

Chronologies

Chronology of Major Conflicts and Political Events

January 2018

In Spain, the Constitutional Court nullifies the investiture of Carles Puigdemont as Catalan President. The European Commission (EC) proposes community mediation for the border dispute between Slovenia and Croatia. In Kosovo, the Kosovo Serb leader Oliver Ivanovic is murdered. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) – currently Republic of North Macedonia – approves co-official status for Albanian and a landmark friendship agreement with Bulgaria. The country also reaches an agreement with Greece for a new initiative to resolve the naming dispute, which sparks large-scale protests in Thessaloniki. In Albania, protests are staged against the government and two MPs lose their seats in connection with a scandal involving undeclared criminal offences. New protests take place in Greece against the austerity measures. Turkey launches its Olive Branch offensive against Manbij and Afrin, in Syria. Northern Cyprus holds elections. The Syrian army announces the capture of Western Ghouta. In Egypt, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi looks set to be the only candidate to the presidential elections in March. In Libya, clashes continue between Islamist militias and the forces of the Tripoli and Tobruk government. Social protests are held in Tunisia and Morocco.

Spain

- On 15 January the High Court of Barcelona orders Democratic Convergence of Catalonia (CDC), the predecessor to the current Catalan European Democratic Party (PDeCat, pro-independence), to pay 6,676,105 euros for

benefitting from the plot orchestrated by the accused party members, in which they received illegal commissions in exchange for public contracts.

France

- On 19 January the President Emmanuel Macron confirms his plans to bring back compulsory national service.
- On 24 January thousands of prison guards begin a strike over the spate of assaults against them by inmates and the overcrowding of French prisons.

Italy

- On 9 January some 170 people, including the president of the Crotone province Nicodemo Parrilla, are arrested in an operation against the Calabrian mafia, the 'Ndrangheta.
- On 9 January the Italian centre-right announces that it will join forces to run in the March elections.
- On 10 January Rome hosts a new summit of the southern European countries Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Malta, Greece and Cyprus to reach a common stance on migration and EU policy.
- On 11 January the former mayor of Rome Ignazio Marino is sentenced to two years' imprisonment for embezzlement.
- On 22 January 56 Cosa Nostra members are arrested in Agrigento accused of extortion in relation to immigrant processing centres.
- On 27 January to mark the commemoration of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp, the mayor's office of Rome announces the renaming of streets dedicated until now to the signatories of the 1938 Manifesto of Race.

Malta

- On 26 January the collective agreement between Air Malta and its pilots is signed following weeks of tense negotiations.

Slovenia

- On 8 January the EC proposes European mediation between Slovenia and Croatia following Zagreb's rejection of the 2017 ruling by the Court of Arbitration of The Hague over the bilateral border dispute.
- On 24 January more than 10,000 civil servants go on strike to demand salary increases.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 30 January Tomislav Kovac, the former Minister of the Interior of the Republika Srpska, is charged over his responsibility in the Srebrenica massacre.

Montenegro

- On 27 January the Democratic Front (DF, conservative) and another three opposition parties sign a declaration of reconciliation between Chetniks and Partisans in an act condemned by the ruling Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) as revisionist and for reviving World War II divisions.

Serbia

- On 15 January the Belgrade Appeals Court sentences eight former members of the Vukovar Territorial Defence to 101 years' imprisonment for the 1991 Ovčara massacre.

- On 17 January Dragan Sikimic is appointed director of the Serbian Anti-Corruption Agency amid controversy over his past involvement with the ruling Serbian Progressive Party (SNS, conservative) as candidate and donor.

Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

- On 5 January the police reports the arrest in Cyprus of an Israeli man involved in the organ-trafficking network uncovered a decade ago in Kosovo.
- On 16 January Oliver Ivanovic, a prominent Kosovo Serb politician, is murdered in Mitrovica. In response, Serbia withdraws from the negotiations for the normalization of relations with Kosovo.

FYROM (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

- On 9 January FYROM and Greece agree on a new initiative to resolve the naming dispute of FYROM.
- On 11 January the Parliament adopts the law that grants Albanian co-official status throughout the country.
- On 15 January the Parliament ratifies a historic friendship agreement with Bulgaria despite the boycott by the opposition Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE).
- On 15 January the Parliament approves an amnesty bill under which around 670 convicts will be released to ease overcrowding in the prison system.

Albania

- On 5 January Aqif Rakipi, from the conservative Party for Justice, Integration and Unity (PDIU) and Gledjon Rehovica, from the Socialist Movement for Integration (LSI), are stripped of their seats after the public prosecutor presents evidence of their criminal activities in Italy in the late nineties.
- On 27 January thousands of people in Tirana call for the resignation of Edi Rama's government, accusing it of having ties with organized crime.

Greece

- On 10 January the Parliament approves a law that restricts the application of Sharia law in Thrace, where the Islamic law has governed family matters of the Muslim minority since 1923, in accordance with the Treaty of Lausanne.
- On 15 January the Parliament approves the reform package agreed between the government and international lenders for the release of a new 4.5-billion-euro tranche of the Greek bailout. Thousands of demonstrators protest outside the Parliament against the cuts.
- On 21 January following the resumption of negotiations on the naming dispute, thousands of people protest in Thessaloniki against the use of the name Macedonia to describe FYROM, claiming that it would imply territorial claims over Greek Macedonia.

Turkey

- On 4 January orders are issued for the arrest of 70 army officers over their alleged ties with the Islamist cleric Fethullah Gulen, accused by Ankara of orchestrating the attempted coup in July 2016.
- On 4 January Idris Baluken, member of the pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP), is sentenced to 16 years and eight months in prison for terrorism and the party's vice-president, Aysel Tugluk, to a year and a half for organizing illegal demonstrations.
- On 4 January Turkey describes the decision of a US jury to convict Mehmet Hakan Atilla, an executive at the Turkish bank Halkbank, on counts of conspiracy, as "political conspiracy." Atilla was found guilty of helping Iran evade sanctions imposed by Washington.
- On 4 January the government removes Murat Hazinedar from his position as mayor of Istanbul's Besiktas district, after linking him with the 2016 coup attempt.
- On 4 January, speaking from where he is imprisoned on terrorism charges, the co-leader of the HDP Selahattin Demirtas announces that he will not seek reelection.

Cyprus

- On 7 January Northern Cyprus holds early parliamentary elections, won by the conservative National Unity Party (UBP) with 35.58% of the vote and 21 seats.

Syria

- On 2 January the Syrian army announces it has fully captured Western Ghouta.
- On 6 January at least 17 civilians are killed in Syrian and Russian airstrikes in Eastern Ghouta, a rebel enclave under siege by government forces. On 8 January at least 21 civilians are killed in a number of airstrikes attributed to Syrian and Russian aircraft in Idlib. The offensive on both areas continues throughout January and inflames diplomatic tensions with Turkey.
- On 19 January the Turkish Defence Minister Nurettin Canikli announces the start of Operation Olive Branch to intervene in Afrin, under the control of the People's Protection Units (YPG), the Syrian wing of the terrorist organization the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). The move comes in response to the US announcement to transform its allies in the Syrian Democratic Forces (FDS), an alliance led by the YPG, into a border protection force.
- On 25 January the ninth round of Syrian peace talks begins in Vienna, in which the issue of how to move forwards with a new constitution is addressed.
- On 26 January the Kurdish administration in Afrin calls on Damascus to send troops to defend the area from the Turkish offensive.

Egypt

- On 4 January the public prosecutor orders the arrest of 75 people accused of human trafficking.
- On 7 January the former Prime Minister Ahmed Shafiq announces that he will not run in the presidential elections in March, saying that he is not the ideal person to guide the country's future.
- On 9 January the Parliament approves a three-month extension of the state of emergency, in force since April 2017.
- On 9 January more than three-quarters of parliamentarians back Abdel

Fattah el-Sisi for a second presidential term, a day after the election commission announces the timeline for the next elections.

- On 9 January an Egyptian court sentences 262 persons to between three years' and life imprisonment for their participation in the protests against the coup d'état in July 2013.
- On 23 January the former Egyptian chief of staff Sami Anan, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's main rival in the presidential elections, is arrested minutes after being accused of forging documents, running for office without permission and inciting against the armed forces.
- On 24 January the left-wing candidate Khaled Ali announces that he will not run in the presidential elections, thereby leaving Abdel Fattah el-Sisi as the only candidate.
- On 29 January Moussa Mostafa Moussa, leader of the extra-parliamentary party al-Ghad ("Tomorrow") and firm supporter of Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, announces his candidacy for the presidency. The opposition describes the candidacy as an "insult" and calls for an election boycott.

Libya

- On 6 January the NGOs operating in the central Mediterranean report the disappearance of at least 56 people after a boat carrying 150 immigrants was shipwrecked off the Libyan coast, in the first migration tragedy of 2018 in the Mediterranean.
- On 7 January the Tarhuna-based Kani Brigade takes Garabulli after ousting the Tripoli Revolutionaries Brigades, a group loyal to the Government of National Accord.
- On 9 January Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar, commander of the army loyal to the Tobruk Parliament, declares that if the coming elections "are a failure," his forces "will take control of the country."
- On 9 January around 100 people are presumed missing after a boat sinks off the Libyan coast. A further 300 are rescued.
- On 15 January at least 20 people are killed in fighting between security forces and an armed group attempting to free terrorists from a prison adjoining Tripoli airport.

Tunisia

- On 8 January protests break out in several cities across the country against the tax hikes and lack of socioeconomic improvements. On 9 January the Prime Minister Youssef Chahed announces imminent economic reforms. The army is also deployed. On 12 January 150 people are arrested charged with causing unrest in the anti-government demonstrations, bringing the total number of arrests to 778.
- On 15 January the presidency announces that the government is preparing to bring before the Parliament the reactivation of the former Agency for External Communication, which, during the Ben Ali regime, acted as an instrument for propaganda and censorship.
- On 18 January the Machrou Tounes party withdraws its support from the national unity government and the Carthage Declaration, following in the footsteps of the parties al-Joumhourî and Afek Tounes.
- On 20 January the authorities announce that they have neutralized an al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) cell in Kasserine. Among the dead is the Algerian Bilel Kobi, a confidant of Abdelmalek Droukdel, AQIM's leader.
- On 23 January the EU removes Tunisia from its tax-haven blacklist.

Algeria

- On 8 January the government temporarily bans imports of 900 basic products to reduce its growing import bill, which has risen as a result of the fall in oil and gas export revenues.
- On 15 January the Algerian presidency reminds the Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia that any attempt at privatization must have presidential approval, following the announcement on 23 December 2017 of the so-called "PPP" agreement between the government, the Algerian General Workers' Union (UGTA) and employers' organizations to stimulate the privatization and liberalization of the national economy.

Morocco

- On 20 January a demonstration is held in Jerada in a string of protests that

have shaken the city since December 2017 following the death of two brothers in an abandoned mine, where they were looking for coal. The demonstrations denounce Jerada's neglect since the closure of its mines in 1998.

- On 22 January Mohammed VI appoints Anas Doukkali and Abdelahad Fassi Fihri, from the Progress and Socialism Party (PPS) and Said Amzazi, from the Popular Movement (MP, liberal), as ministers of Health, Housing and Education, respectively, to replace the ministers who were sacked in October 2017 for their poor management of the Rif development plan. A new African Affairs Ministry is also created, headed by Mohcine Jazouli.
- On 26 January Morocco is voted onto the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU).

Mauritania

- On 8 January the National Assembly approves the organic law that establishes the regional councils authorized in the constitutional referendum in August 2017.

European Union (EU)

- On 1 January Bulgaria takes over the six-month rotating European Presidency with the priorities of socioeconomic cohesion, European stability and security, the membership of the Western Balkans and the digital economy.
- On 11 January Bulgaria announces its intention to accelerate its adoption of the euro, requesting entry into the Exchange Rate Mechanism II in June 2018.
- On 29 January the European Council agrees on the directives for the second phase of the Brexit negotiations, which include the permission for London to negotiate commercial deals during the transition period with prior approval from the EU27 countries and the United Kingdom's continuance in the Single Market until 31 December 2020, following its withdrawal from the Union in March 2019, but with no voice or vote.

February 2018

In Portugal, the Social Democratic Party (PSD) elects a new leader. France recognizes a special statute for Corsica.

Monaco and Cyprus hold parliamentary elections. Sectoral strikes are held in Malta and Slovenia. Kosovo again postpones parliamentary approval for its border agreement with Montenegro. In Greece and the FYROM, nationalist protests take place against concessions in the negotiations on the dispute over the name of the former Yugoslav republic. The Greek Economy Minister resigns. Tensions flare between Cyprus and Turkey over gas and oil exploration. The arrests continue in Turkey in connection with the coup attempt in 2016. In Syria, the army calls on its Kurdish population to help combat the Turkish offensive and steps up its offensive on Idlib and Eastern Ghouta. In Lebanon, a new political crisis erupts. Egypt launches a large-scale anti-terror operation. In Libya, the Supreme Court gives its backing to the Constitution Drafting Assembly. In Tunisia, proceedings begin for the dismissal of the governor of the Central Bank. The Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) validates the fisheries agreement with Morocco.

Portugal

- On 18 February, the PSD elects the former mayor of Porto, Rui Rio, as the new leader of the conservative party.

Spain

- On 22 February thousands of pensioners demonstrate to defend the public pensions system and against the inadequate 0.25% rise in pensions for 2018.

France

- On 1 February thousands of students protest against the university admission reforms, considering them an attack on equal opportunities.
- On 7 February the President Emmanuel Macron accepts a special mention of Corsica in the Constitution, but rejects any demands that might threaten French unity.
- On 8 February the Constitutional Court overturns a law from 1963 that reserved financial compensation for the victims of the Algerian War for French citizens and extends this to include all Algerian residents during the conflict.

- On 13 February the National Assembly (lower house) approves the return to a single French constituency in the European elections.

Monaco

- On 28 February the new nationalist party Priority Monaco led by Stephane Valeri wins in the parliamentary elections (57.71%, 21 seats). Horizon Monaco and Union Monegasque win 2 and 1 seats, respectively.

Italy

- On 3 February a former militant member of the Northern League shoots and injures several black passers-by in Macerata.
- On 13 February the Five Star Movement (M5S, populism) discovers a "1.4-million-euro hole" in its accounts, allegedly resulting from the fraudulent activities of some of its members.

Malta

- On 6 February the medical sector goes on strike after negotiations with the government fail for the privatization of three of the main Maltese hospitals.

Slovenia

- On 12, 13 and 14 February respectively, police officers, nurses and teachers go on strike to demand salary increases.

Croatia

- On 12 February Croatia and Serbia commit to increasing cooperation, especially regarding minority rights, border policy and the search for missing persons from the Yugoslav Wars.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 7 February the Republika Srpska vetoes a cooperation agreement between the Federal Government and Europol.
- On 16 February the former police commander Goran Saric is cleared of charges of genocide in Srebrenica.
- On 28 February the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council orders the

Bosnian State Court to compensate 44 people for the time they spent in custody while standing trial for the Bosnian War, before being acquitted.

Montenegro

- On 22 February a man blows himself up outside the US embassy in protest against Montenegro's NATO membership.

Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

- On 26 February the Appeals Court in Pristina releases three members of the pro-independence party Vetevendosje, jailed for throwing an explosive device in the Parliament in 2016, and orders a retrial.
- On 28 February the Parliament again postpones the vote to ratify the border agreement with Montenegro.

FYROM

- On 18 February the BESA Movement (Albanian nationalist) holds a congress in Skopje in which it elects Afrim Gashi as its new leader after voting for Bilal Kasami's dismissal on 6 January over the party's poor results in the last local elections. On 24 February the Tetovo branch of the movement organizes a parallel congress in which it confirms that Kasami still holds the position. A split thereby emerges in which both groups claim their legitimacy to lead the movement.
- On 28 February thousands demonstrate against the concessions the country is willing to make to reach an agreement on the naming dispute.

Albania

- On 22 February, on the 10th anniversary of Kosovo's unilateral independence declaration, the Prime Minister Edi Rama suggests a single president and joint security policy for Albania and Kosovo, sparking criticism from Serbia, the US and the EU.

Greece

- On 4 February thousands gather to protest against the possible uses of the term Macedonia to rename FYROM.

- On 13 February Greece lodges a formal complaint against Turkey after a collision between a Turkish boat and a Greek coastguard vessel in waters near a group of Aegean islets, whose ownership is disputed by both countries.
- On 31 February the Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras announces a government reshuffle following the resignation of three of its members. The most notable change is the appointment of Yannis Dragasakis as Development Minister, to replace Dimitris Papadimitriou, who resigned after he was revealed to be unethically claiming government benefits.

Turkey

- On 1 February the Konya public prosecutor orders the arrest of 120 people who formed part of a network of “secret imams” in the police forces, linked to Fethullah Gulen.
- On 16 February, minutes after announcing the release of the German Turkish journalist Deniz Yucel, the Istanbul High Criminal Court hands down life sentences to six people over their involvement in the 2016 coup attempt, among them the former editor-in-chief of the now-defunct newspaper *Taraf*, Ahmet Altan, and the former deputy of the Virtue Party, Nazli Ilıcak.
- On 23 February Turkey summons the Dutch Embassy’s chargé d’affaires over the Dutch Parliament’s decision to recognize the massacre of 1.5 million Armenians at the hands of the Ottoman Empire as genocide.
- On 27 February a Czech court orders the release of the former leader of the Syrian Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD), Salih Muslim, arrested in Prague on 25 February at Ankara’s request, despite Turkey having asked for him to remain in custody while the request for his extradition was being processed.
- On 27 February the Parliament approves the expulsion of the pro-Kurdish HDP MPs Ahmet Yildirim and Ibrahim Ayhan for insulting the President and making propaganda for the PKK terrorist organization, respectively.
- On 28 February the journalist Ahmet Altan is sentenced to six years in prison for spreading propaganda for a terrorist organization and insulting the Turkish President, in a sentence that is added

to the life sentence handed down to him in another case.

