

Africa

Central Africa

➔ **Burundi** Authorities and ruling party continued to intimidate opposition using violence and arrests, as insecurity persisted in border areas. Notably, police and intelligence officers 4 April arrested four members of opposition party National Congress for Freedom (CNL) in Kizuka area, Rumonge province in south west; police 5 April rearrested CNL member in Gitega province in centre; authorities 15 April assaulted and arrested three CNL leaders in Mutumba, Karuzi province in centre; ruling party youth wing Imbonerakure 16 April assaulted CNL leader in Mutaho commune, Gitega province. Insecurity persisted in Burundi-Rwanda and Burundi-DR Congo border areas. After heavy gunfire reportedly heard on Rwandan side of border 3 April, armed men seen 8 April near Ruhororo military position, Mabayi commune, Cibitoke province in north west. Unidentified armed group 6 April attacked police station in Gihanga commune, Bubanza province in west near DR Congo border, reportedly injuring six officers. Congolese army 11 April said it had killed 36 members of Burundian rebel groups National Liberation Forces (FNL) and Burundian Republican Forces (FOREBU) during operation 6-8 April in Uvira territory, South Kivu province in DR Congo. France 11 April froze for six months assets of four officials already sanctioned by EU, accusing them of attacks on democracy or responsibility for violence in 2015. International partners in joint statement 5 April expressed concern at govt's late March decision to withdraw BBC's licence to operate in country and maintain suspension of Voice of America's licence.

↓ 🇸🇳* **Cameroon** Boko Haram (BH) intensified attacks in Far North, Anglophone separatists continued to clash with security forces in west and violence could escalate there around 20 May National Day, commemorating 1972 vote to transform federal state into unitary one. In Far North, BH attacks left ten soldiers and at least 24 civilians dead. BH fighters 6 April killed five soldiers near Fotokol, Logone and Chari department; four soldiers killed 12 April when they detonated bombs laid by BH on Gouzda-Vreket-Vouzi road, Mayo Tsanaga department, and same day one killed in same way on Kerawa road, Mayo Sava department. BH killed eleven civilians in Tchakamari, Mayo Sava 19 April; killed at least seven civilians in Blangoua, Logone and Chari department 22 April; one vigilante member in Malloumri, Mayo Sava 26 April; one civilian in Bourouvaré, Mayo Sava 27 April; four civilians in Kofia, Logone and Chari 28 April. Security forces killed two BH in Sanda-Wandjiri 14 April. Conflict in Anglophone regions continued. Clashes between separatists and soldiers in Bali, Northwest region 15 April left three separatists and four soldiers dead. Appeals court of Centre region in capital Yaoundé 9 April rejected detained opposition leader Maurice Kamto's demand for temporary release; police same day arrested seventeen members of Kamto's party Cameroon Renaissance Movement who protested outside court building. European Parliament 18 April passed resolution calling on govt to immediately release Kamto and members of his party, start inclusive dialogue with Anglophone leaders and reform electoral system; it called on EU Commission to assess EU support to security forces and, in absence of progress, put Anglophone crisis on UN Security Council agenda. Govt rejected resolution as "biased, unfounded".

➔ **Central African Republic** Insecurity persisted in provinces as international actors increased pressure on govt to implement Feb peace agreement. In west, UN mission (MINUSCA) 5 April conducted operation in Zoukombo, Mambere Kadei prefecture against members of Abdoulaye Miskine's rebel group Democratic Front of the Central African People (FDPC), who took control of town in early March; MINUSCA dislodged rebels, including from road leading to Cameroon. In south east, clashes between members of rebel group Union for Peace in Central African Republic (UPC) and self-defence groups at Zangba, Basse-Kotto prefecture left tens dead 17-23 April, some report over 100. Heads of regional bloc Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and UN Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) 2-5 April visited capital Bangui to support Feb deal's implementation. African Union (AU) Commissioner for Peace and Security Smaïl Chergui and UN Under-Sec-Gen for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix visited country 14-18 April; they and PM Ngrebada attended ceremony 15 April in Bambari in centre to present future members of special mixed security units to comprise soldiers and former rebels; Ali Darassa, leader of UPC rebel group and appointed military adviser late March, also attended. Joint AU-UN-EU mission visited Bangui 17 April for second meeting of International Support Group for CAR aimed at reinforcing international support for implementation of Feb agreement. UN Security Council 9 April fixed conditions for partial lifting of UN arms embargo, imposed in 2013: in July UN will assess authorities' efforts to improve security sector, advance disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, and set up protocol for management of weapons and Security Council will re-examine arms embargo by 30 Sept.

