

January 1 & 2, 2013

Armed conflicts and attacks

Syrian civil war:

- Fierce clashes erupt near the Aleppo International Airport in the battle of Aleppo in Syria, with unconfirmed reports it has been temporarily closed. (BBC)

War in North-West Pakistan:

- Gunmen kill five female teachers and two other people in an ambush on a van carrying workers home from their jobs at a community center in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan. (AP) (BBC)

Colombian conflict:

- 13 FARC members are killed in an airstrike by the Colombian military. (BBC)

Nigerian Sharia conflict:

- Nigeria's military kill 13 members of the Islamist militant group Boko Haram and lose one soldier in a gun battle in Maiduguri. (Reuters)

International relations

- Argentina, Australia, Luxembourg, Rwanda and South Korea join the UN Security Council. (News24)
- United Kingdom assumes presidency of G8 group. Next G8 summit is to be held on the shores of Lough Erne in Northern Ireland in June 2013. (BBC)

Politics and elections:

United States "fiscal cliff" debate:

- The U.S. Senate bipartisanly approves a deal to avert general tax hikes and spending cuts known as the "fiscal cliff". (BBC) (Reuters) (Fox News)
- The U.S. House of Representatives approves the "fiscal cliff" deal, with Republican Speaker of the House John Boehner breaking with his party to vote "yes". Before the vote took place, congressional members were unsure whether or not the deal would be approved after House Majority Leader Eric Cantor announced his opposition to the deal, and other House Republicans raised concerns about it. (CNN)

North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un makes a rare New Year broadcast, calling for an improved economy and a reunified Korea. (BBC) (Reuters)

Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, as part of his military duties, pilots a Royal Air Force (RAF) Sea King helicopter which was sent out in the early morning hours to an as of yet unsuccessful search for a Blackpool, England man swept out to sea there. (NBC News)

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January 3, 2013 (Thursday)

Armed conflicts and attacks:

Iraqi insurgency (post-U.S. withdrawal):

- A suicide bombing in Mussayab kills 27 Shiite pilgrims and injures 60 others. (Reuters)

Mexican Drug War:

- Mexican troops kill 12 alleged drug traffickers who opened fire at a checkpoint in La Estación, Zacatecas. (BBC)

M23 rebellion:

- The March 23 Movement in the Democratic Republic of Congo announces that peace talks will only commence if President Joseph Kabila's government signs a ceasefire. (Reuters)

Arts and culture:

- Vladimir Putin, the President of Russia, grants Russian citizenship to Gérard Depardieu who has renounced his French citizenship due to high taxes. (AFP via ABC News)
- Romanian film director, actor and politician Sergiu Nicolaescu dies at the age of 82 after complications from surgery which led to cardiac arrest. (AAP via News Limited)

Business and economy:

- News channel Al Jazeera acquires Current TV from Al Gore and Joel Hyatt. (AP)
- Hormel is announced to be purchasing Skippy peanut butter from Unilever for \$700 million. (MarketWatch)
- Starbucks plans to open a coffee shop in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, expanding its reach to 12 Asian nations. (The Globe and Mail)
- Subaru issues a recall for nearly 634,000 vehicles in the United States due to a lighting problem. (The Detroit News)

International relations:

- The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom David Cameron says the future of the Falkland Islands is up to its inhabitants, not Argentina. His statement comes after the President of Argentina Cristina Fernández de Kirchner urged the prime minister to abide by a 1965 UN resolution to "negotiate a solution" to the dispute. (BBC)

Law and crime

- Police in India charge five men with the murder of a 23-year-old woman who was gang-raped on a bus in Delhi on December 16, 2012. (BBC)

Politics and elections

United States Congress:

- The 113th United States Congress is sworn in, replacing the 112th Congress. (CNN)
- Republican Congressman John Boehner is re-elected Speaker of the House. (CNN)

Sports

- A friendly match between A.C. Milan and Italian lower division Pro Patria is suspended after Kevin-Prince Boateng and several other A.C. Milan were the target of racist chants by Pro Patria crowd. (BBC Sport)

January 4, 2013 (Friday)

Armed conflicts and attacks:

- Hundreds of thousands of people rally in Gaza in a show of unity between the governing Hamas, elected in 2006, and Fatah, in opposition since then. (BBC) (Al Jazeera) (The Guardian)

Delhi gang rape:

- Demonstrations against sexual violence spread across Asia and are now happening in Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh. (The Guardian)

Syrian civil war:

- 9 people are killed by a car bomb at a petrol station in the Syrian capital of Damascus. The bomb reportedly hit the Barzeh al-Balad district, as large numbers of people were queuing for fuel. (BBC)
- Police clash with demonstrators in Belfast over when the Union Flag is to be flown over their city hall. (BBC)
- A gunman kills eight people in Kawit, the Philippines. (CNN)

