

# Africa

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## Central Africa

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↓ **Burundi** Parliament and protesters rejected African Union's call for restraint, as relations between President Nkurunziza and Ugandan President Museveni – mediator of Burundian crisis – deteriorated and tensions with neighbouring Rwanda continued to rise. Govt pursued legal proceedings relating to assassination of first elected Hutu president, Melchior Ndadaye, in Oct 1993: four retired Tutsi army officers arrested late Nov and attorney general 30 Nov issued international arrest warrants for seventeen people including former President Pierre Buyoya, now African Union (AU) representative in Mali. AU Commission Chairman Moussa Faki 1 Dec called for restraint on all sides. National Assembly 5 Dec rejected Faki's statement, calling on international organisations to stop interfering in internal affairs. Demonstrators in capital Bujumbura protested against Faki's remarks and called for arrest of Buyoya and other suspects. Following Nkurunziza's refusal to attend East African Community (EAC) heads of state summit planned for 30 Nov, Nkurunziza 4 Dec wrote to EAC president and mediator of Burundian crisis, Ugandan President Museveni, criticising final report of facilitator, former Tanzanian President Mkapa, and demanding extraordinary summit to find solution to "open conflict between Burundi and Rwanda". Museveni replied urging Nkurunziza to discuss with opposition in exile. EAC summit re-scheduled to 27 Dec but again postponed, possibly to margins of Jan AU summit. Govt 21 Dec decided to make Gitega in centre political capital instead of Bujumbura in west. In southern Rwanda, unidentified assailants 15 Dec set fire to three vehicles in Nyamagabe district which borders Burundi, killing at least two civilians; Rwandan army said it pursued attackers into forest bordering Burundi.

➡ **Cameroon** Fighting continued in Anglophone regions in west between separatists and military, and among separatists; in Far North, Boko Haram (BH) continued attacks against civilians; and in Adamawa region in centre north, unidentified armed groups continued abductions. Hours after President Biya 30 Nov signed decree creating National Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Committee to encourage Anglophone and BH militants to surrender, separatists fired gunshots in Buea (Southwest) and Bambui and Bambili (both Northwest) to show their disapproval. Leader of armed group in Ndian (Southwest) 14 Dec promised to hand over weapons to govt and surrender. Separatists 1 Dec abducted traditional ruler of Nso (Northwest). Military 5 Dec killed five people in Meluf-Kumbo (Northwest). Civilian killed in fighting between separatists and military along Buea-Kumba road (Southwest) 7 Dec. Separatists 22 Dec attacked Bangourain, West region in Francophone zone, killing one. Suspected separatists beheaded soldier in Bamenda, capital of Northwest region 28 Dec. Security forces reportedly killed at least six separatists in Binka (Northwest) 28 Dec. Fighting between separatist groups Ambazonia Defence Forces and Southern Cameroon Defence Forces led to five deaths 16 Dec. UN Security Council 13 Dec officially discussed Anglophone conflict for first time; U.S. and UK ambassadors asked for release of Anglophone detainees, immediate talks between separatists and govt and access to Anglophone regions for UN agencies and human rights NGOs. UN renewed offer of

mediation. Biya same day ordered release of 289 Anglophone detainees who had committed minor offences. Ten U.S. senators 7 Dec called for political solution to Anglophone conflict and urged U.S. govt to put sanctions on individuals found to have committed gross human rights violations. In Far North, BH continued attacks, intensifying suicide bombings in Mayo-Sava department. Three attacks in Mayo-Sava and one in Logone-et-Chari 6-15 Dec left five civilians dead. In Adamawa, hostage-takers continued abductions: armed men 22 Dec abducted and later killed two men in Maber (Djerem) and 24 Dec abducted traditional ruler of Yokotodou (Vina).