➔ **Chad** Boko Haram (BH) kept up attacks on security forces in west as authorities continued to repress opposition and civil society nationwide. In Lake Chad province in west, BH militants 15 April attacked army position at Bohama killing at least eleven soldiers, unknown number of militants also killed; unidentified assailants 16 April attacked gendarmerie position at Dabansali killing one gendarme; BH 23 April attacked army at Tetewa, fighting left four soldiers and six militants dead. Supreme Court 12 April ruled that Romadoumngar Félix Nialbé should replace Saleh Kebzabo as parliamentary opposition leader on grounds that, following defection of one MP from Kebzabo's party, Romadoumngar's party had more MPs than Kebzabo's. Governor of Guera province banned congress of Kebzabo's party planned for 12 April citing security concerns. Govt 23 April rejected request of youth-led movement Les Transformateurs to become political party. Govt 22 April banned protest against three-month shortage of butane gas that civil society collective had scheduled for 25 April. Authorities 23 April arrested collective's leader Dingamnayal Versinis after he continued to call for protest, but released him next day when he postponed it. Authorities 25 April arrested thirteen protesters for defying protest ban; released twelve 28 April after public prosecutor dismissed cases against them, but one still detained, reportedly for having contacts with rebel group. President Déby promoted 104 military officers to senior grades 12 April, day after Sudanese military unseated President Bashir. Déby 23 April attended summit on Sudan in Cairo, at which African leaders gave Sudan's Transitional Military Council three months to hand over power to civilians.

➔ **DR Congo** Govt formation remained stalled as coalitions led by President Tshisekedi and former President Kabila failed to agree on PM and cabinet appointments; insecurity continued in centre and east. Officials from Tshisekedi's

Heading for Change (CACH) alliance and Kabila's Common Front for Congo (FCC) met in Kisantu, Kongo Central province 6-7 April to negotiate PM and cabinet, but failed to reach agreement; Tshisekedi refused to appoint FCC's proposed PM Albert Mulimbi, chairman of state-owned mining company Gecamines. In 31 March legislative elections in Beni, Butembo and Yumbi (postponed from Dec due to Ebola and violence), Lamuka opposition platform won ten of fourteen parliamentary seats and Union for the Congolese Nation (UNC) of Tshisekedi's Chief of Staff Vital Kamerhe and FCC won one seat each. In governorship elections, FCC won in sixteen of 22 provinces 10 April; governor elections postponed in North Kivu, Mai-Ndombe, South Ubangi and Sankuru. In document made public 30 April, prosecutors dropped investigation into allegations opposition leader in exile Moise Katumbi hired mercenaries, opening way for his return. Tshisekedi made first domestic tour as president 12-16 April to Lubumbashi in south east, and Goma and Beni in east. In U.S. 3-5 April, Tshisekedi met International Monetary Fund head Christine Lagarde who promised resumption of cooperation, suspended since 2012, and Belgian Deputy PM Reynders who pledged to revive ties. In east and centre, over 2,600 Mai-Mai militiamen surrendered 25 March-9 April. In South Kivu in east, army 2 April arrested leader of Raia Mutomboki armed group; 29 more Raia Mutomboki units surrendered 8 April. In North Kivu in east, clashes between three rival armed groups – Nduma Defence of the Congo/Rénové de Guidon, Alliance of Patriots for a Free and Sovereign Congo (APCLS) and Mai-Mai Nyatura – caused escalation in killings, rapes and robberies. Army 11 April said it had killed 36 members of Burundian rebel groups, National Liberation Forces (FNL) and Burundian Republican Forces (FOREBU), 6-8 April in Uvira territory, South Kivu. In Ituri province in north east, unidentified attackers killed eight people in Kalo 5-7 April.