Business and economy

- Joblessness in the United States remains constant, with latest official figures showing a modest job creation total of 155,000. (Al Jazeera)
- Swiss bank Wegelin & Co., the nation's oldest, will cease to operate after pleading guilty to a US tax evasion case and being fined \$57.8 million. (BBC)

Disasters:

- At least seven children are killed in a fire at an orphanage in Henan, China. (BBC) (South China Morning Post) (The Irish Times)
- Three people are killed when a Beechcraft BE35 plane crashes into a home near Daytona Beach, Florida, United States. (CNN)
- Six Russian tourists are killed and two tourists are seriously injured after a snowmobile towing a sled veers off a ski slope, crashes into a barrier, and flies into a ditch on Italy's Mount Cermis. (BBC)

Law and crime:

- The Nigerian police announces that Hyundai has paid a ransom of £118,000 (\$190,000) to free 6 kidnapped workers in the Niger Delta region. (BBC)
- Former Nepalese Colonel Kumar Lama is charged with torture in the UK stemming from allegations of human rights abuses during the Nepalese Civil War. (BBC)
- U.S. media report that celebrity Naomi Campbell has been assaulted in Paris. Reports say two men on a motorcycle tried to make off with her handbag during the attack. (BBC)

Politics and elections:

- Journalists in China call for the resignation of the propaganda chief in Guangdong province over "excessive censorship" amid the closure of a liberal website. (Financial Times)
- The Venezuelan government announces that president Hugo Chávez is being treated for a "respiratory deficiency" after complications from a severe lung infection. (Al Jazeera)
- The United States Congress officially declares President Barack Obama the winner of the 2012 presidential election. (CNN)
- The leaders of Sudan and South Sudan, Omar al-Bashir and Salva Kiir Mayardit, respectively, will meet in Addis Ababa to convene for talks regarding escalating tensions in response to Sudan's recent seizure of Abyei. (BBC)
- King of Spain Juan Carlos I gives a rare television interview to coincide with his 75th birthday. (BBC)

Religion

- The Church of England drops its prohibition on gay clergy in civil partnerships becoming bishops, so long as they promise to be celibate. (BBC) (The Guardian)

January 5, 2013 (Saturday)

Disasters

- 2013 Tasmanian Bushfires: Thousands of people are stranded by four major fires burning out of control in the Australian state of Tasmania. (AAP via TV New Zealand)

Law and crime:

- The male friend of the Delhi gang-rape victim - the only witness in the case - on Friday spoke for the first time in front of the nation and exclusively told Zee News that his friend was "positive" and wanted to live even after the horrific incident that took place on the night of December 16. (Zee News)
- An armed standoff between a gunman and police leaves three hostages and the perpetrator dead in an Aurora, Colorado home. (CNN) (BBC) (Fox News)

January 6, 2013 (Sunday)

Armed conflicts and attacks:

Syrian civil war:

- The President of Syria Bashar al-Assad delivers a rare television appearance addressing the Syrian crisis and denounces the Syrian rebels as "enemies of God and puppets of the West". It is his first television appearance since June 2012. (BBC)
- A cross-border raid conducted by Indian troops in the disputed Kashmir region results in the death of one Pakistani soldier and another critically wounded, according to Pakistani reports. (AP via The Washington Post)
- A drone attack conducted by the United States kills at least ten people (suspected militants) in South Waziristan, Pakistan. (BBC)

Kachin conflict:

- Kachin rebels claim the government has fired shells at the rebel de facto headquarters of Laiza. (Washington Post)
- Suicide bombers kill four in an attack in Spin Boldak, Afghanistan. (BBC)
- South Africa announces it will send 400 more soldiers to the Central African Republic in an effort to assist the current regime, which faces a potential attack by the Seleka rebel coalition on the capital. (BBC)

Politics and elections

- Mahmoud Abbas, the President of the Palestinian National Authority, orders that the words "State of Palestine" be used on official documents. (BBC)
- In the Netherlands, Gerard Helders who served as Minister of Colonial Affairs from the 1957 until 1959, the oldest known former politician in the world dies at the age of 107. (NOS)

Sport

- In ice hockey, the National Hockey League and the National Hockey League Players' Association reach an agreement that ends the 113-day lockout and averts the cancellation of the 2012-13 season. (Think Progress)

Technology And Electronics

- At Apple, applications developers say they gave Apple plenty of warning about issues with its iOS maps issues. (CNET)

January 7, 2013 (Monday)

Disasters

- An explosion in a coal mine in the Turkish province of Zonguldak kills eight mine workers. (Hürriyet Daily News)