➡ **Central African Republic** Armed group violence continued at low ebb, two more leaders of armed groups arrested, while France and Russia continued to compete for influence. In centre, ex-Seleka faction Union for Peace in the Central African Republic (UPC) reportedly clashed with anti-balaka community defence group in Ippy 4 Dec, UPC next day denied involvement. In north, following residents' request, army unit 6 Dec attempted to deploy in Bocaranga controlled by Fulani-dominated Retour, Réclamation et Réhabilitation (3R) armed group; 3R refused soldiers access to town, negotiations failed and troops withdrew. Police 8 Dec arrested ex-Seleka leader Didier Wangai of UPC in Bambari in centre and transferred him to capital Bangui without disclosing charges. Anti-balaka leader Urbain Sami sentenced to twenty years' labour 12 Dec on several counts, including complicity in murder. Former anti-balaka leader Patrice-Edouard Ngaïssona arrested in Paris 12 Dec on International Criminal Court arrest warrant for war crimes and crimes against humanity from Sept 2013 to Dec 2014. Two main anti-balaka factions 13 Dec announced withdrawal from disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) process. DDR for some 500 former combatants launched in Paoua in north west 17 Dec. Parliament 13 Dec ratified security pact between govt and Russia that envisages continued Russian training of CAR forces and Russian military assistance in case of foreign military aggression. FM Charles Armel Djobane, who had repeatedly expressed disapproval of growing Russian influence, dismissed 15 Dec. Following one-month extension in Nov, UN Security Council 12 Dec renewed mandate of UN mission (MINUSCA) for one year; resolution recognises Russia's positive role via army training, but re-affirms primacy of African Union-led mediation effort. Russia and China abstained from vote. French armed forces minister Florence Parly in Bangui 10-11 Dec reaffirmed France's support and delivered 1,400 weapons promised in Nov.

➡ **Chad** Fighting continued in Tibesti region in far north, bordering Libya and Niger, as military pursued operations against ethnic Tebu community defence force and rebel groups; ruling party early Dec described initiatives as law-and-order operations against criminals. Opposition MP 10 Dec requested govt answer parliamentary questions on matter, govt has not yet responded. Also in Tibesti region, in Kouri Bougoudi gold-mining zone clashes between Arabs and people from Ouaddaï region in east and others 27-29 Dec reportedly left twenty to 30 people dead. President Déby 5 Dec revoked soldiers' salary cut, to take effect from 1 Jan and defence minister early Dec visited army positions in east and south east toward borders with Sudan and Central African Republic. Ahead of French President Macron's visit 22-23 Dec, France 6 Dec signed two financing agreements, including €40mn for civil servants' salaries in Dec and pension payments. Polish deputy defence minister conducted Poland's first high-level visit to Chad 12 Dec and signed

MoU pledging to contribute equipment to army. In south-west Libya, Chadian armed group 27 Dec attacked camp of forces loyal to Field Marshal Haftar, de facto commander in eastern Libya, near town of Traghen, reportedly killing one.

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➡ **Gabon** With President Bongo still recuperating in Morocco following stroke late Oct, hundreds of opposition supporters 12 Dec marched in capital Libreville after political rally for opposition leader and former presidential candidate Jean Ping, who called for "confrontation" with govt; police dispersed protesters and arrested several. Opposition leaders 22 Dec requested medical commission to determine state of health of President Bongo and 31 Dec asked for two-year transition period with transitional president and govt. Constitutional Court 28 Dec confirmed results of Oct legislative elections; ruling party won majority, new govt to be formed in coming weeks.

➡ **Rwanda** Army clashed with Congo-based rebels in north west as tensions between govt and neighbouring Burundi continued to mount. Officials reported clashes in Rubavu district in north west bordering DR Congo between army and

suspected members of rebel group Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), who crossed into country from DR Congo; army said it repelled suspected rebels 9 Dec, killing four; President Kagame 14 Dec said at least two soldiers and unknown number of rebels killed. Burundian President Nkurunziza 4 Dec wrote to East African Community President and Ugandan President Museveni demanding extraordinary summit to find solution to “open conflict between Burundi and Rwanda”. In south, unidentified assailants 15 Dec set fire to three vehicles in Nyamagabe district which borders Burundi, killing at least two civilians; Rwandan army said it pursued attackers into forest bordering Burundi.

