

Africa

Central Africa

➔ **Burundi** **New President Ndayishimiye continued to establish his power, while relations with international community and neighbouring Rwanda showed potential for improvement.** Senate 11 July approved 18 provincial governors appointed by Ndayishimiye, including five senior army and police officers; appointment of defence and security officials as governors a first in 20 years. Coalition of opposition-in-exile 6 July condemned lack of representation of ethnic Tutsi minority in govt formed in June and among governors, with only one Tutsi minister and three Tutsi governors. Municipal councillors 20 July elected 36 senators, including 34 from ruling party CNDD-FDD. Meanwhile, opposition party National Congress for Freedom (CNL) and civil society members continued to face repression and acts of vandalism. Security forces 9 July briefly detained three independent media IWACU journalists after they published interview with civil society leader Terence Mushano; same day arrested Mushano on charges of “threatening public safety”; Mushano released 15 July. Intelligence services 6 and 16 July arrested three CNL municipal councillors in Muhuta municipality, Rumonge province, reportedly to prevent their participation in 20 July senatorial elections. Suspected CNDD-FDD youth wing Imbonerakure 15-16 July destroyed CNL office in Gihanga township, Bubanza province. Unidentified assailants 16 July kidnapped local CNL politician’s daughter in Ntahangwa commune, Bujumbura Mairie province, released her next day. Despite Ndayishimiye’s critical stance on cooperation with international community in June inauguration speech, govt relations with international organisations showed potential for improvement. Ndayishimiye 1 July met with former U.S. special envoy to Great Lakes region. Infrastructure minister 14 July met with EU ambassador to discuss resumption of EU support for infrastructure projects. Rwandan President Kagame 10 July said he was “ready to work with President Ndayishimiye”. In major shift in national response to COVID-19, Ndayishimiye 1 July declared pandemic to be Burundi’s “biggest enemy” at present; authorities 6 July launched countrywide testing campaign; land borders to reopen 1 Aug.

➔ **Cameroon** **Violence persisted in Anglophone North West and South West regions despite talks between govt and separatists, while security forces continued to confront jihadists in Far North.** Incarcerated Anglophone separatist leader Sisiku Julius Ayuk Tabe and nine other separatists 2 July met with govt officials in capital Yaoundé to discuss conditions for cessation of hostilities; in statement 6 July, however, govt said reports of talks “were not consistent with reality”, exposing rifts within govt over strategy in Anglophone conflict. Meanwhile, violence continued unabated in Anglophone regions, particularly North West. Separatists and security forces 4-5 July clashed in Bui department reportedly leaving 17 separatists and one soldier dead. Separatists 10 July killed two police officers near regional capital Bamenda, Mezam department. Security forces 12 July reportedly killed two civilians during military operation against separatists in Esu village, Menchum department; 18-19 July reportedly killed at least sixteen separatists including prominent leader General Okoro and six

civilians during operation in Awing and Pinyin localities, Mezam department. Separatists 24-25 July killed six civilians during attack on Balikumbat town, Ngo-Ketunjia department. In South West, separatists continued to target humanitarian workers and other civilians: Doctors without Borders staff member killed near city of Kumba, Meme department 10 July; up to 60 civilians kidnapped 13 July in Mmouck Leteh village, Lebialem department, and reportedly released few days later. NGO Human Rights Watch 27 July said at least 285 civilians killed in North West and South West regions since Jan 2020. In Yaoundé, unidentified individuals 2 July detonated handmade bomb leaving at least 20 wounded; security officials accused Anglophone separatists, while govt increased security presence in capital, in particular in Anglophone neighbourhoods. In Far North, clashes between locals and jihadists overnight 8-9 July left one militant dead and three civilians injured in Doulo village, Mayo-Sava department. Security forces 15 and 25 July reportedly killed at least eight suspected jihadists in encounters in Tchebe-Tchebe and Gouzda-Vreket villages, Mayo-Tsanaga department. Following border tensions in recent months, Cameroonian defence minister and Equatorial Guinean counterpart 21 July met in Equatorial Guinea's capital Malabo to sign agreement on cross-border security cooperation.

➔ **Central African Republic Violence mounted in west and centre, while security situation continued to improve in north east.** In west, armed group Return, Reclamation et Rehabilitation (3R) continued to step up attacks against UN mission (MINUSCA) in Nana-Mambéré prefecture. 3R 5 July threatened to render region “ungovernable” if MINUSCA does not withdraw, prompting thousands to flee and several NGOs to put their operations on hold in following days. 3R anti-tank mine 8 July damaged MINUSCA vehicle near Baboua, also Niem-Besson axis, in first explosive device incident in country since 2014; in following days, MINUSCA discovered several IEDs in area. 3R elements 13 July clashed with MINUSCA troops in Gedze village, killing blue helmet and injuring two others. In centre, armed group violence continued; notably, clash between Union for Peace in Central Africa (UPC) and anti-Balaka elements 12 July left three civilians and one UPC member dead in Zangba village, Basse-Koto prefecture. Ethnic Goula armed group Party for the Reunification of the Central African Nation (PRNC) 22 July killed at least two ethnic Sara civilians in Bougnoul Niakania village, Haute-Kotto prefecture; in alleged reprisal, Sara assailants next day killed ethnic Goula in Bornou village; PRNC next day attacked Bornou, leaving at least ten Sara dead and 20 wounded. In north east, first phase of Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration program ended 9 July, with 348 demobilised Popular Front for the Central African Renaissance (FPRC) combatants. Suspected PRNC 19 July killed three civilians in Krakoma village, Bamingui-Bangoran prefecture. National Council of Fulani Chiefs 14 July announced its support for President Touadéra's candidacy in presidential election scheduled for Dec. In following days, opposition accused Touadéra of secretly holding talks with Fulani-dominated armed groups 3R and UPC to secure Fulani votes. Former President Bozizé 25 July said he would run for top office again in Dec. UN Security Council 28 July extended sanctions against CAR, including arms embargo, until 31 July 2021.

