. Crisis Group identifies seven points of particular concern.
Read full briefing: International Crisis Group (03/24)

UN chief calls for global ceasefire to focus on ‘the true fight of our lives’
In an appeal issued on Monday, UN Secretary-General António Guterres urged warring parties across the world to lay down their weapons in support of the bigger battle against COVID-19: the common enemy that is now threatening all of humankind.
Read full article: UN News (03/23)