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## Horn of Africa

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➔ **Djibouti** French jihadist suspected of helping brothers who carried out killings at Charlie Hebdo offices in Paris in 2015 arrested in Djibouti 16 Dec.

➔ **Eritrea** Govt 26 Dec reportedly restricted Ethiopians’ passage into Eritrea at Zalambessa-Serha and Rama-Kisad Adi-Quala border crossings, opened in Sept, without giving reasons. Unidentified assailant unsuccessfully tried to kill mining minister and former defence minister, General Sebhat Efrem, at his home in capital Asmara 19 Dec; attacker reportedly arrested. President Afwerki 13 Dec visited Somali capital Mogadishu for first time, as part of ongoing tripartite summits between Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia; leaders discussed how to advance bilateral and regional cooperation.

➔ **Ethiopia** In south, clashes between ethnic Oromo and Somali 13-14 Dec near Moyale on border with Kenya left at least 21 people dead and forced hundreds to flee into Kenya. Another faction of former rebel group Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) returned to Ethiopia from exile 29 Dec. Military court 15 Dec jailed 66 of 200 soldiers who marched on PM Abiy’s palace in Oct for between five and fourteen years, ruling they had broken military ethics. Parliament 25 Dec approved creation of reconciliation commission to counter intercommunal ethnic violence. Eritrea 26 Dec reportedly restricted Ethiopians’ passage into Eritrea at Zalambessa-Serha and Rama-Kisad Adi-Quala border crossings, opened in Sept, without giving reasons.

➔ **Kenya** In north, Samburu and Turkana communities made retaliatory raids on each other 2-3 Dec in Baragoi, Samburu county. In north east, suspected Al-Shabaab member 25 Dec threw hand grenade at police officers manning Border Point 4, Mandera county, injuring four police officers. Chinese FM 29 Dec dismissed reports that China could seize Mombasa port over debt owed by govt.

➔ **Somalia** Arrest of former Al-Shabaab leader and candidate in 19 Dec South West State presidential elections sparked deadly clashes between police and his supporters, and parliament speaker tried unsuccessfully to impeach President Farmajo. Somali police reportedly backed by Ethiopian forces in African Union mission (AMISOM) 13 Dec arrested popular former Al-Shabaab leader Mukhtar Robow; AMISOM 15 Dec denied involvement of its Ethiopian troops. Arrest led to clashes between Robow supporters and police in South West state capital, Baidoa 14-15 Dec, at least eleven protesters killed; tensions diminished by end month. Candidate backed by federal govt Abdiqaziz Laftagareen won South West state’s presidential elections 19 Dec. Speaker of parliament Mohamed Mursal and

opposition MPs 12 Dec introduced motion to impeach President Farmajo, motion dismissed as it failed to garner required 92 MPs' signatures; fourteen MPs 13 Dec accused Mursal of forging their signatures. PM Khayre brokered agreement between pro-Farmajo camp and Mursal, who withdrew motion 20 Dec. In capital Mogadishu, Al-Shabaab attacked checkpoints near president's residence Villa Somalia with twin car bombs 21 Dec killing twenty civilians including veteran and renowned journalist Awil Salaad. In Bay region, Al-Shabaab raid on military base 29 Dec triggered heavy fighting with regional troops, fourteen militants and eight soldiers reportedly killed. In middle Juba region, U.S.-backed Jubaland forces 30 Dec reportedly carried out series of operations against Al-Shabaab militants and training camp. U.S. airstrikes on Al-Shabaab strongholds continued; airstrikes in Gandarashe area 15-16 Dec killed 62 militants; airstrikes near Beled Amin South 19 Dec killed eleven militants. Eritrean President Afwerki 13 Dec visited Mogadishu for first time, as part of ongoing tripartite summits between Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia; leaders discussed how to advance bilateral and regional cooperation.