Law and crime

- A court in Delhi, India, charges five men with the murder of a 23-year-old woman who was gang-raped on a bus in Delhi on December 16, 2012. (BBC)

Politics and elections:

- U.S. President Barack Obama nominates PIAB Chairman Chuck Hagel to be the next Secretary of Defense and HSC Advisor John O. Brennan to be the next Director of the CIA. (BBC)

Science

- Scientists from the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics estimate that there are at least 17 billion planets approximately the size of Earth in the Milky Way. (AP)

Sports

1. In association football, Lionel Messi of Argentina wins the FIFA Ballon d'Or as the best player for a third consecutive time. Abby Wambach of the United States wins the FIFA Women's World Player of the Year award, the first time in ten years that an American has won the award. (ABC News Australia)

January 8, 2013 (Tuesday)

Activism

- Bob Brown, former leader of the Australian Greens, becomes the President of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society leading the campaign against Japanese whaling in the Southern Ocean. (ABC News Australia)

Armed conflicts and attacks:

- Four are killed and a further four are wounded in a U.S. drone strike in North Waziristan, Pakistan. (AFP)
- In a fifth night of protests in Belfast, protestors throw rocks, "missiles", and petrol bombs at police, with law enforcement responding with water cannons and plastic bullets. (BBC)
- The Malian army used artillery on Islamist rebels in Gnimignama in the first skirmish between the two belligerents since April 2012, when Islamist and Tuareg rebels first assumed control of the region. (BBC)
- India claims two of its soldiers have been killed during a gunfight with Pakistani forces in the Indian-controlled portion of Kashmir. This report comes two days after Pakistan made a similar claim of the death of one of its troops due to an Indian cross-border operation in the disputed region. (Reuters)

Business and economy:

- AIG, the insurance giant that has recently paid the U.S. treasury back funds it received on "too big to fail" grounds in 2008, says that it may join a lawsuit against the U.S. for the supposedly harsh nature of the bailout terms. (Reuters)

Disasters

- More than 130 wildfires are burning on the east coast of Australia with thousands of people forced to leave their homes. (The Telegraph)

Law and crime

Death of Amy Winehouse:

- A new inquest begins into the death of British singer Amy Winehouse after it was discovered that the original coroner was not qualified to conduct the inquiry. (AFP via France 24)
- A second inquiry into Winehouse's death concludes that the singer died of alcohol poisoning. (CNN)
- An Illinois man is killed by cyanide poisoning after winning the lottery. (CNN)

Politics and government

- The Venezuelan government announces that Hugo Chávez is in stable condition, and is still receiving medical treatment for a respiratory infection. (Huffington Post)
- Roberto Maroni announces that an electoral pact signed between his Lega Nord party and Silvio Berlusconi's People of Freedom party explicitly rules out Berlusconi assuming the prime minister position again. (BBC)

January 9, 2013 (Wednesday)

Armed conflicts and attacks:

Syrian civil war:

- Forty-eight Iranians who were kidnapped by Free Syrian Army rebels in the capital Damascus in August 2012 are released in exchange for 2,130 prisoners held by the Syrian government. (BBC)

Business and economy:

- James M. Buchanan, who won the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences in 1986 for his role in developing public choice theory, dies in the American town of Blacksburg, Virginia. (AAP via News Limited)
- AIG announces that it will not join a lawsuit against the U.S. government over the 2008 bailout. (CNN)

Disasters

- A SeaStreak ferry travelling to Lower Manhattan, New York City, crashes into the dock, injuring 85 people. (CNN)

Law and crime:

- Retired British businessman Christopher Tappin is sentenced to 33 months in prison by a U.S. court after pleading guilty to selling weapon parts to Iran. (BBC)

Politics and elections

- U.S. Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis announces her resignation from the position, and is expected to step down some time around the presidential inauguration in late January. (CNN)
- The Venezuelan Supreme Tribunal of Justice rules that the latest inauguration of President Hugo Chávez can be deferred while his recovery continues from a cancer operation. (Reuters)

Sport

- In baseball, no candidates were elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame for the first time since 1996, with some candidates such as Barry Bonds and Roger Clemens performing poorly due to allegations of steroid use. (The New York Times)
- In ice hockey the Board of Governors of the National Hockey League unanimously approves the new CBA between the league and the National Hockey League Players' Association. Pending approval of the CBA by the players' association, the league will play a shortened 48-game season beginning January 19. (ESPN)

January 10, 2013 (Thursday)

Armed conflicts and attacks:

- Twin bombings at a billiard hall in the southwestern Pakistani city of Quetta kill at least 81 people and wound up to 120 others, hours after a bombing at a market area killed 11 people in the same city. (BBC)
- Police in France discover the bodies of Sakine Cansız, one of the co-founders of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, and two other Kurdish activists who were all shot dead in a Kurdish information center in the capital, Paris. (BBC)
- 2012–2013 Northern Mali conflict: Islamists capture the town of Konna, previously held by the Malian army. (Reuters)

Law and crime:

- April Casburn, a senior detective with the Metropolitan Police is found guilty of trying to sell information on the investigation into phone hacking to the News of the World, the newspaper at the centre of the scandal. (BBC)
- A gunman opened fire inside a classroom of Taft Union High School in Taft, California. A 16-year-old student was critically wounded, and another student was shot at but was not injured. The gunman surrendered after the classroom's teacher ordered him to drop his weapon. The teacher also suffered minor injuries after being struck by a shotgun pellet. A 16-year-old student, the suspected gunman, was arrested. (CNN)

Politics and elections

- U.S. President Barack Obama nominates White House Chief of Staff Jack Lew to be the next Secretary of the Treasury. (ABC News)

Science

- Near-earth asteroid 99942 Apophis passes close to the Earth with observations by European astronomers estimating that it is larger than previously thought. (CBS News)

Sport

- Researchers confirm that deceased NFL linebacker Junior Seau's suicide was brought on by chronic traumatic encephalopathy. (ESPN)

January 11, 2013 (Friday)

Armed conflicts and attacks:

- Syrian civil war: Rebel forces take over the strategic Taftanaz airbase in northern Syria. (USA Today)

Arts and culture

- The first official portrait of the Duchess of Cambridge, painted by Paul Emsley is unveiled to a mixed reception from critics. (BBC)

Disasters

- 18 people die after a landslide buries a village in the Yunnan province of China, while 40 people are feared to be buried. (BBC)
- 29 people die and 12 people are injured after a bus veers off a mountain road in Doti, Nepal. (BBC)
- A fire sweeps through a complex containing housing for foreign workers in Manama, Bahrain, leaving 13 foreign nationals dead. (BBC)

Law and crime:

- The Metropolitan Police and NSPCC have confirmed 214 separate sexual offences committed by Jimmy Savile over a period of fifty years. (BBC)
- Three people are injured after a hostage situation takes place in a Nordstrom Rack chain in the neighborhood of Westchester in Los Angeles, California. (Los Angeles Times)

Politics and elections

- The Parliament of Sri Lanka passes an impeachment motion against Chief Justice Shirani Bandaranayake. (BBC)

January 12, 2013 (Saturday)

Armed conflicts

Northern Mali conflict:

- A French pilot is killed in a helicopter raid in northern Mali, according to French Minister of Defence Jean-Yves Le Drian. (CNN)
- One French soldier and 17 militants are killed in a failed attempt to free a French hostage in Bulo Marer, Somalia. (France 24)

Climbing & exploration

- The funeral of Ian McKeever, who was killed by a lightning strike on Mount Kilimanjaro, occurs in County Wicklow, Ireland. (RTÉ News)

Disasters

- The death toll in landslides in the province of Yunnan, China rises to 46, according to state media. (BBC News)

Health and environment:

- Beijing's air pollution reaches levels judged as hazardous to human health. (BBC News)

Politics & elections

- Thousands of people gather in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, for the People's Uprising Rally, a protest over many government policies and decisions. (News Straits Times)

Sport

- In ice hockey, the National Hockey League Players' Association overwhelmingly votes to ratify a new collective bargaining agreement reached with the league. NHL training camps are scheduled to open on January 13, with a shortened 48-game regular season to begin on January 19. (ESPN)

January 13, 2013 (Sunday)

Business and economy

- Neelie Kroes, the European Commissioner for Digital Agenda, said in an interview with the Financial Times of London that the European Union is planning regulatory moves later in the year that will facilitate consolidation of the telecommunications market across national borders. (Financial Times)

Politics and elections

- Sri Lankan Chief Justice Shirani Bandaranayake is removed from office by President Mahinda Rajapaksa after being impeached. (BBC News)

January 14, 2013 (Monday)

Armed Conflicts

Syrian civil war:

- Government forces conduct air raids against rebels south of Damascus, as well as in Aleppo, with local observers reporting dozens of deaths, including children. (Al Jazeera)
- At least 57 countries submit a petition to the UN Security Council, calling on it to refer the conflict to the International Criminal Court for a pending war crimes investigation. (Al Jazeera)

Northern Mali conflict:

- Islamists rebels capture the Malian town of Diabaly after fierce fighting with government troops, as French airplanes strike targets in Gao. (Reuters)

Kachin conflict:

- Myanmar government forces shell the rebel stronghold of Laiza for the first time since the resumption of hostilities in 2011, killing 3 civilians and injuring 6 others. (Al Jazeera)