Cyprus

- On 4 February Cyprus holds the second round of its presidential elections between the two most voted candidates from the first round (28 January). The current President, Nicos Anastasiades of the conservative Democratic Rally (DISY), wins with 55.99% of the vote, against Stavros Malas of the Progressive Party of Working People (AKEL), who wins 44%.
- On 13 February the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan warns the Cypriot government not to “overstep the mark” in the eastern Mediterranean, after Cypriots accused the Turkish military of obstructing a vessel exploring for gas.
- On 13 February Nicos Anastasiades unveils his new government. The changes include Costas Kadis’ move from Education to Agriculture and Nicos Christodoulides as the new Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Syria

- On 4 - 5 February the regime’s forces step up their offensive on Idlib.
- On 5 February at least 23 people are killed in regime airstrikes in rebel-held Eastern Ghouta. On 7 February new strikes leave 78 dead.
- On 7 - 8 February over 100 Syrian regime fighters are killed by the US-led coalition in a failed large-scale attack in Deir ez-Zor.
- On 18 February Bashar al-Assad’s regime and the Syrian Kurds reach an agreement to halt the Turkish offensive in the north of the country. On 20 February the contingent sent by Damascus to the Afrin Canton is met with warning shots fired by Turkish troops in the area.
- On 20 February the army steps up airstrikes on the opposition stronghold of Eastern Ghouta leaving hundreds dead.
- On 22 February the Kurdish YPG announce that all its forces deployed in Aleppo will be moved to Afrin to strengthen the area against the Turkish-led military operation, thereby surrendering the control of its territory in Aleppo to the Syrian regime.

- On 23 - 24 February the EU and the UN Security Council calls for an immediate ceasefire in Eastern Ghouta in light of the urgent humanitarian situation. On 26 February Russia orders a ceasefire and the opening of humanitarian corridors, although fighting continues.

Lebanon

- On 1 February the AMAL Movement, the party of Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, calls on its supporters to stop the street protests against the President Michel Aoun, from the Free Patriotic Movement, in response to the insults made by the latter’s son-in-law, Gebran Bassil, against Berri. The rivalry between Aoun and Berri has intensified since Aoun promoted dozens of officers in December 2017 without the signature of the Finance Minister Ali Hasan Jalil, a member of AMAL.
- On 7 February the Defence Council calls on Israel to stop building a border wall, which it says constitutes a direct attack on Lebanese sovereignty and violation of resolution 1701 of the United Nations Security Council.

Egypt

- On 8 February the Court of Cassation upholds the five-year prison sentence of a police Lieutenant Colonel for the death of 37 supporters of the former President Mohamed Morsi in 2013.
- On 9 February the army and police launch a full-scale anti-terror operation in Sinai, the Nile Delta and the Western Desert. On 22 February, according to the army, the operation has left 71 terrorists and six soldiers dead.
- On 21 February the authorities announce the arrest of four members of the Muslim Brotherhood on a property in Beheira belonging to the former presidential candidate Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh, arrested on 14 February for his ties with the Brotherhood.
- On 28 February the singer Laila Amer is sentenced to two years’ imprisonment for “inciting debauchery.”

Libya

- On 2 February around 90 migrants are killed in a shipwreck off the coast of Libya.

- On 7 February Mahmud al-Werfalli, member of Khalifa Haftar's Libyan National Army and wanted by the International Criminal Court for the summary execution of dozens of prisoners, hands himself in to the military police in eastern Libya.
- On 8 February the Coast Security Department denies the involvement of state-connected armed groups in human trafficking networks, as denounced by an exports' report presented to the UN Security Council.
- On 9 February at least two people are killed in a double bomb attack at a mosque in Benghazi.
- On 14 February the Supreme Court overturns a ruling from July 2017 by the Bayda Appeals Court against the Constitution Drafting Assembly, thereby paving the way for a constitutional referendum and parliamentary and presidential elections.
- On 16 February Human Rights Watch (HRW) reports that the authorities in Misrata and various armed groups are blocking the return to Tawergha of 40,000 forcibly displaced people, because of the support that the Tawerghans gave to Muammar Gaddafi.
- On 26 February the EU approves a 115-million-euro package to fund a programme in Libya for the evacuation of 3,800 refugees and the voluntary return of a further 15,000 to their countries of origin.
- On 28 February at least six civilians are killed in clashes in Sabha between the Awlad Suleiman and Tebu tribes, which began at the beginning of the month.

Tunisia

- On 7 February the Prime Minister Youssef Chahed begins the procedure to dismiss the governor of the Central Bank Chedli Ayari, following the European Parliament's decision to classify Tunisia as a high-risk country for money laundering. Marouane Abassi, a senior official at the World Bank, is proposed as his replacement.
- On 11 February the longtime human rights activist Said Sadi announces his retirement from public life at the Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD) congress.

- On 12 February the National Defence Minister Abdelkarim Zbidi announces the future national service reform project, with adjustments regarding its compulsory nature.
- On 13 February five agents from Tunisia's Central Bank are arrested for corruption.

Algeria

- On 12 February thousands of resident doctors, who have already been on strike for three months, demonstrate in Algiers against their working conditions and call for the suspension of the so-called civil service, which forces them to practice in remote areas.

Morocco

- On 3 February the authorities recover the bodies of more than 20 migrants that went missing in the Strait of Gibraltar.
- On 10 February the Prime Minister Saadeddine Othmani announces measures in response to the citizen protests in Jerada, which, since December 2017, have denounced shortfalls in public spending.
- On 27 February the CJEU rules on the validity of the fisheries agreement between the EU and Morocco, stating that it is not applicable to Western Sahara or the waters off the coasts of said territory.

Mauritania

- On 9 February Mauritania and Senegal sign an agreement that will allow the exploitation of the common offshore gas field Grand Tortue-Ahmeyim as of 2021.
- On 23 February the G5 Sahel anti-terror security force raises 414 million euros at a donor conference in Brussels.

EU

- On 6 February the Commission presents its strategy for the Balkans which opens the door to the membership of Montenegro and Serbia in 2025, stressing that there will be no accession if the Balkan states do not resolve their territorial disputes.

- On 7 February the European Parliament rejects the proposal to create transnational lists for the 2019 European elections and approves maintaining the process for appointing the President of the Commission and the distribution of seats after the withdrawal of the United Kingdom.

March 2018

In Spain, the new Economy Minister is appointed and the former Catalan President is arrested in Germany. In France, a three-month railway strike begins. Italy holds parliamentary elections. The Slovenian Prime Minister resigns. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, divisions emerge in the Party of Democratic Action (SDA). In Montenegro, it is announced that Milo Djukanovic will run again in the presidential elections. In Serbia, the Prime Minister announces she may resign or make changes in the cabinet. In Kosovo, the border agreement with Montenegro is approved and tensions ignite with Serbia and Turkey. In FYROM, the President refuses to endorse the co-official status of the Albanian language. Turkey approves an electoral reform. In Syria, the regime forces continue to make ground in Eastern Ghouta and Turkey takes control of Afrin. Egypt holds presidential elections. In Tunisia there is unrest in Gafsa and the Parliament votes not to extend the mandate of the Truth and Dignity Commission. In Morocco there is more unrest in Jerada.

Portugal

- On 19 March the PSD appoints Jose Silvano as its secretary general after Feliciano Barreiras Duarte's resignation over irregularities in his curriculum.

Spain

- On 1 March the former Catalan President Carles Puigdemont withdraws his candidacy to the Catalan presidency and proposes the activist Jordi Sanchez as candidate, who is currently being held in custody for alleged crimes of sedition. On 9 March the National Court denies Sanchez permission to attend

his investiture debate. On 20 March, Sanchez renounces his candidacy after the pro-independence party Together for Catalonia (JuntsxCat) proposes the former minister Jordi Turull. On 24 March, after it is revealed that the leader of the Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC) Marta Rovira has fled to Switzerland, Turull, the former speaker of the Catalan Parliament and four former ministers are remanded in custody due to the flight risk they pose after being prosecuted for rebellion and misuse of public funds in the independence process. Spain also issues international arrest warrants against Puigdemont and the former ministers who have left the country. On 25 March, Puigdemont is arrested in Germany.

- On 7 March the Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy announces the appointment of Roman Escolano as Economy Minister to replace Luis de Guindos, appointed in February as Vice-President of the European Central Bank.
- On 8 March, International Women's Day, a national feminist strike is held in protest against the wage gap with respect to men.
- On 17 March thousands of pensioners take to the streets again to demand guaranteed decent pensions. After this, more marches are organized throughout the year.
- On 20 March the National Court sentences ETA member Sergio Polo to 110 years' imprisonment for the murder in 1995 of Commander Luciano Cortizo.

France

- On 11 March Jean-Marie Le Pen is stripped of his honorary presidency of the National Front at the party's congress. There is also a proposal to rename the party the National Rally put forward by Marine Le Pen, who is confirmed as the party leader.
- On 15 March thousands of pensioners demonstrate throughout France over their loss of purchasing power.
- On 20 March the former President Nicolas Sarkozy makes a statement in the investigation into the illegal funding by the Libyan regime of his 2007 election campaign.
- On 22 March the first of multiple demonstrations takes place in the con-

text of an intermittent three-month strike against Emmanuel Macron's plans to reform the railway sector.

- On 23 March at least three people are killed in a hostage incident in Trebes by a Daesh supporter who is later shot dead by police in Carcassonne.
- On 23 March Mireille Knoll, a survivor of the Nazi holocaust, is murdered by two men at her home in Paris in a crime described by the authorities as anti-Semitic and which prompts a concerned Jewish community to warn of a rise in anti-Semitism in France.

Italy

- On 4 March Italy holds parliamentary elections. M5S is the most voted party (32.68%), but the right-wing coalition wins a total of 35.73% of the vote - 17.37% of the League, a far-right party, which was previously Padano secessionist and now Italian ultranationalist, 14.01% of Forza Italia (FI) and 4.35% of the liberal-conservative Brothers of Italy (Fdl). The Democratic Party (PD, centre-left) of former Prime Minister Matteo Renzi suffers a historic defeat (18.72%). Renzi steps down as the party leader on 5 March.
- On 24 March Roberto Fico (M5S) is elected President of the Chamber of Deputies and Elisabetta Alberti Casellati (FI) becomes the first woman President of the Italian Senate.

Slovenia

- On 14 March the Prime Minister Miro Cerar resigns after the Supreme Court's decision to annul the results of the referendum held in September 2017 on the Koper-Divaca railway project.
- On 16 March Slovenia files a complaint with the EC against Croatia for the country's refusal to abide by the arbitration court ruling on the Piran Bay border dispute.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 13 March the Prime Minister of Sarajevo Elmedin Konakovic founds a new party People and Justice, after handing in his full resignation from the SDA on 30 January over tensions with the party leader Bakir Izetbegovic.

- On 20 March Bosnia and Moldavia agree to give each other mutual support in their European integration processes.

Montenegro

- On 19 March the ruling DPS announces Milo Djukanovic as its presidential candidate in April's elections.

Serbia

- On 4 March the SNS wins the Belgrade elections.
- On 20 March the Prime Minister Ana Brnabic announces she may resign or make changes in the cabinet if the members of her government cannot work together more cohesively.

Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

- On 7 March the mayor of Pristina Shpend Ahmeti leaves Vetevendosje adding to a string of members who have left since December 2017 due to the pro-independence party's internal crisis.
- On 9 March Fatmir Limaj, the former commander of the Kosovo Liberation Army (UÇK) and former minister, is cleared of responsibility for the murder of two civilians in Bellanica during the conflict in 1998.
- On 21 March Vetevendosje deputies throw tear gas canisters to stop the ratification of the border deal with Montenegro, which is, nonetheless, approved by 80 of the 120 deputies.
- On 26 March violent clashes erupt after the head of Serbia's government office for Kosovo Marko Djuric is arrested during a meeting in Mitrovica and deported for entering Kosovo without authorization from Pristina.
- On 30 March the Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj fires Kosovo's intelligence agency chief Driton Gashi and the Interior Minister Flamur Sefaj for ordering the arrest and deportation to Turkey of five Turkish workers, suspected of having ties with the Islamic cleric Fethullah Gulen, without his knowledge.

FYROM

- On 1 March the authorities remove the Alexander the Great statue emplaced

by the previous government in Skopje airport, as a goodwill gesture towards Greece in the country's naming dispute.

- On 5 and 7 March five of the seven members of the State Anti-Corruption Commission resign after a Public Revenue Office report is published suggesting they have spent excessively.
- On 15 March the President Gjorge Ivanov refuses to endorse parliamentary approval of Albanian language's co-official status for the second time.
- On 20 March the Justice Minister Bilen Saliji resigns following the public prosecutor's decision to drop the charges of premeditated murder against an ethnic Macedonian who ran over and killed an Albanian child in Kumanovo. On 21 March, Albanian Macedonian citizens protest outside the government building.

Albania

- On 31 March the police clash with demonstrators protesting against the rise in the tolls on the motorway that joins Albania and Kosovo.

Greece

- On 2 March Greece completes the reforms needed to have access to the next 5.7-billion-euro tranche of its economic bailout.
- On 26 March the former Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis unveils his new party European Realistic Disobedience Front (MeRA25), which will run in the 2019 European elections.

Turkey

- On 1 March Armenia scraps the peace deal signed with Turkey in 2009.
- On 1 March Dilek Ocalan, an HDP MP and niece of the PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan, is sentenced to two and a half years in prison for spreading terrorist propaganda.
- On 2 March the public prosecutor orders the arrest of 154 people for belonging to the Fethullah Gulen network and participating in the 2016 coup attempt.
- On 5 March 12 people are arrested in Ankara suspected of being members of Daesh.

- On 5 March security forces arrest four Iraqis in connection with plans for a terrorist attack on the US embassy.
- On 13 March the Justice and Development Party's (AKP) parliamentary majority approves electoral reforms amid protests from the opposition, which claims they will compromise the credibility of the upcoming elections. Fistfights break out among deputies in the Parliament.
- On 20 March authorities arrest more than a hundred people suspected of belonging to the PKK and accused of planning attacks and illegal demonstrations during Newroz, the Persian New Year.
- On 26 March the public prosecutor in Ankara issues arrest warrants against 56 people for their alleged ties with Fethullah Gulen and the 2016 coup attempt.

Cyprus

- On 16 March the Parliament unanimously condemns Turkey's actions in the Exclusive Economic Zone of Cyprus and calls for a reaction from the European Council.
- On 16 March Averof Neophytou is reelected leader of the ruling DISY.
- On 22 March the judgement made in December 2017 by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) which describes the proceedings of Northern Cyprus' Immoveable Property Commission as "protracted and ineffective" becomes final in light of Turkey's failure to file an appeal.

Syria

- On 4 March regime troops take al-Nashabiya, Autaya, Hazarna, Hosh al-Salihyah, Hosh al-Fadaliya and Furzat.
- On 6 March Turkey announces that it will put up camps in Idlib to provide shelter for 170,000 displaced persons in Afrin, where Turkey launched an offensive in January against the Kurdish militias.
- On 13 March the evacuation begins of the first hundred civilians from Eastern Ghouta through the humanitarian corridors set up by Russia. On 15 March, more than 10,000 people leave Eastern Ghouta, where one of the armed op-

position groups, Faylaq al-Rahman - linked with al-Qaeda - loses control of Hamouria.

- On 18 March two months after the launch of Operation Olive Branch, the Turkish army, supported by the Free Syrian Army, takes control of the centre of Afrin.
- On 21 March at least 20 people are killed by a new airstrike on Idlib province, one of the opposition's last strongholds.
- On 23 March Eastern Ghouta is hit by new airstrikes hours after the rebel group Faylaq al-Rahman announces a ceasefire in the area under its control.

Jordan

- On 1 March five people are sentenced to between five and seven years in prison for collaboration with Daesh.

Egypt

- On 3 March the Supreme Court upholds the deal to transfer the islands of Tiran and Sanafir to Saudi Arabia.
- On 24 March the security chief in Alexandria Mostafa al-Nemr survives a car bomb attack in which two people are killed.
- On 26, 27 and 28 March Egypt holds presidential elections amid reports of vote buying and abstention fines. With a turnout of 47.5%, the President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi wins, as expected, with 97.08% of the vote. Moussa Mostafa Moussa, his only opponent and a self-declared al-Sisi supporter, wins fewer than 3% of the votes, behind the spoilt votes (7.27%).

Libya

- On 1 March Libya announces the closure of two of its immigrant detention centres due to inadequate conditions. A further 16 were closed in 2017.
- On 20 March the Popular Front for the Liberation of Libya announces the candidacy of Saif al-Islam, son of Muammar Gaddafi, for the presidential elections later in the year.
- On 24 March the US military kills Musa Abu Dawud, a senior figure of AQIM in an airstrike in southern Libya.
- On 28 March Daesh carries out a bomb attack in Ajdabiya leaving five dead.

- On 29 March the chairman of the High Council of State Abdulrahman Sewehli survives an assassination attempt in Gharyan.
- On 30 March Abdulaouf Baitelmal, mayor of Tripoli, is released after being kidnapped the previous day.

Tunisia

- On 6 March the presidency extends the state of emergency for a further seven months.
- On 10 March a demonstration in Tunis demands equal inheritance rights for men and women.
- On 13 March the Assembly of the Representatives of the People fails to reach an agreement on the four members of the Constitutional Court, whose appointment is the Assembly's responsibility under the country's Constitution.
- On 17 - 18 March clashes break out in the mining region of Gafsa between police and demonstrators protesting against the inadequate measures announced by the government.
- On 26 March after two tense sessions, the People's Assembly votes not to extend the mandate of the Truth and Dignity Commission.

Morocco

- On 11 and 14 March six activists from the protest movement in Jerada are arrested, as protests continue in the former mining town.

Mauritania

- On 30 March two people are sentenced to 10 and 20 years in prison for the practice of slavery, which was outlawed in 2007. At the same time, anti-slavery groups assert that activist arrests and protest bans have increased.

EU

- On 1 March the European Parliament approves the Commission's proposal to bring sanctions against Poland for being at risk of a serious breach of EU values.
- On 19 March the United Kingdom accepts crucial concessions on Brexit to be able to begin negotiating its future relations with the EU after a transitional

period: Northern Ireland will remain linked to the single market and Europeans arriving in the United Kingdom during the transitional period will have the same rights as those who arrived before this time.