➔ **Chad Jihadist violence flared up in Lake Chad region and electoral commission published long-awaited election timeline amid tense political environment.** In Lake Chad region in west, explosive device reportedly set by Boko Haram 8 July killed eight soldiers and injured 21 in Kalam village. Boko Haram 31 July killed at least ten civilians and kidnapped seven others in attack on Tenana village. Amid persistent insecurity along border with Libya, attorney general 24 July said ten individuals, including high-ranking members of army and security services, sentenced to prison for drug trafficking across Libyan border. In capital N'Djamena, angry mob 14 July attacked and seriously injured army officer after he reportedly killed civilian during scuffle same day; amid rising tensions throughout country in following days, authorities 22 July restricted access to internet and social media in N'Djamena and other cities. Election preparations continued to spark controversy among opposition and civil society. Electoral commission and National Framework for Political Dialogue (CNDP) early July published election calendar, scheduling presidential election for 11 April 2021 and postponing legislative elections set for 23 Dec 2020 to 24 Oct 2021. Opposition immediately rejected reversal of order between presidential and legislative elections and questioned electoral bodies' independence. Electoral timeline also sparked division within opposition coalition G24; coalition members 6 July said they would no longer recognise Félix Romadoumngar as leader, citing his involvement in drafting timeline as head of CNDP. President Déby 14 July carried out govt reshuffle appointing 14 new ministers and six secretaries of state in alleged attempt to secure wider voter support ahead of 2021 elections. After First Lady Hinda Déby brought defamation charges against former minister and rebel leader Yaya Dillo in May, Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) 6 July dismissed Dillo from his post as CEMAC country representative, in effect depriving him of diplomatic immunity; Dillo in May accused Déby of nepotism after his spouse's foundation signed contract with national COVID-19 task force.

↓ **DR Congo Deadly violence intensified in eastern provinces with high toll on civilians, while tensions ran high within ruling coalition.** In North Kivu province, armed group Allied Democratic Forces 1 and 28 July clashed with army in Beni territory, reportedly killing nine soldiers; two factions of militia Nduma Defence of Congo clashed 11-20 July in Walikale territory leaving at least 37 dead; armed group March 23 Movement 21 July attacked armed forces in Rutshuru territory, leaving at least three soldiers dead. In South Kivu province, coalition of militiamen 16 July attacked Kipupu village, Mwenga territory, reportedly leaving 18 civilians dead and over 200 missing. In Ituri province, armed group Cooperative for Development of Congo (CODECO) killed at least 31 civilians and seven members of security forces in Djugu territory 4-8 July. After President Tshisekedi early July sent delegation of former Lendu warlords to negotiate demobilisation with CODECO factions in Djugu, CODECO faction in Kambutso village 13 July stated willingness to disarm and start peace process with govt under conditions; other factions reportedly followed suit late July. Political tensions increased within ruling coalition between Tshisekedi and his predecessor Joseph Kabila's Common Front for Congo (FCC). National Assembly, dominated by FCC, 2 July voted for FCC ally Ronsard Malonda as electoral commission president ahead of 2023 presidential election. After Catholic and Protestant churches 3 July urged Tshisekedi to reverse decision, and Tshisekedi supporters 9 July and opposition members 13 July protested in capital Kinshasa and other cities, Tshisekedi 17 July rejected Malonda's appointment, citing lack of

consensus. Deputy PM and Justice Minister Célestin Tunda ya Katende, at centre of tension between FCC and Tshisekedi since June, resigned 11 July. Head of Constitutional Court, under U.S. sanctions for alleged corruption and obstruction of democracy during 2018 elections, resigned 6 July. Tshisekedi 17 July appointed three new Constitutional Court judges. After 10 July meeting with top army command, Tshisekedi 17 July carried out major army reshuffle, sidelining some pro-Kabila generals, notably Army Inspector General John Numbi.

➔ **Rwanda President Kagame signalled willingness to improve relations with Burundi.** President Kagame 10 July said Rwandan govt is “ready to work” with new Burundi President Ndayishimiye to address issues that have strained bilateral relations over past five years. In France, Paris appeals court 3 July rejected request to reopen investigation into 1994 attack against Rwandan presidential plane, which sparked genocide of ethnic Tutsi minority; case which involved seven suspects close to President Kagame had sparked tensions between French and Rwandan govt, with Kagame 2006-2009 cutting diplomatic relations. French investigative online media *Mediapart* 24 July located Rwandan genocide suspect Aloys Ntiwiragabo, under International Criminal Court arrest warrant for alleged role in 1994 genocide, in French city of Orléans; French anti-terrorism prosecutors next day opened preliminary investigation against him on charges of “crimes against humanity”.

Horn of Africa

➔ **Eritrea President Afwerki and Ethiopian PM Abiy reflected on progress made since 2018 peace deal, while govt’s harsh COVID-19 measures continued to raise concerns over food security.** Eritrean information minister 11 July said that “progress achieved” since Eritrea and Ethiopia signed Joint Declaration of Peace and Friendship in July 2018 had not been “fully congruent with expectations and aspirations” and regretted that Ethiopian troops remain present in Eritrea; President Afwerki 18 July received PM Abiy in capital Asmara where they took stock of progress and obstacles in implementing peace declaration; both sides agreed to bolster bilateral cooperation. During UN Human Rights Council session 30 June-17 July, UN special rapporteur on human rights in Eritrea Daniela Kravetz said there had been no significant progress this past year in Eritrea’s human rights situation; she also expressed concern that “COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating the situation of famine” in parts of Eritrea, and urged authorities to ensure that “emergency food supplies reach all segments of the population”; UK-based Eritrean human rights group 15 July said ethnic Afar people faced “mass starvation” in Red Sea region in south east, where govt has imposed drastic coronavirus restrictions since April, and called on international community to put pressure on Eritrea to supply Afar community with food “as soon as possible”.