2011–present Libyan factional fighting:

- A police officer is wounded after a grenade attack in Benghazi, as Italy announces the temporary withdrawal of the country's consulate in the city after an unsuccessful attack against the consul two days earlier. (Reuters)

Business and economy

- British music retailer HMV goes into administration, becoming the UK's latest large employer to experience financial hardship. (BBC)

Politics and elections:

- Former US President George H.W. Bush is released from a Houston hospital after more than seven weeks of treatment for bronchitis. (Reuters)

January 15, 2013 (Tuesday)

Armed conflicts and attacks

Syrian civil war:

- 82 people are killed and dozens injured in twin blasts at Aleppo University, as government forces and rebels continue fighting in the suburbs of Damascus. (Times of India) (Reuters)

Northern Mali conflict (2012–present):

- African troops are to be deployed in Mali to fight alongside French and Malian soldiers within a week. (Al Jazeera)

Iraqi insurgency (post-U.S. withdrawal):

- A suicide bomber kills a Sunni MP and six others in Fallujah, two days after Finance Minister Rafi al-Issawi survived an assassination attempt in the same city. The parliamentarian, Ifan Saadoun al-Issawi, was an important member of the Sahwa committee in Fallujah and part of the opposition to Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. (AP) (Al Jazeera)

Kashmir conflict:

- Pakistan claims another of its soldiers is killed from gunfire by Indian troops near the Line of Control. This is the fifth such fatality reported in the past two weeks from either of the neighboring countries who each claim the disputed territory. (Reuters)

Accidents and disasters:

- Badrashin railway accident: A train carrying Egyptian Army recruits derails near Giza, Greater Cairo, killing 19 and injuring 120 others. (Reuters) (Al Jazeera) (ABC News)

- A janitor steals a Saltsjöbanan commuter train and crashes it into a residential building in the upscale Stockholm suburb of Saltsjöbaden. (Dagens Nyheter)

Law and crime:

- Egyptian human rights lawyer Ahmed al-Gizawi is sentenced to five years imprisonment and 300 lashes in Saudi Arabia. (BBC)
- Two people are shot dead and another person was wounded at Hazard Community and Technical College in Hazard, Kentucky. (Kentucky.com)

Politics and elections:

- Pakistani Supreme Court ordered the arrest of Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf in relation to a bribery case within 24 hours.(The Washington Post)

Sport

- Paul McGinley is chosen to lead Europe in their defence of the 2014 Ryder Cup at Gleneagles in Perthshire. (RTÉ Sport)
- The Associated Press reports that the U.S. cyclist Lance Armstrong has admitted to doping in his career during his interview with Oprah Winfrey, yet to be aired.

January 2013 :

French Troops Head to Mali (Jan. 1): In response to a plea from the Mali government, France sends its military forces to the country to fight against extreme Islamist militants. French forces, including paratroopers, engage in combat in Mali with the Islamists militants. The exact number of French troops in Mali is unknown, but it is estimated to be between 800 and 900. French President Francois Hollande says in a statement, "French forces brought their support to Malian army units to fight against terrorist elements. This operation will last as long as is necessary."

(Jan. 17): France sends reinforcements, bringing the number of French troops in Mali to 1,400. Reinforcements are needed because the militants have seized much of the country and the battleground has expanded.

More Than 60,000 Have Died in Syria's Civil War (Jan. 2): The United Nations releases information that more than 60,000 people have been killed during Syria's civil war, which has been going on now for 22 months. The report exceeds previous estimates of casualties.

At Least 41 Engineers Are Held Hostage in Algeria (Jan. 16): Islamist militants take about 40 foreign hostages at a remote BP site in Algeria. At least sixty armed militants attack the BP gas field. Among the engineers who are taken hostage are several British and U.S. citizens. Many fear that the hostage situation is a result of the conflict in Mali.

(Jan. 17): Algerian forces raid the site where the hostages are held. According to officials in Algeria, 37 hostages are killed in the raid, including three Americans. Also in the raid, 29 kidnappers are killed and three are captured.

Election Shows a Slight Move Toward the Center for Israel (Jan. 22): As polls close in Israel, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claims victory for what will be his third term, but the election is not the expected landslide. The overwhelming favorite, Netanyahu is followed closely by Yair Lapid, who founded Yesh Atid, a new centrist party. With 99 percent of the vote in, Likud-Beiteinu, Netanyahu's party has 31 seats, followed by 19 seats for Lapid's party. Lapid, the host of a popular Israeli television show, says in a speech after the election, "The citizens of Israel today said no to politics of fear and hatred. They said no to the possibility that we might splinter off into sectors, and groups and tribes and narrow interest groups.