April 2018

Portugal increases the quota of women on election lists and in public administration. In Spain, the terrorist group Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA), announces its imminent dissolution. France announces a reduction in the number of deputies and senators and the Socialist Party elects a new first secretary. In Italy, it is confirmed that secret negotiations took place between the government and Cosa Nostra in the nineties and elections are held in Friuli-Venezia Giulia. In Croatia, the government survives a confidence vote and the Parliament ratifies the Istanbul Convention on violence against women. Montenegro holds presidential elections. The International Criminal Court finds the ultranationalist Serb leader Vojislav Seselj guilty of crimes against humanity. In FYROM, the government survives a confidence vote. Greece privatizes its biggest oil company. Turkey announces early elections. The US, France and the United Kingdom launch an attack against the Syrian army in response to a chemical attack in Douma. In Egypt, the former Anti-Corruption Authority chief is sentenced to five years' imprisonment. In Tunisia, the government announces equal inheritance rights for men and women. In Algeria there are ministerial changes. Morocco and the EU begin negotiations to renew their fisheries agreement.

Portugal

- On 20 April the Parliament approves two draft bills which will increase the 40% quota of women on the electoral lists and in public administration.

Spain

- On 5 April the State Court in Schleswig-Holstein releases the former Catalan President Carles Puigdemont

on bail, while investigations against him continue over the unilateral independence process.

- On 18 April the terrorist group ETA, founded in 1959, announces its dissolution for May 2018.
- On 25 April the regional President of Madrid Cristina Cifuentes resigns after it is revealed that she faked her master's degree in 2012 and video footage emerges in which she is caught shoplifting in a supermarket.

France

- On 4 April the Prime Minister Edouard Philippe announces a 30% reduction in deputies and senators and the election of 15% of deputies by proportional representation, instead of by a majority vote.
- On 7 April Olivier Faure is elected as the leader of the Socialist Party.
- On 22 April the National Assembly approves the draft asylum and immigration bill which doubles the time that irregular immigrants can remain in police custody to 90 days, shortens asylum application deadlines and introduces a one-year prison sentence for entering the country illegally.

Italy

- On 20 April a ruling by the Court of Palermo confirms that negotiations between the government and Cosa Nostra took place in the early nineties to put an end to the attacks carried out by the mafia. The court sentences the main defendants, which includes the former Forza Italia senator Marcello Dell'Utri, to between eight and 28 years in prison.
- On 23 April the President Sergio Mattarella gives the president of the Chamber of Deputies (lower house) Roberto Fico a 48-hour mandate to try to come to an agreement between M5S and the PD to appoint a prime minister and form a new government.
- On 30 April the League's candidate Massimiliano Fedriga wins in the Friuli-Venezia Giulia elections.

Slovenia

- On 24 April Brdo pri Kranju hosts the Southeastern European Coopera-

tion Process Summit which agrees to strengthen the European integration process and to enhance cooperation in security, digital connectivity and young people's social and work prospects.

Croatia

- On 13 April the Parliament rejects a no-confidence vote tabled against the Deputy Prime Minister and Economy Minister Martina Dalic for her role in the restructuring of the bankrupt company Agrokor.
- On 13 April the Parliament ratifies the Istanbul Convention on violence against women.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 24 April following Croatia's signing of a contract to build a bridge that connects Peljesac with the rest of the country, Bosnia lodges a formal complaint with the EU, arguing that the border demarcation between both countries must be completed first.
- On 27 April Atif Dudakovic, former commander of the Bosnian army, and another 11 people, are arrested for war crimes against Serbs and Bosniaks during the Yugoslav Wars.

Montenegro

- On 2 April the explosion of a bomb outside the home of the journalist Seada Sadikovic in Bijelo Polje revives concerns over the increase in attacks during March attributed to score settling between drug gangs.
- On 15 April two years after his resignation as Prime Minister, Milo Djukanovic wins the presidential elections with 53.95% of the vote, ahead of the independent candidate Mladen Bojanic (33.41%), supported by most opposition parties.

Serbia

- On 13 April the appeals court of the International Criminal Court finds the ultranationalist leader Vojislav Seselj guilty of crimes against humanity during the Balkans War, although his sentence is considered to have already been

served because of the time he has spent in custody.

- On 26 April Serbia bans the Croatian Defence Minister Damir Krsticevic from entering its territory as a reciprocal measure to Croatia's announcement on 22 April, according to which his Serbian counterpart Aleksandar Vulin was not welcome at a ceremony to commemorate the victims of the Second World War concentration camp in Jasenovac.

FYROM

- On 12 April the government survives a confidence vote tabled by the conservative opposition which accuses the government of damaging relations with neighbouring countries, failing to control corruption and ineffectiveness in halting economic stagnation.

Greece

- On 18 April Greece begins the privatization of Hellenic Petroleum (Helpe), Greece's largest oil company.
- On 22 April Greece rejects Turkey's proposal to exchange two Greek soldiers, held in Turkey since March without charge, for eight Turkish soldiers, who fled to Greece following the failed coup d'etat in 2016.
- On 23 April the Hellenic Statistical Authority (Elstat) announces that Greece has reached a budget surplus of 0.8% of GDP, exceeding the targets set by the EU and IMF for the second year running.

Turkey

- On 3 April Turkey and Russia sign a historic deal for Russia to build the Akkuyu nuclear plant in Mersin, which will go into operation in 2023.
- On 18 April the President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announces early parliamentary and presidential elections scheduled for 24 June.
- On 25 April a court in Istanbul hands prison sentences down to 15 senior staff members, journalists and collaborators of the opposition newspaper *Cumhuriyet*, accused of having "terrorist" links with both the PKK and Fethullah Gulen.

Cyprus

- On 22 April Giorgos Perdakis is reelected as leader of the Cypriot Green Party.
- On 30 April the Supreme Court rules that Giorgos Papadopoulos must give up his seat, describing as unconstitutional the formula by which the Solidarity Movement MP inherited the seat from the party's leader Eleni Theocharous, so that she could continue as a MEP.

Syria

- On 2 April hundreds of Army of Islam fighters, the main opposition force in Eastern Ghouta, leave the enclave heading to the north of Syria.
- On 4 April the second trilateral summit between Turkey, Russia and Iran, held in Ankara, as part of the Astana Process, culminates with a declaration in favour of the unity, sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and non-sectarian nature of Syria.
- On 9 April the government and Jaysh al-Islam agree to leave Douma in exchange for the release of all prisoners held by the insurgents in the city.
- On 8 April the Syrian Civil Defence and Syrian American Medical Society accuse the Syrian army of killing at least 49 civilians and injuring a further 500 in a nerve gas attack on Douma. On 9 April the US denies bombing the Tiyas Airbase, in Homs, in response to the chemical attack on Douma.
- On 12 April Russia announces that the Syrian army has taken control of Douma, the last rebel-held stronghold on the outskirts of Damascus.
- On 12 April, in the UN Security Council, Russia blocks the US proposal to launch an investigation into the chemical attacks in Douma.
- On 14 April the US, United Kingdom and France attack Syrian army positions in response to the Douma chemical weapons attack. Syria, Russia, Iran and China condemn the attack. On 16 April, the UN Security Council rejects Russia's proposal to condemn the attack against the Syrian army.
- On 16 April the team of experts from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) begins its

work in Syria to investigate reports of the use of chemical weapons.

- On 29 April a series of bombings on two military bases in Hama and Aleppo, allegedly used by Iran, leave more than 10 people dead. Damascus condemns the action without attributing specific responsibility. Israel denies being behind the attack.
- On 28 - 29 April Bashar al-Assad's forces cross the Euphrates in the province of Deir ez-Zor to begin their advance on FSA positions.

Lebanon

- On 6 April the government obtains loans and donations amounting to over 10 billion euros from the international community during the conference held in Paris to boost the Lebanese economy and help the country deal with the refugee crisis.
- On 20 April HRW reports that at least 3,664 Syrian refugees have been forcibly evicted in at least 13 Lebanese municipalities and warns that a further 42,000 may suffer the same fate.

Egypt

- On 1 April two soldiers and six jihadists are killed in the latest anti-terror operations in Sinai, in which more than 500 people are arrested.
- On 18 April the army announces the death of the Emir of the Daesh-linked Sinai Province jihadist group, in an operation in North Sinai.
- On 19 April the authorities release on bail the former editor-in-chief of the newspaper al-Masry al-Youm, Mohamed al-Sayed Saleh, currently under investigation over the newspaper's coverage of the presidential elections in March.
- On 24 April a five-year prison sentence is handed down to Hisham Geneva, the former anti-corruption chief who was detained by the military prosecutor's office on 13 February for declaring that the former chief of staff Sami Anan possessed documents that implicated the country's leadership in corrupt practices.
- On 25 April the army announces the death of 30 terrorists and the arrest of a further 173 during the last week of operations in Sinai.

- On 29 April the President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi praises the attitude shown by the people in facing the tough measures of the economic reform programme, which comes in response to demands made by the IMF to reduce the budget deficit and which translates into a sharp rise in inflation.

Libya

- On 3 April the unity government announces the start of an operation against Daesh in Misrata.
- On 3 April Saadi Gaddafi, Muammar Gaddafi's son, who has been held in Tripoli since his extradition from Niger in 2014, is cleared of the murder of footballer Bashir ar-Rayani.
- On 8 April Khalid al-Mishri, from the Justice and Construction Party, the Libyan branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, is elected in Tripoli as head of the High Council of State, taking over from the outgoing Abdelrahman al-Sweihli.
- On 10 April a United Nations report denounces cases of torture and other violations of human rights by Libyan armed groups, some of them linked to the authorities.
- On 18 April at least one person is killed in an attack in Benghazi on a convoy carrying the army chief of staff Abdel Razeq Nazuri.
- On 18 April Tripoli airport suffers a new attack which the Special Deterrence Force (Rada) attributes to Brigade 33 from Tajura.
- On 21 April Tunisia confirms the reopening of its consulate in Tripoli, three years after it left the country following the kidnapping of 10 of its staff members.
- On 21 April an oil pipeline of the company al-Waha is set on fire by jihadists causing the loss of more than 70,000 barrels of oil.
- On 26 April the military prosecutor of the Presidential Council of Libya Masoud Erhouma escapes his captors after being abducted over a month ago.
- On 26 April Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar, commander of the army loyal to the Tobruk Parliament, returns to Benghazi after two weeks of medical treatment in Paris.

Tunisia

- On 17 April a strike supported by more than 97% of public secondary school teachers marks a new surge in tensions between the Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT) and the government.
- On 26 April the Parliament approves the prerogatives of local councils, 10 days before the municipal elections.

Algeria

- On 3 April following the Autonomous Collective of Algerian Medical Residents' (Camra) consideration of government proposals as inadequate, the medical sector continues its strike and the boycott of specialized medical exams in protest against compulsory civil service.
- On 4 April the President Abdelaziz Bouteflika reshuffles the government. Mohammed Hattab is appointed Youth and Sports Minister; Said Jalab, Trade Minister; Abdul Qadir Bin Masood, Tourism and Handicrafts; and Mahjoub Bada, Parliamentary Affairs Minister.
- On 21 April the ruling National Liberation Front (FLN) reiterates its proposal for 81-year-old Abdelaziz Bouteflika to run for a fifth presidential term.

Morocco

- On 20 April a well-supported boycott campaign begins against three powerful brands - Sidi Ali, Centrale Danone and Afriquia - to halt price hikes in bottled water, dairy products and petrol, respectively.
- On 20 April Morocco and the EU begin talks to renew their fisheries agreement before it expires on 14 July, and which will include, under specific conditions, areas of Western Sahara.

Mauritania

- On 25 April two people are sentenced to a year in prison for sending WhatsApp messages in which they referred to others as slaves. This is a historic ruling as these are the first sentences handed down since the approval of the anti-slavery law.

EU

- On 17 April the EC recommends the European Union open accession negotiations with Albania and FYROM.

Arab League

- On 17 April the 29th Arab League summit concludes in Az-Zahran, Saudi Arabia, notably condemning Iran for its interference in the internal politics of the Arab countries and the US for recognizing Jerusalem as the Israeli capital.

May 2018

Portugal rejects the decriminalization of euthanasia. In Spain, the sentence in the Gurtel case leads to a no-confidence motion. In France, demonstrations take place against the government's reform programme. In Italy, M5S and the League agree to form a government. In Croatia, the Deputy Prime Minister resigns. Montenegro holds local elections. FYROM and Greece reach an agreement to resolve the naming dispute. In Albania, anti-government demonstrations are held. In Turkey, four opposition parties agree on an alliance for the June elections. Syria becomes the stage for the first armed confrontation between Israel and Iran and the forces of Bashar al-Assad continue to gain ground. Lebanon holds parliamentary elections. In Egypt, fare hikes on the Cairo metro spark protests and increase the number of opposition arrests. In Libya, the rival powers of Tripoli and Tobruk agree to hold legislative and presidential elections. Tunisia holds municipal elections. Morocco cuts diplomatic ties with Iran.

Portugal

- On 4 May the former Prime Minister Jose Socrates leaves the Socialist Party after the party leadership accepts his implication in 31 counts of corruption, which he has been accused of since 2014.
- On 29 May the conservative and communist opposition rejects the government's four draft bills on the decriminalization of euthanasia.

Spain

- On 14 May Joaquim Torra is sworn in as Catalan President after the unsuccessful attempts of Carles Puigdemont, Jordi Sanchez and Jordi Turull, which were blocked by the central government.
- On 25 May the National Court passes sentence in the Gurtel corruption case, which mainly affects the ruling People's Party (PP, conservative). Among numerous senior party officials, the former treasurer Luis Barcenas is sentenced to 33 years' imprisonment and the party is ordered to pay 245,492.8 euros for benefitting from the scheme orchestrated by the defendants. The sentence prompts a no-confidence motion against the government, tabled by the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE).

France

- On 1 May 283 people are arrested in clashes that erupt during the International Workers' Day marches.
- On 5 May thousands demonstrate in Paris and other cities against the privatization reforms and cuts introduced by Emmanuel Macron, a year after his election as President.

Italy

- On 13 May the Milan Surveillance Court orders the rehabilitation of former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, who was banned from running for public office until 2019 after being convicted of tax fraud five years ago.
- On 17 May the leaders of M5S and the League, Luigi Di Maio and Matteo Salvini, reach an agreement to form a government. On 21 May, they propose the jurist Giuseppe Conte as Prime Minister. On 24 May, Conte gives up efforts to form a government when the President Sergio Mattarella vetoes his candidate for Economy Minister, the Euro-sceptic Paolo Savona. The League and M5S call for new elections and Mattarella tasks the former IMF director Carlo Cottarelli to form a caretaker government until early elections are held after the summer. On 31 May Cottarelli relinquishes his position following a new agreement between M5S and the League under which Conte will lead a

government without Savona as Economy Minister.

Croatia

- On 14 May Martina Dalic resigns as Deputy Prime Minister and Economy Minister, after being accused of failing to prevent conflicts of interest in her efforts to save the Croatian food giant, Agrokor, from bankruptcy. On 25 May, Darko Horvat is appointed Economy Minister. The Agriculture Minister Tomislav Tolusic takes over as Deputy Prime Minister.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 15 May thousands gather in Sarajevo to demand that the authorities find the truth behind the deaths of Bosnian Dzenan Memić in 2016 in Sarajevo and the Serb Bosnian David Dragicević in March 2018 in Banja Luka. Protesters accuse the authorities of covering up the killings and negligence, and denounce the ethnic divide fuelled by the political class and the lack of socio-economic improvements.

Montenegro

- On 27 May the ruling DPS wins in most municipalities in the local elections, amid reports of irregularities and incidents of violence.

Serbia

- On 29 May the former mayor of Belgrade Sinisa Mali is appointed the new Finance Minister to replace Dusan Vučović, who resigned on 8 May citing personal reasons.

Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

- On 11 May Kosovo's Justice Ministry and the Islamic community sign an agreement to engage Kosovo imams in the deradicalization of young people.
- On 24 May the President Hashim Thaci refuses to endorse the parliamentary appointment of Radomir Laban (Serb List) as member of the Constitutional Court, due to an investigation into his criminal conviction in Serbia for smuggling.

- On 28 May major unrest erupts in Klina when Kosovo Albanian residents protest against Serbs displaced in the aftermath of the 1999 conflict who return to visit the local church.

FYROM

- On 4 May the Deputy Justice Minister Oliver Ristovski announces that the Special Prosecution set up in 2015 to investigate high-level crimes committed during the VMRO-DPMNE's mandate will become part of the regular prosecution, thereby allowing an extension to its mandate.
- On 21 May the Skopje Criminal Court clears the Prime Minister Zoran Zaev of charges of bribing a local businessman from Strumica.
- On 23 May a court in Skopje sentences the former Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski to two years' imprisonment for the unlawful purchase of a luxury car.

Albania

- On 26 May the main opposition parties lead a mass demonstration accusing the government of links to drug dealers and calling for the resignation of the Prime Minister Edi Rama and Interior Minister Fatmir Xhafaj.

Greece

- On 4 May the Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras travels to Lemnos and Lesbos. He announces measures to improve their economies and highlights the growing number of migrants that continue to arrive from Turkey, despite the agreement between Ankara and the EU. He also stresses the importance of maintaining stability in the region and national security and integrity, a message tacitly aimed at Turkey. The visit comes amid rising anger from an overwhelmed local community, with resettlement delays already leaving detention centres at double their capacity. On 16 May the Parliament agrees to simplify and streamline asylum procedures.

Turkey

- On 2 May the Republican People's Party (CHP), the country's main opposi-

tion party, the new centre-right party Iyi, the moderate Islamist Saadet and the liberal-conservative Democratic Party agree on an alliance to run together in the early legislative elections set for 24 June.

- On 4 May Muharrem Ince is elected as the CHP candidate for the presidential elections on 24 June.

Cyprus

- On 2 May the press reports the intention of Cyprus and Israel to apply for international arbitration to resolve a dispute over the reserves of the Aphrodite gas field, located on the sea border between the two countries.

Syria

- On 9 May Syria becomes the stage for the first armed confrontation between Iran and Israel when Iranian missiles aimed at Israeli positions in the Golan Heights are intercepted by Israeli air defence batteries and land in Syria. In response, Israel launches an airstrike against targets of the Revolutionary Guard in Syria.
- On 14 May a new round of Syrian peace talks begin in Astana, brokered by Iran, Russia and Turkey and without the participation of the US.
- On 15 May the last of the fighters withdraw from the last rebel-held area in central Syria.
- On 16 May the OPCW reports that its investigators have determined that chlorine gas was used in an attack on Sarqeb in Idlib, in February 2017. The chemical agents found had not been declared by Damascus before the destruction of its stockpile in 2013.
- On 21 May the army announces its total control over the south of Damascus after pushing Daesh out of the area, following a ceasefire to allow the evacuation of jihadists from Yarmouk and Tadamun.