↓ **Ethiopia Street violence early July left over 200 dead in capital Addis Ababa and Oromia region, while relations between federal govt and Tigray region reached critical point.** Late June killing of popular Oromo singer and activist Hachalu Hundessa sparked wave of deadly protests in Addis Ababa and Oromia: heavy-handed suppression by security forces and Oromo youth targeting of non-Oromo ethnic minorities 30 June-2 July left at least 239 dead; amid protests, govt shut down internet, deployed military in Addis Ababa and arrested at least 5,000 including prominent opposition leaders Jawar Mohammed and Eskinder Nega. PM Abiy 3 July described Hundessa's killing and subsequent violence as "coordinated attempts" to destabilise Ethiopia. Attorney general 10 July announced arrest of two suspects who reportedly confessed to killing Hundessa on orders of armed group Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) with goal of inciting ethnic tensions and overthrowing govt; OLA 15 July denied allegation. Relations between federal govt and Tigray region reached critical point after Tigray region in June vowed to organise regional elections in 2020 despite federal govt decision to postpone them due to COVID-19: in Addis Ababa, authorities 9 July arrested two senior officials of Tigray's ruling Tigray People's Liberation Front on allegations of involvement in late June-early July unrest, released them on bail late July; amid reports of large-scale recruitment of security forces by Tigray authorities, Tigray President 20 July reportedly said "Tigray region will be a burial ground" for those attempting to obstruct election. Abiy 29 July said elections in Tigray were unconstitutional but ruled out military intervention. Amhara region's president 23 July announced Amhara's intention to regain lands "illegally taken" by neighbouring Tigray and said 85 insurgents entered Amhara from Tigray. In Southern Nations region in south, late July clashes between ethnic Konso and Ale reportedly killed at least thirteen and forced thousands to flee. In Benishangul-Gumuz region in north west, gunmen 27 July killed at least fourteen ethnic Amhara. Abiy 21 July said Ethiopia had achieved its first-year target for filling reservoir of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on Blue Nile River thanks to heavy rainy season (see Nile Waters).

➔ **Kenya Al-Shabaab continued to launch attacks in east and north east, while intercommunal violence broke out and tensions ran high between police and civilians in several areas.** In Garissa county in east, Al-Shabaab militants launched several attacks on police camps, notably in Yumbis village 22 July, where clashes reportedly left one police officer and five insurgents dead. In Wajir county near Somalia border in north east, Al-Shabaab 7 July abducted eight civilians; security forces quickly freed all eight. In Mandera county in north east, Al-Shabaab 10 July attacked police post, with no casualties. In Uasin Gishu county in west, security forces next day arrested two suspected Al-Shabaab militants in Chepkatet area. Intercommunal violence killed at least a dozen. Clashes between ethnic Maasai and Kamba 3-5 July left four dead in border area between Makueni and Kajiado counties in south. Angry mob 6 July reportedly hacked to death four suspected cattle rustlers in Mithuthini village, Kirinyaga county in centre. Late July clashes between ethnic Kipsigis and Maasai killed at least five in border area between Narok and Nakuru counties in west. Tensions between police and civilians remained high amid COVID-19 pandemic. In Kisii county in south west, police 5 July shot and killed trader suspected of selling fake hand sanitiser; in response, angry mob set fire to police station and threw rocks at police injuring fourteen officers. In capital Nairobi, hundreds 7 July demonstrated against police brutal enforcement of coronavirus measures; police used teargas to disperse protesters and arrested over

50. In Garissa city, after police 25 July shot and killed two civilians while chasing murder suspect, demonstrators marched on police station and clashed with police leaving several civilians injured. Following moves by President Kenyatta in recent months to seize control of ruling Jubilee Party by removing allies of deputy party leader William Ruto from key parliamentary positions, Ruto early July said purges intended to scuttle his 2022 presidential bid.

➔ **Nile Waters** **New round of talks between Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan over filling and operation of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on Blue Nile River floundered, and Ethiopia lauded completion of first round of filling.** Following resumption of tripartite negotiations under African Union (AU) auspices 3 July, talks faltered 13 July as Ethiopia refused to agree to legally-binding dispute-resolution mechanism; Ethiopian govt next day pledged to pursue negotiations but said demands from downstream nations were thwarting chances of reaching agreement. Following AU Bureau-led extraordinary meeting on GERD negotiations 21 July, Ethiopian PM Abiy same day said Addis Ababa had reached “major common understanding with Sudan and Egypt”; Cairo said all three had agreed to prioritise development of binding legal agreement for filling and operating GERD. Abiy same day said Ethiopia had achieved its first-year target for filling reservoir thanks to heavy rainy season, prompting Egypt and Sudan to immediately condemn “unilateral” move. After AU 24 July called on parties to finalise binding agreement on filling and operation of dam, new round of negotiations started 27 July. Sudan next day requested talks to be postponed until 3 Aug to conduct internal consultations.