They said no to extremists, and they said no to antidemocratic behavior."

Protests Threaten Morsi Government (Jan. 25): Violent protests erupted throughout Egypt on the second anniversary of the revolution. Demonstrators focus their ire on the Muslim Brotherhood and President Mohammed Morsi's government, frustrated that the country is on an ideologically conservative path under the Islamists and that Morsi has failed to bolster the economy or fulfill promises to introduce broader civil liberties and social justice. Dozens of people are killed in the violence at the protests. Morsi declares a state of emergency in three large cities: Suez, Ismailia, and Port Said.

(Jan. 26): The violence is particularly gruesome in Port Said after 21 people are sentenced to death for their role in the deadly brawl at a Feb. 2012 soccer match that resulted in the death of about 75 people. Defying the state of emergency and attendant curfew, rioters, who are upset with the verdict, wreak havoc throughout the city, attacking police stations, a power plant and a jail. At least 45 people die in Port Said alone. News reports indicate the victims are shot by police. Police also reportedly shoot live ammunition and tear gas at protesters in other cities, including Cairo.

Azarenka, Djokovic Repeat as Australian Open Champions (Jan. 26–27): Victoria Azarenka from Belarus defeats Li Na of China, 4–6, 6–4, 6–3 to win her second straight Australian Open Women's Singles Championship. Serbia's Novak Djokovic beats Andy Murray of Scotland, 6-7, 7-6, 6-3, 6-2 to take the Men's Singles Championship. With the win, Djokovic becomes the first man in the 45-year-old Open era to win three consecutive singles titles at Australian Open.

February 2013:

Suicide Bomber Hits U.S. Embassy in Turkey (Feb. 1): Ecevit Sanli detonates a bomb near a gate at the U.S. Embassy in Ankara, Turkey. Sanli dies after detonating the bomb. One Turkish guard is also killed. Didem Tuncay, a respected television journalist, is injured in the blast. Unlike the bombing at the embassy in Benghazi last September, the U.S. government immediately calls the bombing a terrorist attack. According to Turkish officials, the attack is from the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party, which has been labeled a terrorist organization by the U.S. and other nations.

French President Makes Triumphant Visit to Mali (Feb. 2): French President Francois Hollande receives a huge welcome when he arrives in Mali. Thousands of people come out to greet him with music and dance, chanting, "Vive la France!" During his visit, Hollande congratulates French and Malian troops on "an exceptional mission," after the troops chased Islamic extremists out of Mali's cities last month. While speaking to the troops, Hollande also admits that "the fight is not over."

Pope Benedict XVI Announces He Will Resign (Feb. 11): The former Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Pope Benedict XVI announces his retirement, becoming the first pope to do so since 1415. He will retire on February 28. He cites advancing age and a growing physical weakness as his reasons for retirement. Speaking to a small group of cardinals at the Vatican, Pope Benedict XVI says, "Before God, I have come to the certainty that my strengths, due to an advanced age, are no longer suited" for leading the Catholic Church.

Pistorius Arrested for Killing Girlfriend (Feb. 14): South African runner Oscar Pistorius is arrested on Valentine's Day after police find his girlfriend, Reeva Steenkamp, dead from multiple gunshot wounds in his apartment. Early news reports that Pistorius had mistaken his girlfriend for an intruder and accidentally shot her, but by the end of the day he is charged with murder.

(Feb. 19): On the same day as Steenkamp's funeral, Pistorius faces charges of premeditated murder in the Magistrate Court in Pretoria, South Africa. Pistorius denies murdering his girlfriend in an affidavit read by Barry Roux, his lawyer, "I fail to understand how I could be charged with murder, let alone premeditated. I had no intention to kill my girlfriend."

Syrian Opposition Open to Talks, Excluding al-Assad (Feb. 15): The National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces announce that they are open to talks with members of the Syrian government in the hope of finding a political solution. However, the offer comes with conditions, mainly that Syria's president, Bashar al-Assad be excluded. The opposition also wants military leaders to be excluded from the talks. Meanwhile, heavy fighting continues in Aleppo, a city in northern Syria where rebel fighters take control of a military base.

Livni Joins Netanyahu's Coalition to Head Talks with Palestine (Feb. 19): Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu invites former foreign minister Tzipi Livni to join his coalition and head Israel's peace talks with Palestine. Livni, who formed the Hatenuah party to run against Netanyahu in last month's election, will also serve as Justice Minister. Netanyahu and Livni make the announcement at a press conference, both saying they have set aside past disagreements and rivalries to work together. "I criticized the government's management over the past four years, but since the election, we've come to understandings to put all that aside," says Livni.