➔ **South Sudan** Attacks on international observers mid-month violated Sept peace deal and new clashes between govt forces and rebel groups erupted in south. In violation of peace deal, Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS), and Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, international observer team Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements and Verification Mechanism (CTSAMVM) reported attacks and detention of personnel from its Monitoring and Verification Team 18 Dec in govt forces' Luri Training Centre. In south, clashes broke out 16 Dec in Central Equatoria between govt forces and armed opposition group National Salvation Front (NAS), which did not sign R-ARCSS; first major clashes between NAS and govt forces. Alleged former South Sudan National Movement for Change (SSNMC) members in presumed collaboration with South Sudan National Democratic Alliance (SSNDA) – non-signatory of R-ARCSS – 20 Dec carried out attacks in Yei River state, looting and abducting several civilians; NAS 26 Dec denied responsibility. More than twenty officers of main rebel group Sudan People's Liberation Army-In Opposition (SPLA-IO), which signed R-ARCSS, 17 Dec flew to Juba to take part in pre-transitional committees and prepare formation of transitional govt. However, underlining delay in implementation of R-ARCSS, UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix 18 Dec echoed R-ARCSS Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Committee's concerns over failure to establish Independent Boundaries Commission and National Pre-Transitional Committee's failure to reach quorum. U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton 13 Dec announced U.S. would review its aid programs to South Sudan, as leadership "morally bankrupt".

⬇ **Sudan** Amid mounting anger over economic crisis, protests broke out in north east and swiftly spread to 28 cities and towns across country; security forces' brutal response reportedly left up to 37 people dead. Protests began 19 Dec in town of Atbara in north east and quickly spread. Protesters called for President Bashir (in power since 1989) to step down and in several places set fire to local headquarters of ruling party. Intelligence services ordered internet shutdown and closed down a number of newspapers. Authorities from 22 Dec arrested two dozen opposition leaders, closed schools and universities to prevent students taking part. U.S., UK and Norway 24 Dec expressed concern over govt's excessive use of force against demonstrators and UN Secretary-General Guterres 28 Dec called on govt to

investigate deaths of protesters. Parliament 4 Dec backed constitutional amendment to extend presidential term limits, allowing President Bashir to run again in elections planned for 2020. Armed opposition groups Justice and Equality Movement and Sudan Liberation Movement-Minni Minnawi 10 Dec signed pre-negotiation agreement with govt to resume talks in Jan on basis of Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD). African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (led by former South Africa President Thabo Mbeki) 9-12 Dec convened in Addis Ababa to start consultation with Sudanese parties on revision of roadmap on adopting new constitution and on national elections scheduled for 2020; consultations suspended as they excluded political opposition groups, including Sudanese Congress Party. Senior security personnel met U.S. counterparts to increase cooperation, discussions included those on potential “five-point plan +1” to improve adherence to human rights. Bashir 16 Dec visited Syria for first time since March 2011. Bashir 18 Dec received Saudi delegation in Khartoum and pledged continued support to Saudi-led coalition in Yemen.

➔ **Tanzania** After European Parliament’s 12 Dec resolution against govt’s democratic backsliding and continued crackdown on opposition figures, human rights defenders and gay people, EU late Dec announced freeze of €88mn annual aid to Tanzania. Decision followed World Bank’s suspension in Nov of €265mn loan for girls’ education after govt banned pregnant girls from attending school and from continuing education after they gave birth.

➔ **Uganda** Interparty dialogue summit held 12 Dec produced no tangible results, with opposition parties boycotting event and President Museveni dismissing calls for talks about political transition. Popular musician-turned-opposition MP Robert Kyagulanyi, known as Bobi Wine, 15 Dec evaded arrest when police entered hotel where he was staying; police 26 Dec prevented one of his concerts taking place.

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## **Southern Africa**

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➔ **Comoros Islands** Crackdown on opposition continued. Court 17 Dec sentenced secretary general of opposition Juwa party, Ahmed el-Barwane, to seven years in prison for ordering attack on soldier during July referendum and sentenced another Juwa party MP, Tocha Johar, to twenty years in prison. Court 15 Dec sentenced four senior opposition figures to life in prison with forced labour and handed down jail terms to several others for allegedly plotting against state.