➔ **Somalia** **Al-Shabaab kept up insurgency; federal govt and member states agreed to hold elections as previously scheduled; and parliament ousted PM Khayre.** In south, Al-Shabaab 4 July detonated bomb killing at least five civilians and security personnel in Bay region; next day kidnapped and killed regional lawmaker in Middle Shabelle region; 6-13 July launched attacks on security forces reportedly leaving at least seventeen dead in Lower Shabelle and Lower Juba regions. Counter-insurgency operations 6-19 July reportedly killed at least 29 Al-Shabaab militants in Lower Shabelle, Lower Juba and Bay regions. U.S. airstrikes 9 and 29 July reportedly killed two Al-Shabaab insurgents in Lower Shabelle and Middle Juba region; reports of civilian casualties also emerged. In Puntland in north, security operation with U.S. air support 21 July reportedly left 27 Islamic State (ISIS)-Somalia militants dead in Bari region. In capital Mogadishu, Al-Shabaab 8 July detonated bomb killing two police officers; 13 July launched unsuccessful suicide attack on army chief, General Odowa Rage; 18 July detonated bomb failing to kill deputy security minister; 27 July shot policeman dead. After electoral commission late June said it could not organise “one person, one vote” 2020 parliamentary and 2021 presidential elections on time, presidents of all federal member states 11-12 July met in Galmudug state capital Dhusamareb, agreed that polls should be held on time and invited federal govt to discuss alternative, indirect electoral model; in ensuing conference in Dhusamareb 19-22 July, President Farmajo and federal state leaders agreed to conduct timely elections and create technical committee tasked with formulating recommendations for electoral process; during conference, Farmajo and Jubaland state President Madobe reportedly held informal talks after more than a year of fraught relations; Madobe said they had “agreed to reach truce”. Parliament’s lower house 25 July voted no

confidence in PM Khayre notably for failing to deliver direct elections, prompting him to resign; Farmajo same day named Deputy PM Mahdi Mohamed Guleid as caretaker PM. After resuming in June, talks with Somaliland suffered delays (see Somaliland).

➔ **Somaliland Ruling and opposition parties agreed to hold long-delayed elections this year, and talks with Somalia suffered delays amid renewed efforts toward Somaliland's international recognition.** Ruling Kulmiye party and opposition parties Justice and Welfare Party and Waddani 12 July signed agreement to hold long-delayed parliamentary and local elections in 2020 and tasked electoral commission with drafting roadmap. Following June resumption of talks with Somalia over Somaliland's claim to sovereignty, committees tasked with hashing out technical issues failed to meet in Djibouti after Somalia postponed meetings, citing need to focus on internal politics. Taiwan's FM 1 July announced that Taiwan and Somaliland – both of which seek international recognition – had signed agreement in Feb to establish diplomatic offices in each other's capitals. Somalia President Farmajo 4 July met China's ambassador to Somalia who expressed Beijing's respect for Somalia's unity while Farmajo in turn affirmed his support for China's "One-China policy". President Bihi 3-22 July received high-level Kenyan, Egyptian and Ethiopian delegations to discuss bilateral relations. FM late July travelled to Turkey to meet with senior Turkish officials. In centre, inter-clan fighting early July left at least three dead in Togdheer and Saahil regions.

↓ **South Sudan Intercommunal violence escalated in east leaving dozens dead, implementation of local power-sharing agreement stalled, and ceasefire between President Kiir and VP Riek Machar's forces broke down in west.** In east, intercommunal clashes intensified in Jonglei state. Notably, unidentified gunmen 2 July killed four in Poktap village; suspected ethnic Murle youth next day attacked Duk Padiet town, leaving at least 39 dead; at least seven were also killed 13 July in cattle raid in Pajut town; gunmen reportedly crossing over from Pibor Administrative Area 27 July killed about 17 people in Makol-cuei village. In Lakes state in centre, intercommunal violence 4 July left four dead in Cueibet County. In Warrap state, also in centre, 15 were killed in cattle raid in Tonj North county 24 July. President Kiir 8 July said govt would launch nationwide disarmament program and intercommunal dialogue initiatives to address mounting intercommunal violence. Following June agreement between Kiir and former rebel leader turned VP Riek Machar which granted Machar's Sudan People's Liberation Army-In Opposition (SPLA-IO) governorship of contested Upper Nile state, Kiir's spokesperson 2 July said he would not appoint Machar's pick General Johnson Olony over accusations he violated peace agreement by not sending SPLA-IO forces to cantonment sites for unification with govt troops into national army; Kiir 20 July urged Machar to nominate other candidate. Machar's SPLA-IO and Kiir-aligned South Sudan People's Defense Forces 18-19 July exchanged fire in Wau, Western Bar El Gazal state, after latter 18 July arrested SPLA-IO fighters in Nyabor area. UN Security Council 13 July and regional bloc Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) next day urged govt to form legislative assembly and implement security arrangements; IGAD 14 July said in absence of progress in implementation of transitional measures by 14 Aug its chairperson would intervene to mediate between parties and attempt to break deadlock. In south, rebel group National Salvation Front, which refused to be part of Sept 2018 peace agreement, 19 July said it had repelled attacks by govt forces on its positions in Liria county 16 July and Lobonok county 18 July, killing five soldiers.