March 2013

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez Dies (Mar. 5): After 14 years at the helm of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez succumbs to cancer. Elections must be held within 30 days. Maduro will serve as interim president and will run in the election, likely against Henrique Capriles Radonski, who lost to Chavez in October's election.

UN Passes More Sanctions Against North Korea (Mar. 8): In response to the North Korea's nuclear test last month, the UN Security Council unanimously passes another round of strict sanctions against North Korea. In a first, China is involved in drafting the sanctions. The sanctions come shortly after the U.S. and South Korea begin annual military drills near the north-south border. Reacting to the sanctions and the exercises, President Kim Jong-un promises to launch "a pre-emptive nuclear strike" against the U.S. and South Korea and says he has voided the 1953 armistice that ended the war between North and South Korea. Kim's threats are mostly dismissed as bluster, but are nevertheless the most menacing in years by any leader. He continues his bellicose tone throughout March and shuts down not only Red Cross hotlines between North and South Korea, but also military hotlines. At a rare plenary meeting of the Central Committee, Kim says North Korea will continue to develop its nuclear weapons program despite sanctions, saying the weapons ""are neither a political bargaining chip nor a thing for economic dealings."

Economy Adds 236,000 Jobs in February and Unemployment Falls (Mar. 8): The jobs report is released for February 2013. U.S. employers add 236,000 new jobs in February, while unemployment falls to 7.7% from 7.9% in January. The solid report has a positive effect on stocks. The Dow Jones industrial average gains 67.58 points or 0.5% on the day the report is released.

(Mar. 29): The U.S. responds to the growing threat from North Korea by continuing the military drills with South Korea, deploying F-22 stealth fighter jets and B-2 and B-52 bombers to the region in a show of its military strength. The U.S. also increases the number of ground-based ballistic missile interceptors in California and Alaska.

Cardinals Choose Argentina's Jorge Mario Bergoglio to succeed Benedict as Pope (Mar. 13): Cardinal

Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Argentina is elected as the new pope, succeeding Benedict XVI. Bergoglio, 76, becomes the Catholic Church's 266th pontiff. He is the first pope from Latin America, where 480 million Catholics live. Bergoglio receives the required two-thirds of the vote after just two days of the conclave. Accepting his election, Bergoglio chooses the name Francis.

Xi Jinping Becomes President of China (Mar. 14): Xi Jinping assumes the presidency of China. Of the 2,956 delegates, only one votes against Xi. Three delegates abstain. Li Yuanchao is named vice president. Assuming the presidency completes the transition of power to Xi. This final step puts him in charge of all three centers of power in China.

Obama Negotiates Reconciliation between Israel and Turkey (Mar. 22): President Obama visits Israel and helps negotiate a reconciliation with Turkey. During Obama's visit, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu expresses sincere regret to Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey's prime minister, for the commando raid in 2010 on a Turkish ship that killed nine people. Israel also offers compensation for the incident. Erdogan accepts Israel's apology. After the apology, both countries announce that they will reinstate ambassadors and completely restore diplomatic relations. President Obama supports the apology in this statement, "the United States deeply values our relationships with both Turkey and Israel, and we attach great importance to the restoration of positive relations between them, in order to advance regional peace and security." The press in Israel greets Obama's visit with enthusiasm. Multiple newspapers use the phrase he said in Hebrew during his visit, "You are not alone," as a headline.

Cyprus Bailout Sparks Outrage and Protests (Mar. 24): The European Union (EU) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) offer a \$13 billion bailout to Cyprus. The EU and IMF also requests that Cyprus raise \$7.5 billion by taxing all bank deposits. Deposits over 100,000 euros will face a rate of 9.9%, while deposits less than that will be taxed 6.75%. The proposal sparks protests in Cyprus and outrage in Russia-many wealthy Russians put their money in Cyprus banks, which are not heavily regulated. Parliament rejects the bail-out, and the threat of Cyprus being ousted from the euro zone looms large.

Italy Overturns Amanda Knox Acquittal (Mar. 26): A new trial is ordered by the Court of Cassation, Italy's highest court, for Amanda Knox, the exchange student from the U.S. who was accused of murdering Meredith Kercher, her 21-year-old roommate in 2007. The ruling means the case will be reheard, this time by a new appeals court in Florence. The new trial will be later this year or in 2014. Currently attending the University of Washington in Seattle, Knox releases a statement through a spokesman and calls the ruling "painful."

April 2013 :

North Korea's Kim Jong-un Defies Warnings (Apr. 1): Despite stiffer sanctions from the UN, Kim Jong-un announces plans to expand North Korea's nuclear weapons and strengthen the country's economy. His plans defy warnings from the United States that North Korea needs to abandon its nuclear weapons arsenal. Kim prohibits South Korean workers from entering the Kaesong industrial park, which is run jointly by the two countries and is located in North Korea.