Lebanon

- On 6 May, with a turnout of 49.2%, the alliance between Hezbollah and Amal wins the parliamentary elections and takes 30 seats, followed by the Future Movement with 21 seats.
- On 16 May Gay Pride in Beirut is suspended after its main organizer Hadi

Damien reports his arrest and subsequent release by the authorities on the condition that he sign a statement calling off the event.

- On 16 May the Gulf Cooperation Council increases sanctions against senior Hezbollah officials, a measure similar to that taken by the US.
- On 23 May Nabih Berri is reelected as speaker of the Parliament.
- On 25 March the President Michel Aoun appoints Saad Hariri as Prime Minister again.

Egypt

- On 10 May the army announces the death of 21 terrorists in recent days in Sinai. Like in the preceding months, operations in the area continue throughout May with more deaths and arrests.
- On 14 May the police are deployed at Cairo's metro stations a day after more than twenty people are arrested in the context of the protests against the fare hikes.
- On 16 May the President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi announces he will pardon 332 prisoners on the eve of the month of Ramadan.
- On 22 May the journalist Ismail Al-Alexandrani, arrested more than two years ago, is sentenced to 10 years in prison for belonging to an outlawed organization and spreading fake news.
- On 29 May four senior officials are arrested, including the chairman of the state-owned Food Industries Holding Company (FIHC), accused of receiving bribes.
- On 30 May the EU expresses concern, following a similar declaration by the US in recent days, over the rise in the arrests of Egypt's political and human rights activists in May. The arrests include the opposition leader Hazim Abdelazim, the journalist Wael Abbas, the lawyer Haitham Mohamedeen, the activists Shady Ghazali Harb and Amal Fathy and the blogger Sherif Gaber.

Libya

- On 10 May the British government issues an official apology to the Libyan Islamist leader Abdel Hakim Belhaj and his wife, recognizing its participation, in collaboration with the CIA, in their cap-

ture in Malaysia in 2004 and subsequent hand over to the Gaddafi regime in Libya, where both were tortured.

- On 18 May the authorities unveil a new agreement that will allow the return of Tawergha's population, a town that was ransacked in 2011 by rebel forces in retaliation for its support of the Gaddafi regime.
- On 21 May the unity government announces the dismantling of a cell known as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Libya, accused of having ties with Muammar Gaddafi's regime.
- On 25 May Libya's two rival governments condemn the car bomb attack carried out the previous day in Benghazi, which left at least seven dead.
- On 29 May the summit on Libya held in Paris sees the country's rival leaders reach an agreement to hold legislative and presidential elections in December.
- On 31 May the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs warns that, since April, unprecedented levels of violence have been reached in Derna in the fighting between the Islamist Derna Protection Force and Khalifa Haftar's forces, which have held the city under siege since July 2017.

Tunisia

- On 6 May Tunisia holds its first municipal elections since the Revolution in 2011, with an abstention rate of 70%. The Islamist Ennahda party took 155 of the 350 municipalities with 44.29% of the vote. There are good results also for the independent lists, which are the most voted in 96 municipalities. Nidaa Tounes, the party of President Beji Caid Essebsi, wins in 83 municipalities.
- On 28 May the President Beji Caid Essebsi cancels the talks initiated by the government coalition to address economic reforms and a possible cabinet reshuffle over the disagreements surrounding these. On 29 May, the Prime Minister Youssef Chahed accuses the President's son, Hafez Caid Essebsi, of destroying and manipulating the party that forms part of the government coalition and of again demanding, the previous day, Chahed's resignation, arguing that the current government no longer abides by what was agreed in the First Carthage Dialogue.

- On 30 May the special court for trying cases of human rights abuses in Tunisia between 1955 and 2013 holds its first session, which sets 10 July for the beginning of the trial against 14 former public officials, including the former President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, for the murder in 1991 of the Islamist Kamel Matmati. The Truth and Dignity Commission, set up in 2014, has already referred its 10 first cases to this court.

Algeria

- On 22 May the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights urges Algeria to put an end to the mass expulsion of migrants carried out in recent months.
- On 25 May Merzoug Touati, the blogger arrested in 2017 for his social network posts, is sentenced to 10 years in prison for spying for Israel.

Morocco

- On 1 May Morocco cuts diplomatic ties with Iran, accusing it of arming, financing and training the Polisario through the Lebanese Shiite movement Hezbollah.
- On 23 May Nasser Zefzafi, the leader of the protests that took place between late 2016 and mid-2017 in the Rif region, begins a hunger strike in protest against the conditions of his detainment.
- On 26 May Hakim Benchamach succeeds Ilyas el-Omari as the leader of the Authenticity and Modernity Party (PAM).

EU

- On 8 May the House of Lords approves an amendment against the plans of the British Prime Minister Theresa May to leave the single market after Brexit.
- On 17 May Sofia hosts the first EU-Balkans summit in 15 years, focused on strengthening the Union's commitment to regional stabilization, but not on its enlargement.

June 2018

In Spain, a parliamentary no-confidence vote leads to a change in government and Valencia welcomes more than 600 migrants travelling on the ship Aquarius.

France approves the public railways reform and leads an initiative on strengthened military cooperation. In Italy, M5S and the League form a government. Slovenia holds legislative elections. In Montenegro, the opposition puts an end to the parliamentary boycott. The European Foreign Affairs Council agrees to open accession talks with Albania and FYROM in 2019. In FYROM, the President refuses to sign the agreement to put an end to the dispute over the name Macedonia. Greece concludes its international financial assistance programme. Turkey holds early presidential and parliamentary elections. In Syria, the regime takes control of the eastern part of Dera. In Jordan, Abdullah II replaces the Prime Minister. In Egypt, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi is sworn in as President. In Morocco, the leaders of the Hirak protest movement are jailed.

Spain

- On 1 June the government accepts the new ministers of the Catalan government appointed by the regional President Joaquim Torra, thereby ending the application in Catalonia of article 155 of the Constitution, imposed because of the region's unilateral declaration of independence in 2017.
- On 2 June Pedro Sanchez, the leader of PSOE, is appointed Prime Minister by Felipe VI after the success of the no-confidence motion tabled against Mariano Rajoy, sparked by the court rulings against the PP in the Gurtel corruption case. On 7 June the new government takes over, with a cabinet formed by 11 women and six men.
- On 13 June the new Culture and Sport Minister Maxim Huerta resigns after it emerges that he had been fined for tax fraud. On 14 June, Jose Guirao replaces Huerta.
- On 17 - 18 June 69 dinghies carrying 986 immigrants reach the Andalusian coast in a time span of 48 hours. Since the beginning of the year, 17,614 immigrants aboard 803 dinghies have so far landed on Andalusian shores. On 23, 24 and 25 June almost 1,700 immigrants are rescued in Spanish waters, bringing the number of arrivals in the last fortnight to more than 3,000.

France

- On 1 June the far-right party the National Front holds an internal referendum that approves changing its name to the National Rally.
- On 4 June the police evict thousands of people from two illegal migrant camps in Paris, following a similar operation in May, in which the city's largest camp was dismantled.
- On 5 June the anti-corruption prosecutor orders the search of the Finance Ministry in an anti-corruption probe that would affect the secretary-general of the Élysée Palace, Alexis Kohler.
- On 13 June the National Assembly approves the reform of the state railway (SNCF) to open the sector to competition in 2020. On 14 June, the Senate approves the ambitious and controversial reform bill for SNCF, which has accumulated a debt of 54.4 billion euros.
- On 25 June the United Kingdom, Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia and Portugal join France in the creation of the European Intervention Initiative (E2I), a military coalition outside of NATO and the EU.

Italy

- On 1 June Giuseppe Conte is sworn in as Prime Minister along with 18 ministers of his cabinet, formed by M5S and the League. The cabinet includes the Eurosceptic Paolo Savona as European Affairs Minister and not at the helm of the Economy, a proposal that led to a presidential veto on Conte's first attempt to form a government in May.
- On 10 June the Italian Vice-President and Interior Minister Matteo Salvini, leader of the League, orders the closure of Italian ports to Aquarius, a ship carrying more than 600 immigrants, and asks Malta to receive the vessel. Malta refused to accept any responsibility in the matter. Spain welcomes the ship in Valencia on 17 June.
- On 13 June a coast guard ship with 932 immigrants aboard and two bodies arrives in Catania.
- On 18 June the Interior Minister Matteo Salvini announces his intention to take a census of the Roma population and expel any residing in the country illegally.
- On 24 June the centre-right wins in 75 municipalities in the local elections,

thanks to the surge of the League and the crisis suffered by the left, which loses several of its historical strongholds.

Malta

- On 26 June Malta agrees to receive the German NGO rescue ship Lifeline. Some of the 234 immigrants aboard will go to Italy.

Slovenia

- On 3 June Janez Jansa's conservative and anti-immigration Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS) wins in the legislative elections. The List of Marjan Sarec (LMS) comes second place.
- On 18 June Slovenia announces it is filing a case against Croatia at the European Court of Justice for Zagreb's failure to implement the ruling of the UN Permanent Court of Arbitration on the Piran Bay border demarcation.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 4 June the State Court of Bosnia annuls the acquittal of Naser Oric, the former commander of the Bosnian army in Srebrenica, so that he can stand trial again for the death of three Serbian prisoners of war in 1992.
- On 4 June the Serb Democratic Party (SDS), the Party of Democratic Progress (PDP) and the National Democratic Movement (NDP) agree to cooperate to defeat the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) in October's elections in Republika Srpska.

Montenegro

- On 7 June the managing council of the public broadcaster sacks Andrijana Kadija, the media outlet's director, at a time when Kadija's team is distancing itself from the ruling DPS.
- On 13 June the URA movement and the Democrats end their parliamentary boycott which has been in place since the victory of socialist Milo Djukanovic in April's presidential elections and announce they are going to submit a plan to the EC for the creation of a parliamentary commission to revise the coun-

try's legislation on corruption and organized crime, as well as its election laws.

Serbia

- On 4 June the ruling SNS appoints the independent Zoran Radojicic as mayor of Belgrade.

Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

- On 8 June the EU Council decides to refocus the mandate of the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX-Kosovo) handing responsibility for judicial proceedings over to Pristina.
- On 11 June the Constitutional Court rules that the Supreme Court must review the case against 10 former UÇK members convicted of war crimes in 1998 and 1999.

FYROM

- On 17 June the Prime Ministers of Greece and FYROM sign an agreement by which FYROM will change its name to North Macedonia, thereby ending a dispute that dates back to the breakup of Yugoslavia. On 20 June, the Parliament ratifies the agreement despite opposition from VMRO-DPMNE. On 27 June, the President Gjorge Ivanov refuses to ratify the agreement, which sparks protests in both FYROM and Greece.

Albania

- On 26 June the European Foreign Affairs Ministers agree to begin accession negotiations with Albania and FYROM in 2019.

Greece

- On 16 June the government survives a no-confidence motion over the agreement with FYROM on the Macedonia naming dispute, tabled by the opposition New Democracy (ND).
- On 18 June the MP of the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party Konstantinos Barbarousis is arrested for high treason for his Parliamentary intervention in which he called on the armed forces to overthrow the government.

- On 22 June the eurozone closes Greece's fourth and final bailout review, entailing measures to reduce the public debt, a new reimbursement of 15 billion euros and the end of eight years of assistance programmes.

Turkey

- On 1 June more than 60 people are arrested for their alleged links with Fethullah Gulen, accused by Ankara of being behind the 2016 coup attempt. On 23 June, a further 47 people are arrested on the same charges.
- On 7 June Turkey announces the suspension of its bilateral migrant readmission deal with Greece following the release of four Turkish soldiers who were seeking asylum in the country, and whose extradition has been demanded by Ankara.
- On 24 June Turkey holds early presidential and legislative elections. With a turnout of more than 87%, Recep Tayyip Erdogan secures his continued presidency until 2023 with 52.59% of the vote, and his party, the Islamist AKP, allied with the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), obtains 342 of the 600 seats in the legislative elections.

Cyprus

- On 4 June the IMF concludes its post-programme monitoring discussions with Cyprus and supports its extension until 31 July 2019.

Syria

- On 7 June a Russian airstrike kills at least 38 people in Zardana, a town in Idlib located in one of the demilitarized zones delineated by Russia, Turkey and Iran and the stage for fighting between the Salafist militias Jaysh al-Ahrar and Hayat Tahrir al-Sham.
- On 13 June the Turkish army announces an agreement reached with the US army for the withdrawal of the YPG from Manbij, a group that Ankara links with the PKK terrorist organization.
- On 23 June the Iraqi air force bombs a meeting of senior members of Daesh in Hajin, Deir ez-Zor, and kills at least 45 members of the terrorist group.
- On 27 June despite Russian opposition, the OPCW approves Britain's pro-

posal for the organization's inspectors to attribute responsibility for the chemical weapons attacks.

- On 29 June the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights estimates that more than 120,000 people have been forced to abandon their homes since the start of the regime's offensive in the south-east of the country.

- On 30 June, with control of most of the eastern half of Dera province taken in the regime's offensive launched on 19 June, the rebel forces in the areas under attack negotiate surrender agreements.

Jordan

- On 1 June Abdullah II freezes the fuel price hikes planned in May by the government of Hani al-Mulki, as advised by the IMF and which have intensified the widespread social protests that began in January with the VAT rise. On 4 June, Abdullah II replaces al-Mulki with Omar Razaz, who withdraws both measures.

Egypt

- On 2 June Abdel Fattah el-Sisi is sworn in for his second term as President and on 7 June appoints the former Housing Minister Moustafa Madbouly as Prime Minister.
- On 7 June Abdel Fattah el-Sisi issues pardons for 712 prisoners following a campaign of mass arrests in May.
- On 14 June the new government is sworn in with changes in the Defence and Interior Ministries, headed by Mohamed Zaki and Mahmud Taufik.
- On 30 June, the date that marks the anniversary of the coup d'etat that overthrew the Islamist President Mohamed Morsi on 3 July 2013, the viral campaign "Irhah, ya Sisi" ("Sisi must go") calls for the Egyptian President's resignation.

Libya

- On 7 June the UN Security Council imposes its first sanctions on six leaders of migrant trafficking networks active in Libya.
- On 21 June Khalifa Haftar's forces take back control of large areas of Sidra and Ras Lanuf, following an attack by Islamist militias.
- On 25 June the Italian Interior Minister Matteo Salvini travels to Tripoli with

the intention of halting the migrant flows into Italy by establishing "reception and identification camps" in Africa. Libya refuses to allow these centres to be set up on its territory because of the country's evident lack of security.

- On 29 June around a hundred migrants are killed after they are shipwrecked off the coast of Libya. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that, over the past year, at least 635 people have gone missing on their journey to Italy and 292 en route to Spain. The IOM also estimates that migrant arrivals have reached around 45,000 since January, with Italy as the biggest recipient country.

Tunisia

- On 3 June at least 60 immigrants are killed when a boat carrying at least 180 people sinks. The Tunisian authorities report that since the beginning of 2018, 6,000 migrants have been intercepted.
- On 14 June data on tourism in Tunisia reveal the sector's rebound, with figures exceeding those of 2010.

Algeria

- On 13 June with almost 800 resident doctors on strike in university hospitals, the protests are stepped up to demand the reform of their compulsory civil service, which began in November 2017. On 24 June, the doctors temporarily return to work to allow negotiations with the government.
- On 26 June the President Abdelaziz Bouteflika replaces Abdelghani Hamel, considered to be one of his most likely successors, with Colonel Mustapha Lahbiri as the head of the Directorate General for National Security.
- On 26 June Fethi Ghares, spokesman for the Democratic and Social Movement (MDS) and candidate in the 2019 presidential elections is cleared by the Court of Ghardaia of charges of inciting unrest, spreading false information and contempt of court.

Morocco

- On 27 June the main leaders of the Hirak movement, which led the social protests in the Rif region in 2016 and 2017,

are sentenced to 20 years in prison for plotting to undermine the security of the State.

Mauritania

- On 20 June the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights calls for the release of the former senator Mohamed Ould Ghadda, in jail since August 2017 on corruption charges.

EU

- On 6 June the EC approves charging import duties on a range of US products in response to Washington's decision to tax European aluminium and steel imports.
- On 12 June the British Prime Minister Theresa May achieves a narrow parliamentary victory to avoid the need for approval of the final Brexit deal in the House of Commons.
- On 21 June the EU-Armenia Partnership Council highlights the remarkable improvements in bilateral relations and the progress made by Armenia since 2015.
- On 29 June the European Council of Heads of State and Government reaches a complex migration agreement which establishes that Member States can, on a voluntary basis, set up controlled centres for separating refugees and economic migrants on their own soil and processing centres in origin and transit countries. They also pledge greater financial assistance for Africa and the EU Mediterranean countries.

July 2018

In Spain, the PP holds primary elections. In France, the government survives two confidence votes. Italy continues with its harsh approach to migration policy. In Malta, the Prime Minister is cleared in the Egrant case. In Slovenia, negotiations to appoint a prime minister continue without progress. Kosovo receives the green light for visa-free travel for its citizens within the Schengen Area. FYROM is invited to join NATO, parallel to the parliamentary ratification of the agreement on the

naming dispute. Greece is hit by a wave of wildfires. In Turkey, the new presidential system enters into force and a security law is passed that gives the authorities broader powers. In Syria, the regime takes control of Dera. In Egypt, the Parliament grants immunity to senior officials in the armed forces. In Libya, the Deputy Prime Minister of the Presidential Council resigns. In Tunisia, the al-Massar party withdraws from the coalition government. Mauritania hosts the 31st AU Summit.

Spain

- On 3 July the transfer to Catalan prisons of the pro-independence leaders arrested under charges of rebellion, sedition and misuse of public funds in the independence process begins.
- On 12 July the High Court of Schleswig-Holstein authorizes the extradition to Spain of the former Catalan President Carles Puigdemont for the misuse of public funds but not for rebellion, in the framework of Catalonia's independence declaration process. On 19 July, the Spanish judge in charge of investigating the case withdraws the European arrest warrant on the pro-independence figures.
- On 21 July Pablo Casado is elected leader of the PP in the primary elections, beating the government's former Deputy Prime Minister Soraya Saenz de Santamaria.
- On 25 July Barcelona's taxi drivers begin a strike which continues throughout the month and which Spain's other main cities join to demand a limit be put on the licenses for car-hailing services.
- On 26 July 602 sub-Saharaners enter Ceuta after storming the border fence and clashing with police officers. 22 police officers and 132 migrants are left injured.