↓ **Sudan Govt faced increasing pressure to advance transitional agenda amid continuing delays in finalising peace accord with rebel groups and escalating deadly violence in Darfur.** Following 30 June protests demanding greater civilian rule in transition, PM Hamdok 5 July dismissed police chief and his deputy; 9 July accepted resignation of six ministers and dismissed one. Security forces 14 July detained hard-line Islamist preacher and Law and Development Party leader Mohamed Ali al-Gizouli who called on military to remove transitional govt. Thousands of former President Bashir supporters and Islamist group members 17 July protested against govt in capital Khartoum. Khartoum court 21 July opened trial of Bashir over his role in 1989 coup but adjourned it until 11 Aug amid protests and COVID-19 concerns. Govt and rebel coalition Sudanese Revolutionary Front as well as Sudan Liberation Movement/Army faction led by Minni Minnawi mid-July reached tentative agreement on power-sharing; signature of comprehensive peace deal remains elusive with security arrangements an ongoing sticking point; govt 27 July swore in 18 civilian state governors. Holdout armed opposition Sudan Liberation Movement/Army faction led by Abdel Wahid al-Nur (SLM-AW) early July reportedly clashed with security forces in Kamaraya area, West Darfur state, three SLM-AW combatants killed. In Darfur, intercommunal violence flared up and militias killed dozens in a series of violent attacks as they seek to halt returns of internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees to land taken forcibly

under Bashir. In North Darfur state, unidentified gunmen 13 July attacked Fata Borno IDP camp, killing at least nine civilians. In West Darfur state, intercommunal clashes 19 July left at least three dead in state capital el-Geneina; some 500 unidentified gunmen 25 July raided Masteri village, killing over 60, mostly ethnic Masalit. In South Darfur state, unidentified gunmen 23 July raided Abdos village, killing at least 15. In neighbouring South Kordofan state, intercommunal clashes 21-22 July left dozens dead in state capital Kadugli. Ethiopia reportedly achieved its first-year target for filling reservoir of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on Blue Nile River as tripartite talks remained stalled (see Nile Waters).

➔ **Tanzania Authorities continued crackdown on civil society ahead of general elections scheduled for Oct.** Amid absence since late April of govt-issued figures on spread of COVID-19, authorities 6 July suspended media Kwanza Online TV for eleven months for allegedly publishing misleading content, after it relayed health alert from U.S. embassy warning of coronavirus epidemic's "exponential growth" across Tanzania 1 July. Three UN experts 22 July urged govt to end "crackdown" on civic space. Former opposition MP Tundu Lissu, living in Belgium since he was shot in capital Dodoma in 2017, 27 July returned to Tanzania to run for president in upcoming poll. Ruling party Chama Cha Mapinduzi next day endorsed incumbent President Magufuli as presidential candidate. Electoral commission 21 July said presidential and parliamentary elections would be held 28 Oct. African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights 15 July directed Tanzania to allow courts to hear challenges to presidential election results.

➔ **Uganda Authorities stepped up harassment of civil society and opposition amid mounting discontent over COVID-19 lockdown and ahead of general elections scheduled for early 2021.** Police 8 July arrested several traders and prominent academic Stella Nyanzi who were protesting in capital Kampala against COVID-19 lockdown and closure of shopping arcades; court 10 July released Nyanzi and two traders on bail. Police 14 July arrested hundreds of traders who tried to reopen their shops in Kampala; govt next day said it would allow some arcades to reopen. Opposition MPs mid-July called for health minister Jane Aceng to resign, after she was photographed flouting govt-issued coronavirus preventive measures in Lira city 10 July; parliamentary speaker 14 July summoned Aceng and two other ministers over similar allegations. Police same day detained opposition figure Ssemujju Nganda for allegedly holding consultations in his constituency near Kampala despite coronavirus lockdown. Security forces continued to harass supporters of musician-turned-opposition leader Bobi Wine, who plans to run for president in 2021; police reportedly fired tear gas and live bullets to disperse Wine's supporters 11 and 18 July in Jinja city in east, and 21 July in Kampala. Ruling party National Resistance Movement 28 July nominated President Museveni as party's presidential candidate. Following agreement with Rwanda to normalise relations in Aug 2019, govt 7 July released 12 Rwandans from prison. Clashes between South Sudanese tribes in Palorinya refugee camp in north west left three people dead 16-17 July.

Southern Africa

➔ **Malawi Newly elected President Chakwera set new govt in motion and took steps to remove from power remnants of former President Mutharika's rule.** At inauguration ceremony in capital Lilongwe, Chakwera 6 July pledged to introduce legislation to curb presidential powers and strengthen parliament and national anti-corruption body. Govt 7 July rescinded Mutharika's 12 June order putting Chief Justice Andrew Nyirenda on leave pending retirement in retaliation for his role in enabling rerun of disputed 2019 election. After Chakwera 8 July appointed 31-member cabinet, accusations of nepotism emerged on social media; critics said Chakwera appointed relatives as ministers, noting that 70% of cabinet hails from his political stronghold. Authorities mid-July arrested several prominent figures linked to Mutharika on corruption charges. Notably, police detained former Malawi Revenue Authority Deputy Commissioner Roza Mbilizi 10 July and former presidential aide Norman Chisale 14 July for allegedly helping Mutharika avoid nearly \$7mn in duties while importing cement. After court 17 July released Chisale on bail, police same day rearrested him on unrelated charges of attempted murder. Police 29 July questioned Mutharika about corruption allegations. Chakwera 25 July said \$1bn of public money was stolen under his predecessor and vowed to crack down on corruption. Amid surge in COVID-19 cases, govt 6 July indefinitely postponed reopening of schools initially scheduled for 13 July; 10 July said it had suspended mass testing campaign due to test kit shortage.