(Apr. 3): At a rare plenary meeting of the Central Committee, Kim says North Korea will continue to develop its nuclear weapons program despite sanctions and restart the mothballed nuclear facility in Yongbyon.

(Apr. 4): The U.S. announces it is deploying a missile defense system to Guam as a precautionary move. The deployment is two years ahead of schedule.

(Apr. 5): South Korea reports that North Korea now has a missile within range of its coast, but the missile cannot reach the United States.

Economy Stalls as Hiring Slows Down in March (April 5): Only 88,000 jobs are added in March, less than half the amount economists had predicted. The amount is also significantly less than the 268,000 jobs that were added in February. Unemployment decreases from 7.7 percent in February to 7.6 percent in March. However, the decrease comes from more people leaving the labor force, not from new hires.

Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad Resigns (Apr. 13): Prime Minister Salam Fayyad resigns in Palestine amid infighting among the top echelon of the Palestinian Authority and popular discontent. Fayyad is credited with cracking down on corruption in the West Bank, improving infrastructure, and boosting the economy, which resulted in an increase in international aid. It is unclear how Fayyad's resignation would affect the reconciliation of Fatah and Hamas.

Special Election Held to Replace Chavez (Apr. 14): A special presidential election is held to pick Hugo Chavez's successor in Venezuela. Nicolás Maduro wins by a slim margin. Maduro receives 50.8 percent of the vote. Henrique Capriles Radonski, who recently lost to Chavez in the October 2012 election, is close behind with 49 percent.

(Apr. 19): Maduro assumes office. Meanwhile, the opposition questions the constitutionality of his election. In naming his cabinet, Maduro keeps Efraim Rangel on as foreign minister and Diego Molero as defense minister. Rangel and Molero served in the same roles under Chavez.

Multiple Bombs Explode during the Boston Marathon (Apr. 15): Multiple bombs explode near the finish line of the Boston Marathon. Two bombs go off around 2:50 in the afternoon as runners finish the race. At least three people are killed. One is an eight year old boy. More than 170 people are injured. Another explosion happens during the afternoon at the JFK Library, but officials confirm that the incident is not connected. Later in the day, President Obama says from the White House briefing room, "We still do not know who did this or why, and people shouldn't jump to conclusions before we have all the facts, but make no mistake: We will get to the bottom of this. Any responsible individuals, any responsible groups will feel the full weight of justice."

(Apr. 18): President Obama speaks at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Boston's South End. After the service, both the president and First lady Michelle Obama visit those injured in the explosions who are still recovering in the various hospitals throughout Boston. Later in the day, the FBI releases photos and video of two suspects in the hope that the public can help identify them. "Somebody out there knows these individuals as friends, neighbors, co-workers, or family members. Though it may be difficult, the nation is counting on those with information to come forward and provide it to us," says FBI special agent Richard DesLauriers upon the release of the photos and video. Just hours after the FBI releases the images, the two suspects rob a gas station in Central Square then shoot and kill a MIT police officer in his car. Afterwards, the two men carjack a SUV and tell the driver that they had set off the explosions at the marathon. Police pursue the vehicle into Watertown. During the shootout, a MBTA officer is shot and one of the suspects, identified as Tamerlan Tsarnaev, age 26, is killed. A suicide vest is found on his body.

(Apr. 19): The other suspect, Dzhokhar A. Tsarnaev, age 19, remains at large for several hours, causing a massive manhunt and lockdown for all of Boston, Cambridge, and many other surrounding communities. The manhunt ends that evening when he is found alive, but seriously injured, hiding in a boat behind a house in Watertown. The two suspects are brothers and had been living together on Norfolk Street in Cambridge. They have lived in the U.S. for about a decade, but are from an area near Chechnya, a region in Russia.

Syria Faces Chemical Weapon Allegations (Apr. 18): Diplomats from both Britain and France report to the United Nations that there is credible information that the government in Syria has used chemical weapons

recently in its civil war. According to both diplomats, the Syrian government has used chemical weapons multiple times since December 2012. Officials from Israel also say they have evidence that the Syrian government has used chemical weapons. President Obama has said that the use of chemical weapons by Syria's government could lead to a military response by the United States. The U.S. is currently looking into the various claims.

France Becomes 14th Nation to Approve Same-Sex Marriage (Apr. 23): The lower house in France's National Assembly votes 331 to 225 in favor of same-sex marriage. The legislation is expected to be approved by the Constitutional Council and signed into law by President François Hollande. The vote makes France the 14th nation in the world to pass legislation for same-sex marriage. Uruguay and New Zealand have also both recently passed same-sex marriage legislation.