➔ **Madagascar** Electoral commission 27 Dec declared former President Andry Rajoelina winner of 19 Dec presidential run-off vote with 55.66% of vote, beating former President Marc Ravalomanana who garnered 44.34%. Ravalomanana’s team filed complaint with High Constitutional Court asking for cancellation of results, even though he had previously said he would accept results. Some 2,000 Ravalomanana supporters 29 Dec protested in capital Antananarivo, demanding recount.

➔ **Mozambique** Suspected Islamist militants continued attacks in Cabo Delgado province in far north. Assailants 18 Dec reportedly beheaded two civilians in Chitoyo village and same day killed two in Muidumbe district. Assailants 21 Dec attacked Chicomo village, Macomia District, burning down 103 homes. Local residents 7 Dec

captured former soldier suspected of leading insurgent attacks, Mustafa Suale Machinga, and handed him over to authorities in Litingina village, Nangade district. Implementation of peace deal between govt and former armed opposition movement Renamo advanced with 13 Dec appointment of three senior Renamo officials to positions in military, namely as directors of operations, military information and communications.

➔ **Zimbabwe** President Mnangagwa 18 Dec released report by commission of inquiry into 1 Aug post-election violence that left six people dead: report held opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) Alliance responsible for inflammatory rhetoric which, it claims, led to protests and riots, and found police and military responsible for six deaths and injury of 35 protestors through excessive use of force. Report concluded Mnangagwa lawfully ordered deployment of troops who failed to submit to police authority. Mnangagwa 17 Dec promoted to full general military officer who commanded unit that responded to riots that day.

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## West Africa

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➔ **Burkina Faso** Suspected jihadist militants continued attacks against security forces and civilians in north and east amid reports of killings of civilians by security forces, and insecurity persisted in west. In Sahel region in north, suspected Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) militants 4 Dec attacked gendarmerie checkpoint on Dori-Seytanga axis, three gendarmes wounded; suspected members of jihadist group Ansarul Islam 10 Dec destroyed school in Firguindi in intimidation campaign against educational facilities. Mostly Fulani local NGO Kisal late Nov reported security forces were suspected of committing serious abuses against civilians in Sahel region, including killing 38 civilians in three villages in Boulgou province mid Nov and allegedly killing seven civilians in Niafo village, Soum province 22 Nov. In Boucle du Mouhoun region in north west, suspected members of jihadist group Macina Liberation Front, member of coalition Group to Support Islam and Muslims (JNIM), killed two policemen near Goïalé 6 Dec and allegedly abducted two councilmen in Kwaremenguel and Gani 3 Dec. Also in Boucle du Mouhoun region, JNIM 27 Dec claimed responsibility for 25 Dec attack near Toeni that killed ten gendarmes. In North region, suspected Ansarul Islam militants 3 Dec abducted councilman in Banh. In East region, suspected ISGS militants 14 Dec attacked police station in Nadiagou and 15 Dec killed municipal councillor in Pepembougou. Govt 31 Dec imposed state of emergency in violence-affected provinces in seven regions: Hauts-Bassins, Boucle du Mouhoun, Cascades, North, Sahel, East and Centre-East. In south west, unidentified assailants 7 Dec attacked credit union in Péni, Hauts-Bassins region, four civilians wounded; 11 Dec attacked police station in Bouroum-Bouroum, South West region, no casualties reported. President Kaboré 17-18 Dec met French President Macron in Paris; Macron agreed to new military framework for security cooperation, reportedly saying he was ready to send more trainers, military advisers and equipment.