↓ **Mozambique Amid counter-insurgency operations and allegations of extrajudicial killings, Islamist militants launched deadly attacks and stepped up kidnappings in far north.** In Cabo Delgado province in far north, Islamist militants killed scores of civilians throughout month, including at least twenty in raid on Mungue village on border between Mocimboa da Praia and Muidumbe districts 15 July, and nine in attacks in Macomia and Mocimboa da Praia district 28-30 July. Numerous kidnappings were reported in July, including several truckloads of women taken by insurgents during occupation of Mocimboa da Praia town 27 June-3 July. Islamic State (ISIS) 3 July threatened to attack natural gas projects, same day warned it would target South Africa should it intervene to support Mozambican army in Cabo Delgado. Meanwhile, security forces 1 July launched raid on insurgent base near Ntessa village, Macomia district, allegedly killing over 100 militants. Reports of extrajudicial killings persisted. Security forces 7 July reportedly killed four civilians suspected of supporting insurgents in Mocimboa da Praia town. Demobilisation and disarmament of Renamo forces continued; ten former Renamo fighters 6 July enrolled with police in Pemba, capital of Cabo Delgado province; UN Special Envoy for Mozambique Mirko Manzoni 16 July said Renamo base in Muxungue, Sofala province in centre, had been dismantled previous day and over 500 former Renamo fighters demobilised since June, reportedly including eleven members of Renamo dissident faction which calls itself Renamo Military Junta. Trial of six individuals accused of supporting Renamo Military Junta, including former Renamo MP Sandura Ambrosio, started 10 July in Dondo district, Sofala province. Police 23 July killed five Renamo Military Junta fighters in Sussundenga district, Manica province in west.

↓ **Zimbabwe Amid COVID-19 concerns and deepening economic crisis, authorities stepped up crackdown on opposition and civil society, arresting dozens ahead of planned anti-govt protest.** Following calls spearheaded by opposition party Transform Zimbabwe to protest corruption and worsening economic crisis in capital Harare 31 July, Deputy Defence Minister Victor Matemadanda 8 July alleged foreign actors were funding unrest and planning to spread COVID-19 through tear gas. Police 20 July arrested Transform Zimbabwe leader Ngarivhume and prominent investigative journalist Hopewell Chin'ono, who in June reported alleged corruption in govt procurement of COVID-19 medical equipment worth \$60mn, on charges of inciting public violence; court denied bail to Ngarivhume 23 July and Chin'ono 24 July. After govt 22 July tightened COVID-19 lockdown and imposed night-time curfew, UN Human Rights Office 24 July said govt should not use coronavirus "to clamp down on fundamental freedoms". Ruling party 27 July called on supporters to "face down" protesters and accused U.S. ambassador of "funding disturbances, coordinating violence and training fighters" in Zimbabwe. Security forces 31 July locked down Harare, thwarting planned protest, and arrested at least 60 people late July, including opposition and civil society leaders, while a dozen others reportedly went into hiding. Meanwhile, authorities 4 July requested Kenya to extradite govt critic and former Higher Education Minister Jonathan Moyo over corruption allegations and accusations of plotting "mass uprising" against govt. Main opposition party Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) leaders Nelson Chamisa and Thokozani Khupe continued to vie for control of party; de facto interim leader Khupe 1 July sidelined eight Chamisa-aligned MPs from parliament. Parliament 27 July said it would suspend its activities after two MPs tested positive for coronavirus. Perrance Shiri, agriculture minister and former commander of notorious army brigade suspected of massacres in 1980s, died 29 July reportedly of COVID-19; family and others claimed he was poisoned.

Sahel

➔ **Burkina Faso Amid slight decrease in jihadist violence in east and north, govt faced increasing international and domestic pressure to hold security forces accountable for alleged extrajudicial killings.** In East region, Group to Support Islam and Muslims (JNIM) militants 4 July ambushed army convoy in Haaba area, Komondjari province, killing soldier and wounding five others; sophisticated IED attack 12 July targeted senior state official on Boudiéri-Kantchari axis in Tapoa province, with no casualties reported; suspected jihadists 20 July killed two soldiers in Tankoualou area, Komondjari province. In north, suspected JNIM combatants 6 July ambushed convoy escorting mayor of Pensa, Bam province in Centre-North region, killing him and wounding two volunteers fighting alongside security forces; later same day ambushed joint security forces convoy deployed to site, leaving six soldiers and three volunteers dead. Infighting between jihadist groups continued notably in northern Sahel region. Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) early July reportedly killed several civilians accused of being close to JNIM in Oudalan province. Three deadly ISWAP-JNIM clashes reported in same area during first three weeks of July. Meanwhile, security forces faced new allegations of extrajudicial killings. In East region, army 2 July reportedly killed six civilians at Tatiangou market, Tapoa province, and soldier was arrested

next day after security forces late June reportedly extrajudicially killed seven members of Fulani community on outskirts of Tanwalbougou commune, Gourma province. In report published 8 July, NGO Human Rights Watch accused security forces of involvement in extrajudicial killings Nov 2019 to June 2020 of 180 “mostly ethnic Fulani” civilians, whose bodies were found in mass graves around Djibo town, Soum province in Sahel region; govt 10 July questioned findings, suggesting jihadists wearing stolen army uniforms may have staged attacks to incriminate armed forces. Ruling party Movement for People and Progress 11 July endorsed President Kaboré as candidate for presidential election scheduled for Nov. Other parties followed suit: head of Union for Progress and Change Zéphirin Diabré nominated 25 July, and head of former ruling Congress for Democracy and Progress Eddie Komboïgo next day.