France

- On 7 July Nantes suffers its fifth night of unrest following the death of Aboubakar Fofana, a young Frenchman of African origin who was wanted by police and died on 3 July at a police traffic stop during his capture.
- On 15 July clashes break out in Paris during the celebration of France's victory over Croatia in the final of the Rus-

sia World Cup, despite the deployment of more than 12,000 police officers.

- On 22 July Alexandre Benalla, security chief for the President Emmanuel Macron, is charged with beating demonstrators on 1 May posing as a police officer. The Gaullists and the left both table no-confidence votes against the government on 31 July, which are defeated thanks to the parliamentary majority of Macron's party, the Republic on the Move (LREM, liberal).

Italy

- On 15 July Italy allows 450 immigrants to disembark after Malta, Spain, Portugal, Germany and France all agree to receive some of them.
- On 26 July citing a sanitary and hygiene emergency, Rome's City Council clears the Roma camp "Camping River," a day ahead of when the ECHR had requested the eviction be delayed until.
- On 31 July, according to the NGO Proactiva Open Arms, an Italian towboat, Asso 28, takes the 108 migrants it is carrying to disembark in Libya.

Malta

- On 22 July after a year-long inquiry, the attorney general considers there to be insufficient evidence to link the Prime Minister Joseph Muscat, his wife Michelle, his aide Keith Schembri, the Tourism Minister Konrad Mizzi or the former European Commissioner John Dalli with fraudulent practices in the Egrant case, connected with the Panama Papers financial scandal.
- On 30 July the MPs from the Democratic Party, Godfrey and Marlene Farrugia, report death threats against them for calling for the resignation of the Nationalist Party leader Adrian Delia, accusing him and the Labour Party of their involvement in corruption.

Slovenia

- On 16 July the conservative New Slovenia (NSi) withdraws from talks to form a government. On 23 July, the President Borut Pahor declines to nominate a candidate for prime minister in the absence of the necessary parliamentary majority.

Croatia

- On 30 July Croatia begins construction work on the Peljesac Bridge that will join Dubrovnik-Neretva with the rest of the country, despite protests from Bosnia, which argues that there is no maritime border agreement and that the bridge will negatively affect the operation of the port of Neum, Bosnia's only sea access.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 12 July five Bosnian Serb military policemen are sentenced to a total of 82 years in prison for the murder of 28 Bosnian civilians in Mount Borje in 1992.
- On 13 July the former commander of the Bosnian army's Zulfikar squad, Nihad Bojadzic, is found guilty of crimes against civilians and prisoners of war in Jablanica in 1993.
- On 26 July around fifty local councilors and mayors in the country's north-east protest in Sarajevo against the creation of migrant reception centres in their municipalities.

Montenegro

- On 19 July the Prime Minister Dusko Markovic announces it will introduce stricter penalties for anyone publicly commemorating or praising war crimes convicts. The move comes after the service held in Herceg Novi two days previous by the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro for the World War II-era Chetnik leader, Draguljub Mihailovic.

Serbia

- On 13 July the Belgrade Higher Court acquits seven members of the security service's dissolved Special Operations Unit of involvement in a rebellion against the government of Zoran Djindjic in 2001.

Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

- On 18 July the EC considers that Kosovo meets the requirements for visa-free travel for its citizens within the Schengen Area.

- On 26 July the writer and politician Adem Demaci dies, one of Kosovo's legendary pro-independence activists.
- On 31 July Kosovo announces it has lifted the temporary trade barriers introduced on 18 July to protect its agricultural produce, after the move was met with fierce opposition from the countries of the Central European Free Trade Agreement.

FYROM

- On 5 July the Parliament again ratifies the agreement with Greece to change the country's name to North Macedonia, following the President Gjorge Ivanov's refusal on 26 July to sign the first parliamentary approval of the text.
- On 11 July NATO formally invites FYROM to begin accession talks after its agreement with Greece on the name change.
- On 20 July the businessman Sead Kocan, an ally of the former Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski, begins serving his six-year prison sentence for falsifying documents to win a tender in 2011.
- On 23 July the government and opposition agree to appoint an election commission to organize the referendum on the country's name change. The agreement marks the end of VMRO-DPMNE's parliamentary boycott.

Greece

- On 11 July Greece expels two Russian diplomats for interfering in national affairs and undermining national security.
- On 23 July at least 91 people are killed and 200 injured by wildfires in Attica, which spark fierce social criticism against the authorities for inadequate prevention measures and their poor handling of the situation.

Turkey

- On 2 July the public prosecutor in Ankara orders the arrest of 68 members of the army over their ties with the organization of the Islamist cleric Fethullah Gulen.
- On 8 July the government orders the dismissal of 18,632 civil servants over their links with "organizations that present a threat to the security of the State."

- On 9 July Recep Tayyip Erdogan is sworn in as President in a ceremony that marks the entry into force of the new presidential system, under which the post of prime minister disappears and the President is granted broader powers, such as the appointment of senior members of the judiciary and direct control over the secret services and religious affairs. After the ceremony, the new government is unveiled, which includes Berat Albayrak, Erdogan's son-in-law and hitherto Energy Minister, as Treasury and Finance Minister; Erdogan's chief advisor Mustafa Varank as the new Industry Minister; and the hitherto chief of the general staff Hulusi Akar as Defence Minister. Continuing at the helm of the Foreign Affairs, Interior and Justice Ministries are Mevlut Cavusoglu, Suleyman Soylu and Abdulhamit Gul, respectively.

- On 11 July Adnan Oktar, the eccentric Islamist television preacher, is arrested on charges of sexual abuse of minors, abduction, blackmail and espionage.
- On 15 July the Interior Ministry announces the death of Mehmet Yakisir, the commander of the PKK terrorist organization in the Black Sea region.
- On 25 July the Parliament approves a security law that grants authorities with broad anti-terror powers after, on 18 July, the state of emergency is lifted, in place since the failed coup attempt in 2016 and during which over 80,000 arrests have been made and more than 130,000 dismissals.

Cyprus

- On 26 July the UN Security Council renews the mandate of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) for a further six months.

Syria

- On 12 July following a brutal bombing campaign, the army takes control of Dera, the cradle of the Syrian revolution, before negotiating surrender agreements with the local rebel groups.
- On 19 July, faced with the advance of government troops, the rebels in Quneitra reach an agreement with the regime for some of them to leave towards Idlib.

- On 25 July at least 135 civilians, 111 regime fighters and 56 jihadists are killed in Sweida in a chain of Daesh attacks and executions.
- On 25 July a delegation from Syrian Kurdistan, which includes FSA members, travels to Damascus to negotiate an agreement for a “decentralized and democratic Syria” in exchange for preserving the country’s unity.

Lebanon

- On 24 July the Prime Minister-designate Saad Hariri confirms talks with Russia for the return of around 890,000 refugees to Syria.
- On 28 July the US orders a one-year extension to its national emergency with respect to Lebanon and the sanctions imposed on the country since 2007, owing to activities involving Hezbollah.

Jordan

- On 3 July the United Nations urges Jordan, currently playing host to 650,000 registered Syrian refugees, to open its borders to those fleeing the rising violence in Dera.

Egypt

- On 5 July the Parliament approves giving the President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi the authority to appoint military leaders, who will enjoy lifelong immunity for the repression carried out in the 30 months between 2013 and 2016, during the Constitution’s suspension.
- On 22 July Daesh’s branch in Sinai confirms the death of one of its leaders Abu Jaafar al-Maqdesi.
- On 30 July the US unfreezes 195 million dollars in military aid withheld by Washington since August 2017 because of human rights violations and Egypt’s ties with North Korea.

Libya

- On 5 July the International Criminal Court issues a second arrest warrant against Mahmoud Mustafa Busaif al-Werfalli, a senior commander of Khalifa Haftar’s army, for war crimes in Benghazi.
- On 10 July the reopening of the ports of Ras Lanuf, Sidra, Hariga and Zueitina

is announced after Khalifa Haftar’s forces agree to hand them over to the Government of National Accord.

- On 19 July Fathi al-Majbari, Libya’s Deputy Prime Minister, resigns as member of the national unity government’s Presidential Council, over his disagreement with the way in which the country’s security and economy has been handled.
- On 20 July the Prime Minister of the national unity government Fayez Serraj reiterates his rejection of the EU’s plans to set up migrant reception centres in Libya.

Tunisia

- On 4 July Souad Abderrahim, from the Islamist Ennahda, becomes the first woman to serve as mayor of an Arab capital.
- On 6 July the IMF approves payment of a new tranche of 249 million dollars of Tunisia’s 1.14-billion-dollar loan, signed in 2016 in exchange for economic reforms.
- On 17 July the Al-Massar party, which forms part of the cabinet in which Samir Taieb serves as Agriculture Minister, withdraws from the weakened government coalition.
- On 17 July the security forces arrest Tarek Haddad, spokesman for the protest movement that has paralysed oil and gas production in Kamour, in Tataouine, since 2017, demanding socioeconomic improvements.

Algeria

- On 30 July the Democratic National Rally (RND) and FLN defend a fifth presidential term for Abdelaziz Bouteflika.

Morocco

- On 8 and 15 July thousands demonstrate in Casablanca and Rabat to denounce the harsh prison sentences handed down to the leaders of the Hirak protest movement.

Mauritania

- On 1 - 2 July Nouakchott hosts the 31st AU Summit, dominated by the se-

curity crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Western Sahara, South Sudan and the Sahel, the unchecked migration flows and the creation of a continental free trade area.

- On 24 July the coalition formed by the IRA abolitionist movement and the pan-Arab Sawab party presents as candidates for the September legislative elections the freed slave Haby Mint Rabah and Adama Sy, a widow of a black soldier who was murdered in the nineties.

EU

- On 1 July Austria takes over the EU Presidency with the priorities of security, migration, competitiveness, digitization and stability in the neighbourhood.
- On 2 July the EC begins a new infringement procedure against Poland for its reform of the law on the Supreme Court, in the understanding that it compromises judicial independence.
- On 9 July the British Prime Minister Theresa May appoints Dominic Raab as Brexit Minister after the resignation of his predecessor David Davis for disagreements over the strategy for leaving the EU.
- On 9 July the 20th EU-Ukraine Summit reaffirms European support for Ukraine’s territorial integrity and the positive results of the partnership with Kiev.
- On 10 July the Western Balkans summit concludes in London, as part of the Berlin Process, reaffirming the commitment to creating a society anchored to European values and highlighting the progress made by candidate countries.
- On 19 July the EC brings Hungary before the CJEU for failing to comply with European asylum and return legislation.
- On 24 July faced with Italy’s ultimatum to find alternatives to its ports, the Commission proposes compensation of 6,000 euros for each migrant taken in for countries that accept migrants rescued in the Mediterranean, and pledges its support to Member States that set up reception centres on their soils. Italy rejects the proposal, which it describes as a “charity handout.”
- On 25 July the EU and the US reach an agreement to avoid a trade war and relaunch economic relations.

August 2018

In Portugal, the former Prime Minister Pedro Santana Lopes launches a new party. In France, Emmanuel Macron issues a decree giving the government the authority to appoint - or dismiss - certain senior positions of the administration, at its discretion. In Italy, at least 43 people are killed when the Morandi Bridge collapses in Genoa. Malta allows 141 migrants aboard the ship Aquarius to disembark. In Slovenia, the Parliament confirms Marjan Sarec as the new Prime Minister. In Bosnia, the Parliament of the Republika Srpska votes in favour of revoking the 2004 report on the Srebrenica massacre. The EU Foreign Ministers voice concern at the proposal put forward by Serbia and Kosovo to modify their border. In Greece there is a government reform in the same month the country leaves the international bailout programme. The diplomatic crisis between Turkey and the US deepens. In Syria, rebel groups continue to surrender and thousands of Syrians begin their return from Lebanon. In Egypt, new sentences are handed down against the Muslim Brotherhood. The IOM denounces an alarming increase in refugee arrests in Libya. Tunisia moves towards equal inheritance rights for men and women. In Algeria, Abdelaziz Bouteflika sacks two generals. In Morocco, Mohammed VI sacks the Economy Minister.

Portugal

- On 4 August more than 740 firefighters are deployed to put out the wildfires in Algarve, made worse by record temperatures on the Iberian Peninsula and the heatwave sweeping across Europe.
- On 18 August the former Prime Minister Pedro Santana Lopes leaves the PSD and launches a new liberal party, Alliance.

Spain

- On 23 August Spain expels to Morocco 116 sub-Saharaners who had violently stormed the Ceuta border fence the previous day.

France

- On 3 August the President Emmanuel Macron issues a decree that gives the government the authority to appoint - or dismiss - certain senior positions of the administration without needing to have previous experience in the civil service.

Italy

- On 13 August the Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini proposes the nationalization of the motorway concessionary company Autostrade following the collapse, on 7 August, of the Morandi Bridge in Genoa, which left 43 people dead.
- On 25 August the Interior Minister Matteo Salvini defends a penal code reform to facilitate the deportation of migrants convicted of crimes following the news of the rape of a teenage girl by a Senegalese man near Venice.
- On 26 August Italy authorizes the disembarkation of 134 migrants aboard the coast guard ship Diciotti, which has been docked in Catania for five days.

Malta

- On 15 August 141 migrants, rescued on 10 August, disembark from the ship Aquarius in La Valeta after Germany, France, Luxembourg, Portugal and Spain agree to share responsibility for the group.
- On 22 August the army rescues 100 migrants.

Slovenia

- On 17 August the Parliament confirms Marjan Sarec as the new Prime Minister.

Croatia

- On 22 August migrants and refugees waiting in Bosnia to continue their journey towards central Europe accuse the Croatian police of beating them at the border, a claim denied by Zagreb.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 14 August the Parliament of the Republika Srpska votes in favour of revoking the 2004 report that concludes

that Bosnian Serb forces killed roughly 8,000 Muslims in Srebrenica, and appoints a new international independent commission to investigate.

Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

- On 4 August the four-month period that EU gave Kosovo in April to approve a special statute for Serbian municipalities comes to an end without Pristina fulfilling its commitment, which arose from talks to normalize relations with Belgrade.
- On 31 August the EU Foreign Ministers voice their concerns at the proposition tabled by Serbia and Kosovo to modify their border as a solution to normalizing their relations.

Greece

- On 2 August according to Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), more than 10,000 migrants and refugees have crossed the Evros River from Turkey in the first half of 2018, surpassing the figures for the whole of 2017.
- On 12 August a state of emergency is declared in Evia due to a wildfire that forces the evacuation of the villages of Kontodespoti and Stavros.
- On 20 August the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) announces that Greece has finally left the last bailout programme agreed on in 2015. The country's next economic programme, therefore, will be the first to be developed by the Greek government in eight years.
- On 28 August Alexis Tsipras carries out a government reshuffle. Alexis Haritsis takes over the Interior Ministry from Panos Skourletis, who becomes the general secretary of Syriza. Michalis Kalogirou is appointed the Justice Minister, Myrsini Zorba the Culture Minister and Mariliza Xenogiannakopoulou the Administrative Reform Minister.
- On 31 August UNHCR urges Greece to address the situation of thousands of migrants in the Aegean islands, where detention centres are becoming dangerously overcrowded.

Turkey

- On 15 August Turkey doubles its tariffs on certain US imports in response

to the US' "deliberate attacks on the Turkish economy."

- On 26 August at least nine PKK members are killed in anti-terrorism operations carried out by the army in the provinces of Bingol, Agri and Tunceli and in the Iraqi region of Avasin-Basyan.

Syria

- On 5 August a car bomb attack carried out by the Abu Amara Brigades in the province of Hama kills Aziz Asber, director of the Syrian Scientific Research Centre, which Western countries believe is part of the Syrian regime's chemical weapons programme.
- On 17 August Saudi Arabia announces aid to the value of 100 million euros for the international coalition fighting Daesh to stabilize projects in liberated areas of northeastern Syria.
- On 25 August the newspaper Asharq al-Awsat reports that more than 16,000 Syrian refugees in Lebanon have returned to Syria since 23 July through the Masnaa border crossing.
- On 27 August Syrian rebel militias hand over 231 weapons and 11 tonnes of ammunition in the southeast of the country, according to the Russian Defence Ministry.

Jordan

- On 2 August the Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi confirms that the border with Syria will remain closed until the situation in its northern neighbour is totally and definitively normalized.
- On 11 - 12 August four members of the security forces and three suspected terrorists are killed in a police operation in Salt in the hunt for the suspects of a bomb attack which, on 10 August, killed a police officer.

Egypt

- On 5 and 12 August the army reports the death of 52 and 12 suspected jihadists, respectively, in anti-terrorism operations in Sinai. Anti-terrorism operations in the peninsula continue throughout the month resulting in more deaths.
- On 12 August a court in Giza hands down another life sentence to the leader of the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood

Mohammed Badie over the 2013 protests that followed the overthrow of Mohamed Morsi.

- On 27 August a coalition of secular and leftist parties criticizes the arrests of opposition figures and calls for the release of those people convicted of non-violent crimes, a day after the arrest of the former ambassador Massum Marzuk, along with another two government opponents.

Libya

- On 1 August the Libyan coast guard rescues 547 migrants trying to reach Europe.
- On 11 August the IOM reports that the number of refugees and migrants intercepted in the Mediterranean and arrested in Libya in deplorable conditions has risen from 5,500 to 9,300, between 2017 and 2018.
- On 16 August 45 members of the forces loyal to Muammar Gaddafi are sentenced to death for killings committed during the 2011 uprising.

Tunisia

- On 13 August the President Beji Caid Essebsi proposes equal inheritance rights for men and women. The measure sparks demonstrations from its opponents, who believe it violates Islamic precepts.

Algeria

- On 17 August the President Abdelaziz Bouteflika sacks two generals Said Bey and Lahbib Chentouf, as part of an overhaul of Algeria's military leadership.

Morocco

- On 1 August Mohammed VI dismisses the Economy and Finance Minister Mohamed Boussaid citing the principle of accountability, which the king aims to apply to all civil servants.