➡ **Republic of Congo** Govt late April lifted suspension of party led by Frédéric Bintsamou, known as Pasteur Ntumi, imposed in April 2016 when rebels led by Ntumi resumed attacks in Pool region; peace agreement signed in Dec 2017.

➡ **Rwanda** Relations between Rwanda and Uganda remained tense as Ugandan security forces continued crackdown on Rwandans. In western Uganda, following 2 April kidnapping of U.S. citizen and Ugandan tour guide in Queen Elizabeth National Park, Ugandan authorities 4 April arrested over 40 Rwandans near park for being in country without necessary papers. After Rwanda late Feb restricted travel across two of three principal border crossings with Uganda (Gatuna and Cyanika), Rwanda relaxed restrictions at Gatuna, allowing Rwandans to enter Uganda during daytime, returning before end of day.

Horn of Africa

➡ **Eritrea** Govt closed two border crossings with neighbouring Ethiopia without giving reasons: Omhajer-Humera crossing 18 April and Bure-Assab crossing 22 April.

➡ **Ethiopia** Inter-ethnic fighting erupted in Amhara region in north leaving some 25 people dead and govt reshuffled key positions. Ethnic Oromo and Amhara militias reportedly clashed in Oromo-administered zone and North Shewa Zone in Amhara region particularly around Kemissie and Ataye towns 5-7 April leaving around 25

dead before military put stop to fighting. Former President of Amhara region Gedu Andargachew was appointed FM 18 April. Same day president of Oromia region Lemma Megersa was appointed defence minister. Finance Minister Ahmed Shide was confirmed as chair of Somali People's Democratic Party 2 April. Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), one of four parties in ruling coalition Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), 13 April said it was opposed to plans to convert EPRDF into one party, while EPRDF Council meeting 15-17 April failed to address coalition's key challenges. Attorney General Berhanu Tsegaye 12 April announced arrest of 59 people for corruption including agency heads and mid-ranking officials. Berhanu same day said National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) had foiled planned attacks in capital by suspected Al-Shabaab militants. PM Abiy 15 April received members of Sudan's Transitional Military Council and praised it for respecting popular will. Eritrea 18-22 April closed two border crossings with Ethiopia. Former rebel group Gambela People's Liberation Movement 21 April returned from Eritrea.

➔ **Kenya** Suspected Al-Shabaab militants 12 April abducted two Cuban doctors in Mandera town in north east, shooting dead one of two police officers escorting them, and took them into Gedo region in Somalia; security forces launched operation to rescue them. After Kenya mid-Feb recalled its envoy to Somalia and expelled Somali ambassador over maritime border dispute, officials from both countries in Nairobi 3 April agreed to allow ambassadors to return to station.