➔ **Côte d'Ivoire** Likely main rivalry in 2020 presidential election continued to emerge between ruling coalition Rally of Houphouëtists for Democracy and Peace (RHDP) led by President Ouattara and opposition Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI) led by Henry Konan Bédié. Latter 17 Dec met with assembly speaker and

RHDP critic Guillaume Soro. Oil and hydrocarbons minister and last PDCI figure in govt Thierry Tanoh dismissed 10 Dec. After Supreme Court late Nov annulled municipal elections in six communes and regional elections in two regions, new votes took place 16 Dec; incidents of violence were reported in Port-Bouët and Grand-Bassam communes. PDCI and RHDP filed complaints calling for annulment of vote in Grand-Bassam and Port-Bouët respectively. Clashes between RHDP and PDCI supporters erupted in Grand-Bassam 21 Dec over results, at least one person injured. President Ouattara 28 Dec shuffled military leadership, including replacing army chief of staff, head of special forces, superior commander of national gendarmerie and navy chief of staff.

➡ **Guinea** Tension persisted between govt and opposition over results of municipal elections held in Feb, but violence decreased. Security forces 10 Dec and 13 Dec dispersed opposition protests in capital Conakry demanding better governance and justice for people killed in recent protests. President of opposition party Union of Republican Forces (UFR) Sidya Touré 11 Dec resigned as high representative of President Condé, saying he had not achieved his ends. Security forces 3-4 Dec used tear gas in Conakry to disperse students protesting against teachers' strike and paralysis of education system. Students demonstrated again 18 Dec in Conakry. Villagers of Massala and Fanafanfakö in Siguiri area 16 Dec clashed over ownership of gold mine, at least eleven injured.

➡ **Guinea-Bissau** Public prosecutor 6 Dec suspended voter census ahead of 2019 legislative elections after platform of political parties made allegations of fraud; 13 Dec allowed census to continue "under monitoring" after West Africa regional organisation ECOWAS 13 Dec called for elections to be held by end of Jan and for date to be set before organisation's next summit 22 Dec; govt 17 Dec said census would end 19 Dec; President Vaz 20 Dec announced legislative elections would take place 10 March. Teachers' unions 3 Dec launched new fifteen-day strike over unpaid salaries and poor working conditions; 18 Dec refused to sign memorandum negotiated with govt to end crisis.

➡ **Mali** Intercommunal and jihadist violence continued in centre and Ménaka region in east and govt blocked protests over electoral calendar. In centre, tit-for-tat attacks continued largely by Dogon and Bambara militias, known as Dozo, against Fulani civilians and, less so, by Fulani-dominated jihadist groups against Dogon and Bambara civilians. Army reported one soldier killed in "terrorist" attack near Bankass, Mopti region 5 Dec; Fulani self-defence group said four of its members killed in attack. Arrest of three Dozo accused of murder in Bankass near Burkina Faso border 17 Dec sparked public anger and alleged violence against Fulani. In Ménaka region in east, suspected Fulani combatants affiliated with Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) 12 Dec attacked campsites in Tinabaw, killing 47 Tuareg Daousak. After rumours spread of planned retaliation by Daousak militia, many fled to Niger 16 Dec. After French and Malian authorities late Nov reported killing of Amadou Kouffa, leader of jihadist group Macina Liberation Front, leader of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) Abdelmalek Droukdel 11 Dec indicated Kouffa was alive. Authorities 6 Dec said they had dismantled jihadist cell in Koutiala town in south near border with Burkina Faso. French airstrike night of 19-20 Dec killed at least five suspected jihadists in south east near Niger border. In capital Bamako, governor 4 Dec banned gatherings in several areas. Security forces 8 and 15 Dec repressed opposition protests in Bamako seeking to denounce bad governance and extension of MPs' mandate until June 2019 due to postponement of legislative



election. Over 50 organisations early Dec denounced govt-proposed Law of National Understanding which is envisaged in 2015 peace agreement, arguing that it would allow impunity. Parliament 13 Dec delayed vote on draft law, requesting additional information from govt.