September 2018

In Spain, the Health Minister resigns and the Parliament approves the exhumation of Francisco Franco. In France,

there are changes in the government. Italy hardens migration policies. In Slovenia, the Parliament approves the new government. Bosnia approves changes to the criminal code required to move forwards in the accession process. FYROM holds a referendum on the agreement with Greece over the naming issue. Greece announces lower taxes and increases in public spending. There are new arrests in Turkey for the 2016 attempted coup. In Syria, the agreement between Russia and Turkey to establish a demilitarized zone prevents the Syrian regime's imminent military assault on Idlib. In Jordan, there are new protests against a new attempt to introduce income tax. In Egypt, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi ratifies a law that regulates the media and social networks and hands down new sentences against the Muslim Brotherhood. In Libya, there are weeks of intense fighting in Tripoli and the Prime Minister of the unity government Faye Serraj takes over as Defence Minister and approves a new security body. In Tunisia, a new fuel price hike is announced and the crisis intensifies in both Nidaa Tounes and the government coalition. In Algeria, Abdelaziz Bouteflika approves new dismissals within the military leadership and citizen protests are held in Ouargla. In Morocco, the law that criminalizes violence against women enters into force. Mauritania holds elections.

Portugal

- On 22 September thousands of activists from all over Europe demonstrate in Lisbon against gentrification and the rise in housing prices, which have reached record levels in the Portuguese capital, in line with other big European cities.

Spain

- On 12 September Maria Luisa Carcedo replaces Carmen Monton as Health Minister, who resigned the previous day over irregularities in how she obtained her master's degree.
- On 13 September the Parliament approves the government decree from 24 August to modify the Historical Memory Law, thereby allowing the exhumation of the remains of the dictator Fran-

cisco Franco from the mausoleum in the Valle de los Caidos.

France

- On 4 September the President Emmanuel Macron carries out a cabinet reshuffle. François de Rugy replaces Nicolas Hulot as Ecological Transition Minister and Roxana Maracineanu takes over from Laura Flessel as Sports Minister.
- On 9 September at least seven people are left injured after a stabbing in Paris perpetrated by a man of Afghan origin.

Italy

- On 18 September the public prosecutor rules that the League is to return the 45 million euros it owes the State over the next 75 years, saving the far-right party from possible bankruptcy.
- On 22 September at least two people taking part in an anti-racist demonstration are injured by activists from the fascist group CasaPound Italia in Bari.
- On 24 September the government approves a decree that establishes tougher conditions for asylum approval and doubles the time that irregular immigrants can be detained.

Malta

- On 30 September 58 migrants and refugees rescued by the rescue ship Aquarius are disembarked in Malta.

Slovenia

- On 4 September the President Borut Pahor voices his concern after images emerge showing the Stajerska Guard, an armed group led by the former presidential candidate and leader of the nationalist movement United Andrej Sisko.
- On 13 September the Parliament approves the new centre-left government of Marjan Sarec.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 5 September the police quell a protest in Sarajevo held by hundreds of war veterans calling for a law to improve the benefits they receive from the State.
- On 17 September the Federal Parliament approves changes to the criminal

code to bolster the rule of law and the fight against crime and corruption, a move required for progress to be made in the accession process.

FYROM

- On 16 September thousands demonstrate in Skopje in favour of EU and NATO membership and for the country's name change to North Macedonia.
- On 30 September a non-binding referendum is held on the political agreement with Greece for the country's name change. Despite a convincing "yes" victory of 91%, the low 37% turnout renders the referendum invalid, falling short of the required 50%.

Greece

- On 2 September the former President of the Eurogroup Jeroen Dijsselbloem declares that the eurozone "has asked too much" of Greece in return for the bailout loans given to the country.
- On 8 September the Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras announces tax cuts and an increase in public spending and the minimum wage to alleviate the effects of austerity after the end of the financial bailout programme.

- On 8 September thousands demonstrate in Thessaloniki against the agreement between Athens and Skopje on the naming issue.

Turkey

- On 1 September an electricity price hike comes into effect to counter the effects of the fall in the Turkish lira of up to 42%.
- On 19 September a court orders the pre-trial detention of 24 of the 400 arrested for taking part in protests against the poor working conditions on the construction site of Istanbul's new airport.
- On 24 September the army announces the death of five PKK members in the province of Siirt, as part of the anti-terrorism operations carried out throughout the month.
- On 24 September the authorities order the arrest of 61 soldiers for their alleged links with the cleric Fethullah Gulen.

Syria

- On 2 September the state media reports loud blasts at an airbase near Damascus, attributed, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, to Israeli airstrikes, a claim denied by Syrian military sources.
- On 3 September Russia resumes its bombing campaign in Idlib, after a three-week pause.
- On 21 September Russia and Turkey agree on the borders of the demilitarized zone to be established in Idlib as part of the agreement announced on 17 September, which has the Syrian regime's backing and prevents an imminent offensive from Damascus.
- On 29 September Russia confirms the supply of S-300 surface-to-air missile systems to Syria after the downing of a Russian warplane, for which Moscow blames Israel.

Lebanon

- On 25 September the General Security Directorate reports that some 50,000 Syrian refugees living in Lebanon have returned to Syria since January.

Jordan

- On 15 - 16 September groups of activists boycott ministerial appearances in Tafleeh and Maan in protest against the announcement on 11 September of a new income tax introduced by the Prime Minister Omar al-Razzaz.

Egypt

- On 1 September the President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi passes a law, approved in July by the Parliament, which regulates the media and will allow the monitoring of certain accounts of social network users.
- On 8 September a court hands down death sentences to 75 people for the incidents that took place in 2013 during the dismantling of the protest camps in Cairo, against the overthrow of Mohamed Morsi.
- On 11 September Egypt announces the seizure of assets belonging to 1,589 supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as 118 companies, 1,133 char-

ities, 104 schools, 69 hospitals and 33 websites and television channels with alleged links to the outlawed Islamist organization.

- On 22 September the Court of Cassation rejects a motion from the family of former President Hosni Mubarak for his political rights to be restored following his conviction for corruption in 2015.
- On 23 September a court hands down another life sentence to the leader of the Muslim Brotherhood Mohammed Badie and a further 64 members of the Brotherhood for inciting murder and violence during the protests against the coup d'état in 2013.
- On 24 September the Court of Cassation upholds the death sentences for 20 people convicted in the attack on the Kerdasa police station in Giza, in August 2013.
- On 30 September a court orders a retrial against Mohammed Badie, but adds new charges against him.

Libya

- On 1 September several missiles hit the Hotel Waddan, near the Italian embassy in Tripoli leaving three people injured. An oil depot to the south of the Libyan capital is also affected by the clashes between the Tarhuna Seventh Brigade and the Tripoli and Nawasi Revolutionary Brigades, allies of the unity government.
- On 2 September at least four people are killed and seven injured by a rocket that hits the al-Falah camp of displaced Tawerghans, in Tripoli, on another day of clashes between rival militias.
- On 6 September the Prime Minister of the unity government Faye Serraj takes over the Defence Ministry as well.
- On 9 September the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) announces an agreement between the armed groups that operate in Tripoli to create a mechanism that consolidates the ceasefire agreed on 4 September. The announcement comes after, on 7 September, the military commander-in-chief of the east of the country Khalifa Haftar warns that he will intervene in Tripoli to settle the weeks-long clashes.
- On 12 September the Prime Minister of the unity government Faye Serraj

admits that Libya is yet to fulfil the conditions needed to hold elections.

- On 18 September Faye Serraj approves a decree for the creation of a new security body, the Joint Force for Conflict Resolution and Security Imposition, prompted by the clashes in recent weeks between different militias in Tripoli.
- On 20 September the National Oil Corporation (NOC), announces the reopening of the runway at the Wafa oilfield hours after reporting its closure by members of the Petroleum Facilities Guard (PFG).
- On 23 September the Libyan coast guard rescues 235 migrants.
- On 24 September the death toll of the fierce fighting between militias in Tripoli which began in August stands at 115.

Tunisia

- On 1 September the government announces a 4% fuel price hike, the year's fourth, to control its budget deficit and comply with agreements reached with the international lenders.
- On 15 September Nidaa Tounes announces it is suspending the membership of the Prime Minister Youssef Chahed in the context of a confrontation over the leadership of the ruling government between the Prime Minister and Hafez Caid Essebsi, the Tunisian President's son. In May, Chahed accused Essebsi of dynamiting the party. Essebsi, for his part, supported by the UGTT union, has been calling for Chahed to step down from the leadership of the government, accusing him of failing to resolve the economic and social crisis affecting Tunisia.
- On 25 September the President Beji Caid Essebsi announces the end of the alliance between his party Nida Tounes and the moderate Islamist Ennahda, and promises legislative and presidential elections for December 2019.

Algeria

- On 4 September the President Abdelaziz Bouteflika dismisses several generals to bolster his control over the power, in view of a possible reelection in 2019, and reduce the power of the military.

- On 13 September the French President Emmanuel Macron recognizes Paris' responsibility in the murder of the communist activist and defender of Algerian independence Maurice Audin, arrested by security forces in 1957.
- On 15 September a demonstration in Ouargla calling for socioeconomic improvements gathers around 5,000 people. The mobilizations, which began at the end of July, continue over the following days.

Morocco

- On 8 September Morocco says it has stopped around 54,000 attempts of illegal entry into Europe and dismantled 74 human trafficking networks over the past year.
- On 12 September the law that criminalizes violence against women enters into force. The text includes the prohibition of forced marriage and sexual harassment in public spaces but does not outlaw marital rape or give a precise definition of domestic violence.

Mauritania

- On 1 and 15 September Mauritania holds the two rounds of its first legislative, regional and municipal elections following August's constitutional reform which created a unicameral parliamentary system. The elections are won by the ruling Union for the Republic (UPR).
- On 21 September the President Mohamed Ould Abdelaziz rules out amending the Constitution to allow him to run for a third term.

EU

- On 12 September the President of the Commission Jean-Claude Juncker defends, before the European Parliament, a dramatic reform of the common migration and asylum policy, which includes greater border protection, part of a project aimed at accelerating the return of irregular migrants and European funding to manage this, among other measures.
- On 14 September the EC announces that the Member States will have to decide before April 2019 whether or not they would prefer to stay on summer

time or winter time, and, therefore, end the practice of adjusting clocks.

- On 16 September the EC proposes a new alliance between Europe and Africa which includes a free trade agreement capable of fusing the numerous current agreements and which allows for cooperation “between equals.”

October 2018

In Spain, the former Economy Minister and IMF director Rodrigo Rato begins his prison sentence. Portugal, France, Greece, Albania and Kosovo all see changes in the composition of their governments. In Italy, the general budget for 2019 is rejected by the EC. In Slovenia, the police resume their strike which is ongoing since February. In Croatia, the Health Minister survives a confidence vote and the former Prime Minister Ivo Sanader is sentenced to prison. Bosnia holds general elections and the former Agriculture Minister Jerko Ivanovic is sentenced to prison. In FYROM, the Parliament approves the agreement with Greece over the country's name change. In Turkey, the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul ignites an international crisis. In Cyprus, an agreement is reached to open two new border crossings. Turkey, Russia, France and Germany agree in Istanbul on a political solution for Syria. Jordan reshuffles the government and announces the cancellation of two annexes of its bilateral peace treaty with Israel. In Libya, the unity government is restructured. Tunisia adopts a law that penalizes racism and is the victim of a terrorist attack. In Algeria, Abdelaziz Bouteflika announces his candidacy for the 2019 presidential elections. Mauritania appoints a Prime Minister.

Portugal

- On 15 October there are changes in the government after the resignation on 12 October of the Defence Minister Jose Azeredo Lopes, who is implicated in the cover-up of a military arms depot robbery in June 2017. He is replaced by Joao Gomes Cravinho. Graça Fonseca takes over as Culture Minister; Pedro

Siza Vieira as Economy Minister; and Marta Temido as Health Minister.

Spain

- On 1 October a march in Barcelona marks the first anniversary of the unilateral independence referendum. On 8 and 12 October there are also demonstrations across Barcelona in support of Spanish unity.
- On 6 - 7 October Salvamento Marítimo rescues at least 1,181 people in the Mediterranean.
- On 25 October the former Economy Minister and former IMF director Rodrigo Rato begins serving his four-and-a-half-year prison sentence for embezzling funds for personal use.

France

- On 2 October the President Emmanuel Macron accepts the resignation of the Interior Minister Gerard Collomb, who on 18 September announced his candidacy for mayor of Lyon for the 2020 municipal elections. Collomb's departure leads to a newly formed cabinet on 16 October: Christophe Castaner takes over as Interior Minister; Franck Riester as Culture Minister; Didier Guillaume as Agriculture Minister and Jacqueline Gourault as Territorial Cohesion Minister.
- On 12 October Emmanuel Maurel, leader of the leftist branch of the Socialist Party, announces his departure from the party, amid a serious crisis that is splitting the party.
- On 18 October protests break out during a police raid of the offices of the Unbowed France party as part of two investigations into the alleged irregularities of Jean-Luc Melenchon's campaign in the 2017 presidential elections.

Italy

- On 2 October the mayor of Riace Domenico Lucano, notorious for his policy of welcoming refugees, is placed under house arrest charged with facilitating illegal immigration.
- On 8 October the leaders of the French and Italian far right, Marine Le Pen and Matteo Salvini, meet in Rome and announce an alliance of far-right

and Eurosceptic parties for the 2019 European elections.

- On 17 October the Deputy Prime Minister Luigi Di Maio (M5S) accuses the League of presenting a manipulated - more lenient - version of the tax amnesty on fortunes held in overseas accounts agreed by both government partners, and blocks the document before its signing by the President Sergio Mattarella.
- On 23 October the EC rejects the annual budget of a Member State for the first time and gives Italy three weeks to redraft its 2019 budget, for failing to comply significantly with European public spending policy, as it foresees a rise in the deficit until 2.4% of the GDP.
- On 25 - 26 October four undocumented immigrants with criminal records are arrested for the rape and murder of the minor Desiree Mariottini in Rome. The dark circumstances of the crime are reminiscent of the murder of Pamela Mastropietro in February in Macerata and reignite the debate on migration and identity.

Malta

- On 7 October the army rescues 120 migrants.

Slovenia

- On 1 October the police resume their strike for higher wages a month after the government of Marjan Sarec took the power following the June elections. The strike began in February but was suspended in March after the resignation of then Prime Minister Miro Cerar, which prompted early elections.

Croatia

- On 12 October the Health Minister Milan Kujundzic survives a confidence vote led by the social democratic and centrist opposition who blame him for the precarious situation of the public health system.
- On 20 October thousands protest in Zagreb against pension reforms that will raise the retirement age and make it more difficult to take early retirement.
- On 22 October the former Prime Minister Ivo Sanader is sentenced to two

and a half years in prison for profiting from the breakup of Yugoslavia by accepting illicit payments from the Austrian Hypo Alpe Adria bank.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 7 October Bosnia holds general elections. The SNSD is the most voted party in the Republika Srpska and Zeljka Cvijanovic (SNSD) will preside over the entity. The main Bosniak party, the Party of Democratic Action (SDA), is the most voted in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its Bosniak cantons, while the Croatian Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina (HDZ-BiH) wins in the majority Croat cantons. The three-member state presidency is formed by the Bosnian Serb Milorad Dodik (SNSD), the Bosniak Sefik Dzaferovic (SDA) and the Bosnian Croat Zeljko Komsic (DF) whose victory over the HDZ-BiH candidate Dragan Covic sparks protests from the Croatian nationalist party.
- On 22 October the Bosnian State Court sentences Jerko Ivankovic Lijanovic, the former Agriculture Minister of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to 12 years in prison for fraud, money laundering and organized crime.
- On 23 October clashes break out between police and some 300 migrants trying to enter the country from Croatia.

Serbia

- On 30 October hundreds of pensioners protest in Belgrade and other cities against the pension cuts.

Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

- On 15 October the Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj sacks Bejtush Gashi as Interior Minister and replaces him with Ekrem Mustafa. Gashi had replaced Flamur Sefaj in April after the controversial arrest and deportation of six Turkish nationals accused of having links with Fethullah Gulen.
- On 30 October Serbia and Kosovo reach an agreement on the reciprocal repatriation of the remains of the victims of the 1998-1999 war.

FYROM

- On 5 October the six members of a cell accused of trafficking over 7,000 people are arrested.
- On 8 October the government approves the agreement with Greece on the country's name change. On 19 October, the Parliament agrees to amend the Constitution to allow the country to change its name to North Macedonia.
- On 23 October the opposition VM-RO-DPMNE expels one of its deputy leaders Mitko Jancev and another three senior party members for acting against the interests of the party.

Albania

- On 21 October the former socialist MPs Arben Ndoka and Arben Cuko are arrested during a series of operations against organized crime.
- On 25 October the Parliament approves a law that bans privately managed betting and gambling.
- On 27 October the Interior Minister Fatmir Xhafaj resigns after his brother is convicted for drug trafficking in Italy. He is replaced by Aleksander Lleshi.
- On 29 October a member of the Greek minority is killed in Bularat in a gunfight with the Albanian police during the Oxi Day (No Day) celebrations, which commemorate Greece's resistance to pressure from Benito Mussolini in 1940. The incident sparks a diplomatic crisis with Greece.

Greece

- On 17 October the Foreign Minister Nikos Kotzias resigns following a clash with the Defence Minister Panos Kammenos over the agreement with FYROM on the naming dispute. The Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras takes over the post.
- On 24 October the former socialist minister Yannis Papantoniou and his wife begin their prison sentence for corruption.

Turkey

- On 2 October a court sentences one of the brothers of the Islamist cleric Fethullah Gulen to more than 10 years in prison for belonging to a terrorist organization.

- On 2 October the Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi is murdered in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. On 23 October, the President Recep Tayyip Erdogan addresses the Parliament to give an account of the investigation into the murder, which he describes as a "political murder."
- On 3 October the Parliament approves a year extension to its authorization for cross-border military operations in Iraq and Syria against Kurdish armed groups.
- On 8 October 23 people are arrested for their alleged ties with Fethullah Gulen.
- On 12 October a court in Esmirna sentences the US evangelical pastor Andrew Brunson to three years in prison, leading to his release because of the time he has been held in prison since his arrest in 2016. The ruling puts an end to the dispute between Ankara and Washington, after, on 1 August, the US announced it would impose economic sanctions against Turkey for refusing to release the pastor.
- On 23 October Turkey warns Greece it will not tolerate a change in Greece's maritime border, days after Athens announces plans to extend its territorial waters.