↓ **Mali Political crisis turned deadly despite regional mediation efforts, while violence continued at lower intensity in centre and north.**

Tens of thousands 10 July protested against President Keïta in capital Bamako for third time since early June; protesters clashed with security forces, set up roadblocks and ransacked administrative buildings; unrest continued in following days, reportedly leaving at least 14 dead and dozens injured 10-12 July; protest followed calls by coalition of opposition and civil society groups M5-RFP, led by prominent Imam Mahmoud Dicko, demanding Keïta’s resignation, formation of M5-RFP-led govt, dissolution of National Assembly and Constitutional Court. In address to nation 11 July, Keïta announced de facto dissolution of Constitutional Court. President’s son Karim Keïta, under growing scrutiny for his lavish lifestyle, 14 July resigned as chair of National Assembly’s National Defence, Security and Civil Protection Commission. Regional bloc Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) 14 July appointed former Nigerian President Jonathan special envoy for Mali; mediation mission 15-19 July failed to reach deal to end deadlock; ECOWAS 23 July sent African heads of state delegation to Mali to pursue mediation efforts; 27 July held virtual extraordinary summit, proposed four-point plan to solve crisis including creation of national unity govt and resignation of MPs whose elections are contested, but called Keïta’s resignation “red line”. Keïta same day reshuffled cabinet, asked new ministers to negotiate with opposition to form unity govt. M5-RFP next day rejected plan and reiterated demand for president’s resignation. Meanwhile, violence persisted in Mopti region in centre, albeit at lower intensity. Suspected Fulani armed groups 1 July attacked several Dogon villages in Bankass circle, killing at least 33. Rising tensions between Dogon militia Dan Na Ambassagou and Dogon villagers who refuse to adhere to its rule led to clashes in Koro Cercle. Notably, Dan Na Ambassagou 4 July killed three Dogon civilians in Berda village. In Timbuktu region in north, suicide attack 23 July killed French soldier near Gossi city; al-Qaeda-linked Group to Support Islam and Muslims 30 July claimed responsibility.

➔ **Niger Jihadist violence continued in south east and south west, while opposition voiced concern over electoral framework ahead of Dec elections.**

In south-eastern Diffa region along border with Nigeria, Boko Haram factions continued campaign of abductions and attacks against civilians. Suspected Boko Haram militants, or members of splinter group Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), 1 July reportedly killed five people in N’Garoua Gana village and 9 July abducted up to nine women and children in Njibouloua village in N’Guigmi

area; suspected Boko Haram militants same day abducted 15 people in Kindjandi town. Jihadists and bandits' attacks on villages and livestock raids continued in south-western Tillabery region near Burkina Faso. Nine humanitarian workers taken hostage by suspected jihadists in Bossey Bangou village late June were released 1 July. Suspected Islamic State militants 3 July killed village chief and two other civilians in Filingue area and 9 July killed two Fulani community leaders in Ayorou area. In white paper published 23 July, main opposition parties called for inclusive political dialogue to discuss revision of electoral framework ahead of presidential and legislative elections scheduled for 27 Dec. Electoral commission same day postponed municipal and regional elections planned for Nov until 13 Dec citing COVID-19-related delays. NGO Amnesty International 13 July called for release of journalist Samira Sabou, arrested in June on defamation charges, saying case was "politically motivated"; Sabou released 29 July. Govt 17 July announced plans to reopen air borders 1 Aug following their closure in March amid COVID-19 pandemic.

West Africa

➔ **Benin** **Authorities arrested several suspects after alleged coup attempt against President Talon.** Following allegations of attempted coup night of 25-26 June, communications minister and govt spokesperson 1 July said suspects were detained on terrorism charges and case had been brought to recently created Anti-Terrorism and Economic Crimes Court; security forces reportedly detained at least nine individuals, including senior military officers and bodyguard of former President Kérékou's son, Colonel Montan Kérékou.

➔ **Côte d'Ivoire Sudden death of ruling party candidate for Oct presidential election created uncertainty.** PM and ruling party Rally of Houphouëtists for Democracy and Peace (RHDP) presidential candidate Amadou Gon Coulibaly 8 July died after returning from medical treatment in France. RHDP Executive Director Adama Bictogo 9 July said “every option is on the table” as party has until 1 Sept to appoint new nominee for presidential election scheduled for Oct. VP Daniel Kablan Duncan, reportedly frustrated by RHDP nomination process, resigned 13 July citing personal reasons. RHDP parliamentary group 22 July and RHDP political council 29 July called on President Ouattara to run for re-election; Ouattara 29 July deferred his decision until Aug. Meanwhile, Ouattara 30 July appointed Defence Minister Hamed Bakayoko as new PM. Other politicians jockeyed for position ahead of election. Former FM Marcel Amon Tanoh 22 July said he will run for president as independent candidate; Tanoh resigned from govt in March after failure to secure RHDP nomination. Opposition Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire 26 July chose party leader and former President Bédié as presidential candidate. Former President Gbagbo, in Belgium following his 2019 acquittal of crimes against humanity by International Criminal Court, continued to take steps to return to Côte d'Ivoire ahead of election; his lawyer late July said he was waiting for Ivorian authorities to issue him passport. Following jihadist attack on security forces in north in June, govt 13 July adopted decree bolstering military patrols near border with Mali and Burkina Faso. National Security Council 15 July lifted COVID-19 lockdown in economic capital Abidjan despite warnings from Health Ministry; 30 July eased restrictions throughout country and maintained state of emergency until 31 Aug.