➡ **Niger** Suspected jihadist groups continued attacks in south east near border with Nigeria and in west near borders with Mali and Burkina Faso. In south east, suspected members of Boko Haram (BH) 5 Dec killed three Fulani herdsmen near Ngalewa village, Diffa region; presumed members of BH faction Islamic State West Africa Province 14 Dec ambushed civilian convoy between N'Guigmi and Kabelawa, Diffa region, killing state official and two other civilians. In south west, armed assailants 15 Dec kidnapped traditional chief in Torodi area, Tillabery region, and headed toward Burkina Faso border; security forces supported by local population launched operation to rescue him, four assailants reportedly killed, along with one gendarme and one civilian. Traditional chief's fate remained unclear. Army 17 Dec killed two suspected members of Islamic State in Greater Sahara near Tin Tadangawi, Tillabery region. French force Barkhane and army 29 Dec raided jihadist camp near Tongo Tongo, Tillabery region allegedly killing fifteen militants. UN refugee agency 13 Dec said violence along western borders with Mali and Burkina Faso had displaced 52,000 in 2018. Colonel and two senior officers reportedly arrested 15 Dec in capital Niamey for allegedly plotting coup.

⬇ **Nigeria** Campaigning stepped up ahead of Feb-March 2019 general elections, as Boko Haram (BH) kept up high rate of attacks in north east and criminal violence rose in north west. Political parties, including President Buhari's All Progressives Congress (APC) and main challenger Atiku Abubakar's People's Democratic Party (PDP), 11-12 Dec committed to campaign peacefully, but political violence continued: gunmen 23 Dec killed local APC leader in Onne, Rivers state; 28 Dec killed councillor in Ado area, Ekiti state; thugs 29 Dec disrupted Buhari supporters' meeting in Akoko Northeast area, Ondo state, injuring many. In north east, BH continued attacks in Lake Chad area in north of Borno state, and in neighbouring Yobe state to west. In Borno state, six attacks 7-16 Dec on civilians and military positions left at least one soldier dead; BH 26-28 Dec seized six towns in Kukawa area including HQ of Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and navy and marine police bases; air force 29 Dec bombed insurgents near Baga causing unknown number of casualties. In Yobe state, BH 1 Dec attacked Buni Gari, destroying army's tank base and killing at least eight soldiers; 29 Dec attacked Buni Gari town again. In north west, bandits stepped up attacks in Zamfara state, prompting several calls for state of emergency. Attacks on at least ten villages across state 10-22 Dec left at least 97 civilians dead. Army 14 Dec said it killed eight bandits in Dumburum forest. Ten troops, five Nigerian and five Nigerien, killed 29 Dec in joint Nigeria-Niger operation against criminal gangs in Doubouroum area, Zamfara state near border with Niger. In Middle Belt, herder-farmer tensions persisted: in six attacks across Benue, Plateau and Kaduna states 15-30 Dec, gunmen killed at least 37 people. In Niger Delta, militant groups threatened to resume violence. New group, War Against Niger Delta Exploitation, 25 Dec threatened to disrupt 2019 elections if federal govt failed to meet demands for region's development. Coalition of four militant groups 30 Dec announced termination of two-year ceasefire citing govt's failure to meet Pan Niger Delta Forum's Nov 2016 demands. Criminal and ethnic violence reported in several states; notably, gunmen 18 Dec killed immediate past Chief of Defence Staff, retired Air Chief Marshal Alex Badeh near capital Abuja.

↓ **Togo** With mediation between govt and opposition coalition stalled, clashes between security forces and opposition protesters in run-up to contested 20 Dec legislative elections left at least four people dead. Following govt ban on opposition protests, protesters clashed with security forces in several places, with many opposition supporters injured by gunshot wounds in capital Lomé and northern city of Sokodé; at least four people killed in protest-related violence 8-13 Dec, including twelve-year-old boy. Govt 12 Dec confirmed 20 Dec election date. Coalition of fourteen opposition parties boycotted vote citing irregularities and called for overhaul of electoral commission. President Gnassingbé's party won most seats, according to provisional results released 31 Dec. Repeated opposition protests since Sept 2017 have called for Gnassingbé to resign, while mediation by West African regional bloc ECOWAS, launched April 2018, to facilitate dialogue between govt and opposition has been continuously delayed due to disagreement between parties.