Cyprus

- On 16 October Cyprus protested to the UN over actions taken by Turkey against Cypriot fisherman.

Syria

- On 1 October around a hundred Syrian refugees living in Lebanon are transported to Syria amid calls from Beirut supporting the return of refugees.
- On 8 October rebel groups finish their withdrawal of heavy arms from the demilitarized zone agreed on by Turkey and Russia in the Idlib region.
- On 9 October the President Bashar al-Assad decrees an amnesty for army deserters and military service dodgers.
- On 10 October Bashar al-Assad approves Law 31/2018 which regulates the structure and functions of the Ministry of Awqaf (Religious Affairs) which is aimed at preventing religious mobilizations spinning out of control in post-war Syria.

- On 14 October Syria and Jordan reopen their border.
- On 27 October Turkey, Russia, France and Germany agree in Istanbul to set up a constitutional committee to come up with a political solution for Syria.

Lebanon

- On 2 October the President Michel Aoun describes Israel's claims of the existence of Hezbollah missile facilities close to Beirut's airport as "unfounded."

Jordan

- On 1 October the Foreign Affairs Minister Ayman Safadi announces that Russia and Jordan are in talks to dismantle the Syrian Rukban refugee camp.
- On 11 October the Prime Minister Omar al-Razzaz announces a government reshuffle. Basam Samir Talhouni takes over as Justice Minister; Azmi Mahmud Mahafaza as Education Minister; Ghazi Mansur al-Zabin as Health Minister; Basma Musa Ishaqat as Social Development Minister; Raed Muzaffar Abu al-Saud as Water and Irrigation Minister; Majd Mohammad Shweikeh as Administrative and Institutional Development Minister; Falah Abdullah al-Amoush as Public Works Minister; Ibrahim Subhi al-Shehadeh as Agriculture and Environment Minister; and Mohamed Suleiman Abu Rumman as Culture and Youth Minister.
- On 23 October Jordan's former counterterrorism chief Habis al-Hanini is murdered in Madaba.

Egypt

- On 2 October Daesh announces the death of Abu Hamza al-Maqdisi, one of its senior members in Sinai, in anti-terrorist operations carried out in the peninsula, which continue throughout October.
- On 4 October HRW accuses security forces of the forced disappearance of the lawyer and human rights defender Ezzat Ghoneim, who has been in custody since March and was due to be released on 4 September.
- On 6 October the former presidential candidate and human rights activ-

ist Khaled Ali is banned from leaving the country accused of illegal funding with the aim of harming national security.

Libya

- On 3 October Ahmed Araibi, the deputy head of the secret services in eastern Libya is kidnapped.
- On 7 October the Prime Minister Fayez Serraj reshuffles the government to broaden the unity government's powers in Libya and bolster security in Tripoli. Fathi Ali Bashagha, from Misrata and close to armed groups involved in the clashes in Tripoli takes over as Interior Minister and Ali Abdulaziz Issawi, from Benghazi, as Economy and Finance Minister.
- On 8 October Libya's eastern forces, led by Khalifa Haftar, arrest the Islamist Hisham al-Ashmawy in Derna, wanted by the Egyptian authorities.

Tunisia

- On 9 October the Parliament approves a law with an overwhelming majority that penalizes racist discourse, the incitement of hatred and discrimination.
- On 9 October Slim Azzabi, the head of the presidential cabinet, resigns in the context of a steady weakening of Beji Caid Essebsi and his party, Nidaa Tounes.
- On 15 October the Free Patriotic Union merges with Nidaa Tounes.
- On 29 October at least nine people are injured in a suicide bomb attack outside the Municipal Theatre in Tunis, carried out by a young woman from Mahdia.

Algeria

- On 21 October the Parliament resumes its activity after being paralysed for more than three weeks by a broad group of lawmakers, mostly from the ruling FLN and the RND, demanding the resignation of the parliament speaker and FLN member Said Bouhadja. On 24 October, the Parliament elects Mouad Bouchareb as its new speaker. On 27 October, the Socialist Forces Front suspends its parliamentary activity to denounce "the taking of legislative power"

by the cabinet following Bouchareb's election.

- On 28 October a demonstration in Tizi Ouzou calls for a boycott of the teaching of Arabic in colleges in Kabylie in response to demands from MP Naima Salhi and numerous parents of students to stop the generalized teaching in Amazigh in the region.
- On 28 October the secretary general of the FLN Djamel Ould Abbes announces that the President Abdelaziz Bouteflika will be the ruling party's candidate for the presidential elections in April 2019.

Morocco

- On 26 October 22 prisoners from the Hirak movement which, led the protests in the Rif region in 2016 and 2017, end their hunger strike after the authorities agree to improve living conditions in the prison.

Mauritania

- On 8 October a demonstration demands the release of the anti-slavery activist Biram Ould Dah Ould Abeid, ending in clashes with the police.
- On 8 October Cheikh Ould Baya is elected as speaker of the National Assembly.
- On 29 October the President Mohamed Ould Abdelaziz appoints Mohamed Salem Ould Bechir as Prime Minister.
- On 29 October Boydiel Ould Houmeid dissolves his party, El Wiam, which took part in the protests in 2011 against Mohamed Ould Abdelaziz, to join the ruling UPR.
- On 30 October the chief of staff Mohamed Ould Ghazouani is appointed Defence Minister and the leader of the UPR Sidi Mohamed Ould Maham takes over as government spokesman.

EU

- On 8 October the EU expresses its alarm over the recent murders of three investigative journalists - Victoria Marinova in Bulgaria on 6 October, Jan Kuciak in Slovakia on 21 February and Daphne Caruana Galizia in Malta on 16 October 2017.

- On 20 October thousands of Britons of different ideologies demand that the final agreement for Britain's departure from the EU be put to a national referendum, in one of the country's largest demonstrations of the last decade.
- On 24 October the European Parliament approves the Union's budget for 2019 - 166.34 billion euros. The cuts of 794 million euros committed to boost growth and create employment, as proposed by the Council, are rejected, additional funding is requested for the Balkans' pre-accession assistance and the Neighbourhood and Cooperation Instruments, and cuts in the funding assigned to Turkey due to the lack of improvements in democracy and the rule of law are approved.

November 2018

In Spain, judges and prosecutors go on strike to demand better working conditions and greater independence and there are demonstrations in Catalonia against the public spending cuts. In France, there are major protests against the rise in fuel prices and New Caledonia votes against independence. Malta is urged by the EC to step up measures against money laundering. In Bosnia, the former commander Naser Oric is acquitted of committing war crimes. Kosovo triggers a regional crisis by imposing 100% tariffs on imports from Serbia and Bosnia. The former Prime Minister of FYROM flees to Hungary to avoid being jailed. In Greece, there is a general strike. Cyprus opens two new crossings between the north and south of the island. The Syrian government accuses the armed opposition of a chemical weapons attack in Aleppo. An agreement is yet to be reached to form a government in Lebanon. Egypt outlaws the Islamist group al-Gamaa al-Islamiya. Palermo hosts an international summit to work towards an effective transition in Libya, whose parliamentary elections are postponed. In Tunisia, there is a government reshuffle and major protests. In Algeria, Abdelaziz Bouteflika appoints Muad Bouchareb as the FLN secretary general.

Spain

- On 5 November the former secretary general of the PP and former Defence Minister Maria Dolores de Cospedal steps down from the party's executive committee after details are revealed of a meeting with the former police commissioner Jose Manuel Villarejo, currently serving a prison sentence for corruption, in which she asked him to spy on different political figures.
- On 6 November the Strasbourg Court concludes that the National Court judges that convicted the Basque politician Arnaldo Otegi for trying to rebuild the terrorist group ETA's political wing Batasuna were not impartial.
- On 8 November the government approves a law decree under which banks, and not borrowers, are responsible for paying the Documented Legal Acts tax on mortgages, two days after the controversy caused by the Supreme Court ruling which establishes the opposite, contradicting its previous ruling on 19 October.
- On 19 November judges and prosecutors hold their second general strike of the year after the one held in May - the third since 1978 - to demand better pay and working conditions and greater judicial independence.
- On 26 November a week of demonstrations and strikes begins in the Catalan health sector, demanding that the regional government reverse the public spending cuts. On 28 - 29 November the state education sector and firefighters join the demonstrations.

France

- On 1 November France deploys 15,000 security officers to deal with the riots, attacks on police officers and torching of cars that took place across multiple cities during the night of Halloween, in a series of acts inspired by the film saga *The Purge*.
- On 4 November a referendum is held in which New Caledonia decides against independence from France with 56.4% of the vote.
- On 6 November six people who belong to the extreme right group the Barjols, are arrested for plotting to assassinate the President Emmanuel Macron.

The group was founded in 2017 and promotes fighting against Islam and the "decadence" of France through direct action.

- On 24 November there is major unrest in Paris and other French cities during multiple demonstrations called by the "Yellow Vest" movement, which, since the middle of the month, has been organizing protests against the fuel price hikes.

Monaco

- On 6 November the President of AS Monaco Football Club Dmitry Rybolovlev is detained and released after testifying in a corruption probe.

Italy

- On 10 November the mayoress of Rome Virginia Raggi (M5S) is acquitted of giving false testimony in a corruption trial involving one of her chief advisors in Rome's city hall, Raffaele Marra.
- On 27 November the ECHR rejects the appeal of former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi against his six-year ban on running for public office due to his 2013 tax fraud conviction and in accordance with the 2012 Severino law, approved by the government of Mario Monti.

Malta

- On 5 November the Financial Services Authority of Malta announces the closure of the Maltese Pilatus Bank for its involvement in the Panama Papers financial scandal.
- On 8 November the EC urges Malta to take effective measures to comply with European regulations against money laundering.
- On 16 November the Prime Minister Joseph Muscat states that he is ready to resign if the official inquiry into the reports of journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia, who was murdered in October 2017, on his Dubai-based company 17 Black reveal fraudulent practice in relation to the Panama Papers scandal.

Slovenia

- On 21 November the government announces a 4% public sector pay hike

as of January 2019 to prevent the wave of strikes planned for December.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 20 November the members of the three-part presidency are sworn into office after the elections held in October.
- On 30 October Naser Oric, the Bosnian army's former commander in Srebrenica, is acquitted by a court in Sarajevo of war crimes during the Bosnian War.

Montenegro

- On 27 November Montenegro summons the Serbian ambassador in Podgorica after Branka Milic, a suspect in the trial of the 2016 failed coup attempt, flees to the Serbian embassy to avoid arrest.

Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

- On 7 November Belgrade and Sarajevo protest against the decision of Kosovo's government to impose a 100% tariff on Serbian and Bosnian imports because of the hostility shown by both countries towards Kosovo. The measure also sparks protests in the Serb-majority areas, as well as the resignation on 27 November of the mayor of North Mitrovica Goran Rakic. The US urges Pristina to suspend the tariff hike, which is backed by Albania.
- On 8 November the Serbian and Kosovo presidents Aleksandar Vucic and Hashim Thaci meet with the EU High Representative Federica Mogherini in Brussels to try to relaunch bilateral talks.
- On 23 and 26 November the police in Kosovo arrest four ethnic Serbs in Mitrovica for their alleged connection with the murder of the Kosovo Serb politician Oliver Ivanovic in January.

FYROM

- On 1 November a court temporary freezes 69 real-estate assets of the main opposition party VMRO-DPMNE, as part of a large-scale money-laundering probe.
- On 13 November the former Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski uses a car from

the Hungarian embassy in Skopje to flee through Albania and Montenegro to Hungary, where he requests political asylum. The incident comes after Gruevski was sentenced, on 5 October, to two years' imprisonment for illegally soliciting the purchase of a vehicle, a case in which the former Interior Minister Gordana Jankuloska was also given an eight-year jail sentence.

- On 18 November around a thousand people demonstrate in Skopje against the agreement with Greece over the country's name change.
- On 20 November police arrest the former secret service chief, during Nikola Gruevski's term in office, Saso Mijalkov in the investigation into criminal activity involving VMRO-DPMNE.
- On 28 November the opposition VMRO-DPMNE leads the first of a series of demonstrations against the social democrat government of Zoran Zaev, accusing it of mismanaging the economy and making intolerable concessions to Greece.

Albania

- On 14 November the 10th Stabilization and Association Council with Albania reaffirms the need to continue with reforms in the areas of Justice and the fight against corruption in order to begin accession talks in June 2019.

Greece

- On 17 November thousands of demonstrators demand an end to austerity in a march to commemorate the 1973 student uprising, which was decisive in bringing down the Regime of the Colonels.
- On 27 - 28 November the journalist unions hold a strike in the sector to support the national strike called for 28 November to demand higher wages and pensions and an end to cuts in public spending, in the same month that the EC detects delays in the implementation of certain measures agreed with Greece in its economic bailout, which came to an end in August.

Turkey

- On 4 November the President Recep Tayyip Erdogan says that Turkey will not

accept "any attempt to extract natural resources in our country, Cyprus or the eastern Mediterranean" in the context of the disputes over the overlapping jurisdictional claims for the exploitation of oil and gas reserves in the area.

- On 20 November the ECHR condemns Turkey for holding the Kurdish opposition leader Selahattin Demirtas in prison since November 2016 given that he was a candidate in the June 2018 presidential elections.
- On 27 November Recep Tayyip Erdogan announces that his party the AKP will reach an agreement with the MHP for the March 2019 municipal elections to bolster the centre-right vote.

Cyprus

- On 12 November the new border crossings of Dherynia and Lefka open, as agreed on 26 October by the Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades and the northern Cyprus leader Mustafa Akinci.

Syria

- The Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan calls on the US to suspend its joint patrols with the Kurdish militia on the Turkish-Syrian border.
- On 25 November Syria and Russia blame rebel groups for a toxic gas attack in Aleppo. Russia responds by destroying the rebel positions from where the attack was said to be launched and asks the UN Security Council to condemn the attack. The National Liberation Front denies responsibility.
- On 29 November a new round of talks comes to an end in Astana, without making any progress, over the formation of a constitutional committee that could put an end to the hostilities.
- On 30 November the SDF announces the capture of the prominent Daesh official Osama Oweid Saleh, in the anti-jihadist operations in Deir ez-Zor.

Lebanon

- On 14 November Samir Geagea and Suleiman Franjeh, leaders of the Christian Lebanese Forces and Marada Movement, hold a meeting in Bkerke where they put an end to 40 years of tension

dating back to the 1978 Ehden massacre, which took place during the civil war and saw the Marad Movement leader's parents and sister murdered at the hands of the Lebanese Phalangists, of which Geagea was a leader.

Egypt

- On 2 November at least seven people are killed in a Daesh attack on three buses carrying Coptic worshippers in Minya. In response, an anti-terrorist operation leaves at least 19 militants dead.
- On 11 November a court in Cairo outlaws the Islamist group al-Gamaa al-Islamiya and orders the inclusion of 164 of its members on an official list of terrorist entities.
- On 25 November Egypt and Sudan agree to deploy joint anti-terrorist patrols along its borders with Libya.

Libya

- On 9 November the UN Special Envoy to Libya Ghassan Salame rules out elections in Libya for December and supports starting the process to hold them in spring 2019, following a national conference between the parallel rival powers, aimed at helping to stabilize the country.
- On 23 November at least six people are killed and several kidnapped in a Daesh attack on a police station in Tazerbo.
- On 12 - 13 November Palermo hosts a conference on Libya under the auspices of the United Nations. Following the conference organized by France in Paris on 29 May, in which a commitment was made to hold elections in December, which has since been ruled out, attempts were made to bring the rival powers of Tripoli and Tobruk to an agreement on a way out of Libya's political crisis and set in motion a new United Nations plan to guarantee the start of an ordered and peaceful transition.

Tunisia

- On 5 November the Prime Minister Youssef Chahed announces a major government reshuffle under pressure from the IMF to reduce the deficit to 4.9% of GDP in 2018, down from 6.2%

in 2017, in order to continue to receive the international financial aid the country depends upon and amid a surge in social protests.

- On 22 November some 650,000 public workers go on strike in protests against the government's refusal to increase their salaries.
- On 23 November the government approves the draft bill that gives equal inheritance rights for men and women.
- On 28 November Tunisia sees the first protest in an Arab country against the Saudi crown prince Mohammed Bin Salman during an official visit of the country.

Algeria

- On 5 November the President Abdelaziz Bouteflika orders the provisional release of five generals who were sacked in 2017 and who, on 14 October, in an unprecedented decision, were placed in custody by a military court charged with corruption and negligence.
- On 25 November less than five months ahead of the 2019 presidential elections, Abdelaziz Bouteflika appoints the FLN secretary general Mouad Bouchareb as the speaker of the National Assembly to replace Djamel Ould Abbas, who was sacked on 14 November.

Morocco

- On 9 November nine demonstrators that took part in the Jerada protests in 2017 and 2018 are sentenced by the court of first instance in Uxda to between three and five years in prison.

EU

- On 5 November the Dutchman Frans Timmermans, the Commission's First Vice-President is elected to head the list of the Party of European Socialists (PES) in the 2019 European elections. On 9 November, the European People's Party (EPP) elects the German Manfred Weber.
- On 8 November Finland becomes the tenth country to join the European Intervention Initiative.
- On 13 November the European Parliament approves a resolution in which it asks Romania to reestablish its sepa-

ration of powers in light of the controversial reform of the law regulating the Romanian legal system.

- On 15 November the British Prime Minister Theresa May attains the support of her government for the draft agreement negotiated with the 27 for Britain's withdrawal from the EU, despite the resignations of several of her ministers, among them the Brexit Minister himself, Dominic Raab. On 25 November, the EU and the United Kingdom hold a special summit in Brussels to close the agreement, approved on 19 November by the European Council.
- On 21 November Poland approves an amendment to the reform of its judicial system repealing the section on the retirement age of Supreme Court judges, thereby abiding by the CJEU ruling on 19 October which ordered the immediate suspension of the reform, arguing that it compromises judicial independence.
- On 28 November the Commission presents its strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050, with respect to 1990 levels.