➔ **Guinea Amid political tensions over President Condé's potential bid for re-election, demonstration turned violent and series of protests over living conditions broke out in several cities.** Regional bloc Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), African Union and UN representatives 3 July met with govt delegation in capital Conakry in attempt to break persistent deadlock between ruling party and opposition on framework of presidential election planned for Oct. Condé 8 July stated willingness to hold inclusive political dialogue with opposition. Meanwhile, coalition of opposition parties and civil society groups National Front for the Defence of the Constitution (FNDC) resumed anti-Condé protests despite govt's ban in context of COVID-19. Violent clashes between security forces and demonstrators 20 July left at least 20 injured in Conakry; FNDC accused authorities of using "weapons of war" against protesters, while govt blamed violence on "groups of hooligans". FNDC 29 July called for new protest 6 Aug. NGOs Amnesty International and Tournons la Page (TLP) 17 July jointly called for immediate release of FNDC activists Oumar Sylla and Saikou Yaya Diallo, arrested respectively in April on charges of "diffusion of false information" and May on charges of "assault, violence, threats and public insults", and accused authorities of trying "to strangle dissident voices" through "arbitrary detention and judicial persecution"; security forces 19 July reportedly summoned TLP coordinator to Conakry central police station. Protests over electricity cuts and lack of access to water turned violent: clashes between protesters and ruling party supporters left several injured in Siguiri city (north east) 14 July; security forces 21 July arrested 22 protesters in Kankan city (east) after govt reportedly deployed army there; following outcry from civil society, all 22 were released 29 July. Authorities mid-July eased COVID-19 curfew in Conakry and reopened air borders, also extended state of emergency into Aug.

➔ **Guinea-Bissau President Embaló tightened his grip on power despite mounting international pressure to reach compromise with opposition.** UN Security Council 1 July expressed concern over “ongoing political and institutional crisis” and called on Embaló to compromise with African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cap Verde (PAIGC), winner of 2019 legislative elections, to form govt “in full compliance with the provisions of the Constitution”. PAIGC contested legality of parliament’s late June approval of Nuno Gomes Nabiam as PM. PAIGC parliamentary group leader Califa Seidi 1 July said vote was “null and void”, citing procedural flaws; PAIGC leader Domingos Simões Pereira 5 July accused security forces of coercing five PAIGC MPs into voting for Nabiam. Meanwhile, Embaló 3 July reinstated five ministers he had dismissed in June to secure parliamentary majority. Embaló 7 July announced forthcoming referendum to change constitution, and said authorities would start tracking citizens’ communications within next ten days, citing need to “provide security and tranquillity to the citizens” by monitoring “insults under the guise of anonymity in the media or social networks”; several jurists immediately criticised “violation of constitution”. Group of “armed men in uniform” 26 July reportedly vandalised broadcasting equipment of independent Rádio Capital FM in capital Bissau; PAIGC same day accused authorities of staging attack; govt denied accusations. High Commissioner in charge of COVID-19 response 6 July said official figures on cases and deaths were “not even close to reality”, citing country’s low screening capacities. Embaló 25 July extended coronavirus state of emergency until 24 Aug but announced lifting of international travel restrictions.

↓ **Nigeria Jihadists resumed attacks on Borno state capital in north east, armed groups inflicted heavy toll on army in north west, and attacks on farming communities spiked in Middle Belt.** In Borno state in north east, insurgents 2 July shot UN helicopter near Damasak town, prompting UN to pause humanitarian flights to review risk assessments. Suspected Boko Haram faction Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) 7-16 July killed about 50 soldiers, including 37 in ambush along Maiduguri-Damboia highway 7 July. Troops 13 July repelled first insurgents’ attack in state capital Maiduguri in several months, and 19 July repelled ISWAP attack on army’s super camp in Damasak town, killing eight ISWAP commanders. ISWAP same day killed five humanitarian workers abducted in June. Insurgents 30 July fired four rocket-propelled explosives into Maiduguri killing seven, in second major security breach of city long considered beyond insurgent’s reach. In north west, military reported 80 armed men killed in operations 1-31 July, while armed groups continued attacks mainly in Katsina and Zamfara states. In Katsina, unidentified gunmen 6 July killed at least 25 in Yar Gamji village in Batsari area; first explosive device attack in Katsina 18 July killed seven children in Yammama village, Malumfashi area; armed group same day ambushed army unit in Jibia area, inflicting heavy toll on military by killing at least 23 soldiers; 20 July abducted seventeen women in Zakka town, Safana area. In Zamfara, armed group 6 July stormed Danfana village, Maru area, killing seven and abducting 20. Air force 9, 20 and 23 July bombed armed groups’ hideouts in Zamfara state forest, killing unspecified numbers. With armed groups deploying increasingly sophisticated weapons, army 10 July reported growing indications of connections between them and jihadist groups. Intercommunal violence and attacks on farming communities flared in Middle Belt, killing dozens. In southern part of Kaduna state,

armed attacks on farming communities 9-24 July killed over 70 residents in Kaura, Kajuru, Kauru and Zangon Kataf areas. In Benue state's Logo area, unidentified assailants 10 July killed seven in Chembe village. In other communal violence, unidentified gunmen 29 July killed fourteen at Agbudu village, Kogi state.

➔ **Sierra Leone Deadly clashes erupted between protesters and security forces in north, while doctors went on strike amid COVID-19 pandemic.** Security forces 18 July opened fire on protesters who attacked local offices of President Bio's political party in northern Makeni city, Bombali district, leaving at least four killed and ten wounded; hundreds had gathered to block relocation of power generator to another city, fearing loss of electricity supply. Govt immediately imposed curfew in Makeni. In statement published 21 July, MPs from Bombali district condemned violence and demanded investigation into "use of excessive and disproportionate lethal force by police and military personnel". Bishop of Makeni diocese 26 July called for calm and "immediate, independent and transparent investigation" into recent violence. Amid escalating tensions between health workers and govt over alleged misuse of COVID-19 funds, doctors 2 July went on strike to protest unpaid hazard allowance and lack of protective equipment, suspending care of coronavirus patients; 7 July threatened to suspend care for all patients if govt failed to meet their demands. Govt 22 July reopened air borders for commercial flights, closed since March amid COVID-19 pandemic.