December 2018

Portugal repays its debt to the IMF. In Spain, Andalusia holds regional elections. France is still engulfed in a wave of anti-government protests led by the so-called Yellow Vests. Italy presents a new version of the 2019 budget. NATO reactivates Bosnia's accession process. Anti-government protests continue in Serbia. Kosovo approves the creation of its own army and new tariffs. FYROM approves a partial amnesty for the 2017 attack on the Parliament. Albania reshuffles its government. The CJEU rules that the United Kingdom could revoke its withdrawal from the EU right up to the last minute. The US announces the imminent withdrawal of its troops in Syria. The protests continue in Jordan against tax hikes. In Egypt, the trials continue against members of the Muslim Brotherhood. In Libya, there are new clashes in Tripoli. In Tunisia, the Truth and Dignity Commission concludes its mandate. Morocco hosts the signing of the Global Compact for Migration and approves compulsory military service.

Portugal

- On 10 December the Finance Minister Mario Centeno announces the early payment of 4.7 billion euros to the IMF, thereby fully repaying its debt with the international body for its economic bailout.

Spain

- On 2 December Andalusia holds regional elections won by PSOE, although the number of seats held by the party drop from 47 to 33. The socialists may lose the option to govern faced with the possible formation of a right-wing coalition that would take control of the region after 36 years of socialist rule. The alliance would be formed by the PP - which came second although winning only 26 seats, down from 33 -, Citizens - which wins 21 seats, up from nine - and Vox, the far-right party which makes a dramatic entry into the Andalusian Parliament with 12 seats.
- On 28 December the NGO ship Open Arms, carrying more than 300 sub-Saharan migrants, docks in the Spanish port of Crinavis, in the province of Cadiz, after Italy denies it permission to enter any of its ports.

France

- On 3 December, faced with the persistent protests of the Yellow Vest movement and after, on 1 December, Paris is witness to its most serious unrest in the last decade, the President Emmanuel Macron tasks the Prime Minister Edouard Philippe with setting up crisis talks. On 4 December Philippe announces a suspension of the fuel tax hike which was set to enter into effect in January 2019, but the protests continue and are joined by students denouncing the education reforms, lorry drivers, who call an indefinite strike, and farmers, protesting against the rise in taxes, among others. On 10 December Macron announces a rise in the minimum wage, year-end bonuses, and the cancellation of a tax hike on small pensions. These measures will cost between 8 and 10 billion euros and cast doubt on France's ability to fulfil the European stability pact. They also fail to

halt the protests, on which the far-right FN begins to capitalize.

- On 11 December a shooting in Strasbourg leaves at least three people dead and 11 injured. The perpetrator, Cherif Chekatt, had 27 prior convictions in France and Germany and was on the "S" list for showing signs of radicalization.

Italy

- On 4 December, in Palermo, the police arrest Settimo Mineo, the new Cosa Nostra boss following the death of Toto Riina in November 2017.
- On 5 December "Operation Pollino" is carried out, the biggest simultaneous raid in history against the Calabrian 'Ndrangheta in Italy, Germany, Spain, Belgium and the Netherlands. The operation affects the Mammoliti and Giorgi families, which form the "Pelle-Romeo" clan of San Luca, in control of the Colombian cocaine trafficking routes into Europe. The clan has also extended its activity to include human trafficking.
- On 8 December the Piazza del Popolo in Rome is the stage for a mass rally in support of the League in which its leader and Interior Minister Matteo Salvini proposes a "new European community."
- On 16 December the government presents a new version of its 2019 budget which, as compared to the initial version, includes less ambitious public spending after, on 21 November, the EC requests a procedure to be opened against Italy for its high public debt - around 131% of GDP - and for the absence of measures to reduce this and comply with the Stability and Growth Pact.

Malta

- On 30 December the army reports it has rescued 69 migrants in the Mediterranean.

Slovenia

- On 11 December Tatjana Bobnar becomes the country's first female police chief, after the appointment in November of another woman, Alenka Ermenec, as head of the army.

Croatia

- On 12 December Bosnia expresses its disapproval of the Croatian Parliament's adoption of a non-binding declaration that calls for changes to Bosnia's Constitution and electoral law, to give the Bosnian Croat community equal rights with Bosniaks and Bosnian Serbs.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 5 December the former Bosnian Commander Ramiz Drekovic is arrested for allegedly committing war crimes against Serb civilians during the Balkans war.
- On 7 December the former Bosnian Serb soldier Bosko Devic is sentenced to 10 years in prison for crimes against humanity committed in Kljuc in 1992.
- On 5 December NATO decides to activate the Membership Action Plan for Bosnia, after years of impasse.
- On 11 December Bosnia misses the deadline to present its answers to the 3,242 supplementary questions that make up the pre-accession questionnaire, received by Sarajevo in December 2016 and whose completion is needed for the EC to issue a ruling on the country's membership application.
- On 31 December the mayor of Banja Luka Igor Radojicic cancels the New Year celebrations in the Bosnian Serb capital for security reasons, in view of the demonstrations demanding the truth behind the murder in March of the student David Dragicevic.

Montenegro

- On 10 December Montenegro and the EU open the chapter on the environment and climate change in the membership negotiations.
- On 12 December the Constitutional Court orders the release of Nebojsa Medojevic, one of the leaders of the opposition DF, arrested on 30 November for refusing to testify in a bribery case involving the country's special prosecutor and a former mayor of Podgorica.

Serbia

- On 10 December Serbia and the EU opens chapters on economic policy and statistics in the membership negotiations.

- On 29 December thousands protest in Belgrade in the fourth week of demonstrations in support of the opposition Alliance for Serbia against the President Aleksandar Vucic and the SNS, who they accuse of corruption and stifling freedoms in the country following the attack in Krusevac on 23 November on the leader of the Serbian Left party Borko Stefanovic.

Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

- On 14 December NATO says that it will "reassess" its involvement in Kosovo, on the same day as the Kosovo Parliament approves transforming the Kosovo Security Force (KSF) into an army, in the face of Serbian opposition.
- On 28 December Kosovo announces increased tariffs on foreign products imported from Serbia and Bosnia, escalating tensions with the two countries.

FYROM

- On 4 December the former secret service chief Vladimir Atanasovski is arrested under suspicion of orchestrating the attack on the Parliament in April 2017.
- On 18 December the Parliament approves a controversial amnesty law which clears anyone not personally involved in the violent storming of the Parliament in 2017 by supporters of the former Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski and the then-ruling VMRO-DPMNE, in protest against the alliance between the Social Democrat Party (SDSM) and the Albanian nationalists to form a government.

Albania

- On 8, 9 and 10 December Albanian students protest against rises in university tuition fees and the 2014 education law, in the context of the commemoration of the 1991 student uprising, which marked the beginning of the fall of the socialist regime.
- On 28 December the Prime Minister Edi Rama announces a government reshuffle that affects eight ministries, including Education, Foreign Affairs and Energy.

Greece

- On 17 December militants from the far-left Popular Fighters Group (OLA) carry out a bomb attack on the headquarters of the SKAI-TV media group. Ten days later, another device explodes outside the Church of St. Dionysios in Athens leaving two people injured and for which there is no claim of responsibility.

Turkey

- On 14 December the public prosecutor orders the arrest of 219 military personnel for their alleged ties with Fethullah Gulen.

Cyprus

- On 2 December protests are held in different cities to denounce the sharp increase in house prices in the country after, on 26 November, a parliamentary majority censures the government for not doing enough to support people in vulnerable situations who are unable to afford decent housing.
- On 4 December the Geroskipou town council launches a campaign in opposition to its merging with Paphos, as part of the government's plan to reduce the number of town councils from 30 to 16, in view of the financial difficulties many of them are facing.
- On 14 December the Nicosia criminal court acquits the former executives of the Bank of Cyprus, Yiannis Kypris and Andreas Eliades, of charges of market manipulation. A further five implicated in the same case will be taken to trial.

Syria

- On 3 December the Syrian army kills over 270 Daesh militants as part of its offensive in the province of Sweida.
- On 5 December the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet reports that Daesh is executing prisoners accused of cooperating with rebel groups in the province of Deir ez-Zor.
- On 5 December the Syrian army kills around twenty Daesh militants in an offensive to the east of the city of Homs.

- On 12 December the Syrian authorities announce the discovery in Deir ez-Zor province of seven mass graves with the unidentified bodies of hundreds of people murdered by Daesh.

- On 12 December the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announces a new military operation about to be launched in areas of Syria to the east of the Euphrates, to eliminate any "terrorist separatist" threat, in reference to Kurdish militias like the YPG.

- On 18 December Turkey, Russia and Iran agree in Geneva to set up a constitutional committee to resolve the Syrian conflict, tasked with drafting a new constitution and holding elections.

- On 19 December the US President Donald Trump announces the withdrawal of 2,000 US troops in Syria, shortly after the hitherto Pentagon chief James Mattis announces his resignation due to disagreements with Trump.

- On 25 December the Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu says that Turkey has reached an agreement with the US on Manbij, which will see the completion of its roadmap in the town when the withdrawal of the US troops is finalized. The roadmap includes the full withdrawal of the YPG from the area.

- On 31 December Iraqi fighter jets bomb a meeting of alleged Daesh leaders on the outskirts of the Syrian town of al-Sousa, a day after the Iraqi government announces it is stepping up its involvement in Syria following the withdrawal of US troops from the country.

Lebanon

- On 2 December the pro-Syrian political leader Wiam Wahhab calls for calm following the death of his bodyguard in a shootout with police, who wanted him for questioning over accusations of fuelling civil unrest. The incident sparks tension and clashes between Wahhab's supporters and police.

Jordan

- On 13 December hundreds of Jordanians take to the streets again in Amman protesting against the tax hikes planned by the government at the re-

quest of the IMF and high unemployment rates. In response, the government of Omar al-Razzaz calls for talks with demonstrators and Abdullah II orders the approval of a general amnesty, which will affect thousands of prisoners.

Egypt

- On 3 December a court sets 12 January 2019 as the date for the trial against the actress Rania Youssef, accused of “spreading vice in ways that violate established norms in Egyptian society” after agreeing to process the complaint presented by a group of lawyers who accuse her of inciting “debauchery and temptation” for arriving at a film festival showing her legs.
- On 5 December a court hands down life sentences to the Muslim Brotherhood leader Mohammed Badie and his number two Khairat el-Shater in a retrial over the violence leading up to the military coup of July 2013.
- On 6 December a court in Cairo agreed to hear a citizen-led petition for a referendum to be held on the amendment of article 140 of the Constitution, which limits a president to two terms in office.
- On 11 December the government announces that it will restrict the sale of yellow vests fearing that the people will copy the wave of protests that has hit France. The concerns are caused by the growing popular discontent in Egypt in the face of the IMF-imposed austerity programme, which has eliminated fuel subsidies and caused petrol and public transport prices to soar by 50%; electricity by 26%; and metro fares in the capital by 250%.
- On 11 December the authorities release the blogger and journalist Wael Abbas, seven months after he was detained.
- On 20 December the government announces the death of eight alleged members of the Hasm armed group, in operations in Cairo and Giza, considered by Egypt a splinter group of the Muslim Brotherhood.
- On 23 December, in a non-appealable sentence, the Court of Cassation in Cairo reduces the sentence handed down to the leader of the Muslim

Brotherhood Mohammed Badie from life to 10 years in prison. The conviction is part of the trial over the unrest in Ismailiya during the protests against the overthrow of Mohamed Morsi in July 2013.

- On 23 December the general Khaled Megawer is appointed the new military intelligence chief.
- On 29 December at least 40 Islamist militants are killed in three operations carried out by security forces in Giza and North Sinai, following the previous day's bomb attack on a tourist bus in Giza, which left four people dead. The operations are also aimed at preventing acts of terrorism being carried out during the celebration of the Coptic Christmas on 7 January.
- On 30 December an appeals court sentences the activist Amal Fathy to two years in prison for accusing the authorities of failing to protect women from sexual harassment.

Libya

- On 2 December demonstrators demanding improvements to their salaries and living conditions storm the Presidential Council of Tripoli following the authorities' refusal to talk with them.
- On 19 December the Tripoli Revolutionary Brigade, the Nawasi Battalion, the Bab Tajoura Brigade and the Joint Deterrent and Intervention Force Abu Salim, four of the biggest militias operating in Tripoli, announce they will join forces to form the Tripoli Protection Force. Two days later an agreement is reached between the militias to end the fighting.
- On 20 December the state oilfield El-Sharara remains closed, despite the national unity government's announcement of its reopening following the Prime Minister Fayez Serraj's visit on 19 December. The company reiterates its refusal to pay the demonstrators that forced its closure two weeks ago, demanding the payment of delayed salaries.
- On 22 December Libya and Turkey agree to launch an urgent joint investigation into the seizure at Khoms port, close to Tripoli, on 16 and 17 December, of two illegal arms shipments, one containing 2.5 million bullets and the

other 3,000 weapons. In both cases the arms were made in Turkey.

- On 24 December the Libyan authorities recover the bodies of at least 34 Ethiopian Christians executed in 2015 by Daesh and buried in a mass grave.
- On 26 December a car bomb explodes outside the Libyan Foreign Affairs Ministry in Tripoli before assailants storm the building killing two people, in an attack claimed by Daesh.

Tunisia

- On 26 December Tunisia announces it has dismantled the Daesh-linked Brigade of Jihad in Sfax, days after another similar cell in Sidi Bouzid is dismantled.
- On 31 December after four years of work and the documentation of 25,000 violations of human rights, the Truth and Dignity Commission ends its mandate with the recommendations of preserving memory, cleaning up the security forces and judiciary and allowing the special courts to continue looking into the causes of corruption and violations of human rights that have been transferred to them.

Algeria

- On 29 December Algeria holds elections to renew 48 of the 96 seats of the Council of the Nation (upper house), elected by ballot and 50% of which are won by the FLN.

Morocco

- On 5 December the former editor-in-chief of the *Akhbar al-Youm* newspaper, Taoufik Bouachrine, is ordered on appeal to pay 130,000 euros to the Agriculture and Fisheries Minister Aziz Akhannouch and Economy and Finance Minister Mohamed Boussaid, for defamation, more than triple the amount established by the court of first instance. On 10 November Bouachrine was sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment on several counts of sexual assault.
- On 10 December more than 150 states sign the United Nations Global Compact for Safe Orderly and Regular Migration at the intergovernmental conference in Marrakech. Among those who

do not sign are the US, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, Israel, Croatia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Latvia, Australia, Chile and the Dominican Republic.

- On 26 December the Parliament votes in favour of the draft bill approved by the government in August which establishes a year of compulsory military service, which was suspended in 2006, for men and women under 25 years of age.

Mauritania

- On 6 December the EU announces additional funding of 125 million euros at the conference of the G5 partners and donors held in Nouakchott, to strengthen social cohesion in the Sahel's cross-border regions and its institutional capacities in the area of Justice and Human Rights. European funding of the G5-Sahel rises to 8 billion euros in the 2014-2020 period.

EU

- On 7 December Switzerland asks for more time to conduct political consultations regarding the EU's request to unite the 120 sectoral agreements that govern bilateral relations under a single treaty. This is the date originally given by Brussels as the deadline, following 10 years of pressure on Bern with respect to the matter.

- On 10 December the CJEU rules that the United Kingdom can back out of its EU withdrawal process right up to the last moment - March 2019 - maintaining all the exceptions that the country currently enjoys within the Union. On the same day, in light of its likely rejection, the British Prime Minister Theresa May is forced to postpone the parliamentary vote on the Brexit deal, which Brussels warns it will not renegotiate. On 12 December, May survives a confidence vote tabled by hardline right-wingers in the Conservative Party itself, unhappy about the terms of the deal brokered with Brussels.

Gibraltar

- On 16 March the Deputy Chief Minister of Gibraltar Joseph Garcia threat-

ens to rescind the rights enjoyed by Spanish and other EU nationals if Spain exercises its right to veto to exclude the Rock from the Brexit deal.

- On 19 March Europe's chief Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier and his British counterpart David Davis announce that the agreement on the transition period following Britain's withdrawal from the EU will also affect Gibraltar, meaning that the Rock will be left outside of the Union, just as the United Kingdom will.

- On 20 August Gibraltar withdraws its permission for the migrant rescue ship Aquarius to use its flag, as it is not operating as a research ship, as per its registration at the Rock. A month later, the Panama Maritime Authority also initiates the process to revoke the ship's registration, due, according to MSF and SOS Méditerranée, to pressure from the Italian government.

- On 25 November Spain lifts its veto at the last minute on the deal between the EU and the United Kingdom on Brexit, after receiving a "triple guarantee" in writing, including a statement signed by the 27 EU leaders - including the United Kingdom - and the Commission, for any future negotiation on Gibraltar to have Spain's prior authorization.

Western Sahara

- On 3 January members of the Polisario occupy the Guerguerat buffer zone, on the border with Mauritania. In response, on 5 January, Morocco files a complaint with the UN over the "violation of the ceasefire agreement."

- On 21 March the UN Envoy to the Western Sahara Horst Kohler presents the first conclusions of his regional tour in February to the Security Council.

- On 21 March Morocco, Mauritania, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt, along with a further 38 of the 55 members of the AU, sign an historic agreement at the special summit in Kigali to launch the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Representatives of the Polisario also sign the agreement.

- On 1 April the Moroccan authorities announce they have alerted the UN Security Council following "serious"

incursions by the Polisario Front in the Western Sahara buffer zone in Guerguerat.

- On 4 April Bujari Ahmed, diplomatic representative of the Polisario Front in the UN, dies in Bilbao where he was being treated for a long-term illness.

- On 23 September the Polisario leader Brahim Ghali asks the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres to intervene "to put an end to the repressive practices of the Moroccan authorities and guarantee the safety and protection of Sahrawi civilians."

- On 31 October the UN Security Council extends its mission in the Western Sahara (Minurso) by six months, and urges Morocco and the Polisario Front to move forward in the negotiations to put an end to the Sahrawi conflict.

- On 6 November, in his speech to mark the 43rd anniversary of the Green March, Mohammed VI proposes "the creation of a bilateral political mechanism for dialogue and consultation" with Algeria, a few weeks after talks resumed on the Western Sahara, under the auspices of the United Nations.

- On 26 November the Moroccan Foreign Minister Nasser Bourita receives the Algerian ambassador in Rabat to ask for an official response from Algiers to Mohammed VI's speech on 6 November to mark the anniversary of the Green March, in which he calls for an initiative to set up bilateral talks on the Western Sahara.

- On 5 - 6 December talks are held in Geneva on the Western Sahara which end without any progress on the status of the territory, but with the commitment of Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania and the Polisario to meet again in the first quarter of 2019.

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