↓ 🌟* **Somalia** Clashes between security forces and protesters in capital Mogadishu left five civilians dead, as Al-Shabaab kept up attacks in Mogadishu and rural areas and could escalate insurgency in month of Ramadan starting 5 May. In Mogadishu, after police shot dead young rickshaw driver at checkpoint in Howl-Wadag 13 April, residents same day protested against govt; protests led to clashes between protesters and security forces, that left five civilians dead. President Farmajo accused opposition of orchestrating protests. In Mogadishu, Al-Shabaab car bombing near police academy 4 April killed at least one person; car bombing near police station and hotel 17 April killed four; unclaimed car bombing 22 April injured at least two civilians. In Lower Shabelle region in south-centre, following heavy fighting between army and Al-Shabaab in Sabid 1 April, govt forces seized truck loaded with explosives. In Bosaso town, Bari region, Puntland, at least six soldiers injured in roadside bombing 11 April; also in Bosaso unclaimed land mine targeting governor of Bari region 24 April injured at least three security guards. In Lower Juba, Hiraan, Lower Shabelle and Middle Shabelle regions, suspected Al-Shabaab attacks 17-23 April killed a dozen Kenyan soldiers in African Union mission (AMISOM), seven Somali soldiers and one local official. Senior Al-Shabaab official Aden Abdi Mohamed "Aden Obe" 23 April surrendered near Bardhere in Gedo region in south. U.S. airstrikes continued, killing five Al-Shabaab militants four Islamic State (ISIS)-Somalia militants including deputy leader of ISIS-Somalia 9-26 April. Following late March allegations by NGO Amnesty International that U.S. airstrikes had caused civilian deaths, U.S. conducted internal review and 5 April for first time admitted that airstrikes in 2018 caused two civilian deaths. After Kenya mid-Feb recalled its envoy to Somalia and expelled Somali ambassador over maritime border dispute, officials from both countries in Nairobi 3 April agreed to allow ambassadors to return to station.

➡ 🌟* **South Sudan** Sept 2018 peace agreement held, but could collapse triggering resumption of fighting if President Kiir forms transitional govt at scheduled end of pre-transitional period 12 May against wishes of main rebel leader Riek Machar. Machar 12 April called for six-month extension of pre-transitional period. Kiir and Machar alongside other political and church leaders from South Sudan attended “spiritual retreat” at Vatican in Rome 11-12 April; Pope Francis entreated leaders to keep disagreements behind closed doors. Following 11 April ouster of Sudanese President Bashir, guarantor of South Sudanese peace process, South Sudanese delegation 17 April travelled to Khartoum and stressed importance of continued free flow of oil from South Sudan into Sudan for export. Kiir 23 April travelled to United Arab Emirates to discuss improving bilateral relations.

⬇️ **Sudan** Military’s ouster of then President Bashir 11 April after almost 30 years in power led to tense stalemate between military council and protest movement leaders over composition and leadership of joint civilian-military body to oversee transition. Thousands marched in capital Khartoum 6 April – anniversary of 1985 popular uprising – and began sit-in outside military headquarters, resisting security forces’ attempts to break up crowds. Army adopted policy of non-intervention and junior and mid-ranking military defied orders to disperse protesters; some soldiers reportedly clashed with members of National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS). Police 9 April also adopted non-intervention policy. First VP and Defence Minister Ahmed Awad Ibn Auf 11 April announced ouster and arrest of Bashir, creation of Transitional Military Council (TMC) to rule for up to two years before elections, suspension of constitution, three-month state of emergency and curfew. Protesters rejected curfew and Ibn Auf as ruler, and demanded immediate transition to civilian rule. Next day Ibn Auf resigned and was replaced by Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah Burhan. Burhan 13 April announced overhaul of military leadership, notably head of Rapid Support Forces paramilitary group Mohamed Hamdan “Hemedti” appointed TMC deputy chair. Salah Gosh resigned as NISS head 13 April. Bashir reportedly transferred to prison 17 April and next day two of Bashir’s brothers arrested. African Union 15 April gave TMC fifteen days to hand over power to civilians to avoid Sudan’s suspension; summit of several African leaders chaired by Egyptian President Sisi in Cairo 23 April gave military leaders three months. Protest leaders led by Sudanese Professionals Association late April engaged TMC in talks on formation of joint transitional council, but said protests would continue until TMC accepted to form civilian-led transitional body.

➡ **Uganda** Authorities re-arrested opposition leader Robert Kyagulanyi and relations between Uganda and Rwanda remained tense. Police 22 April placed under house arrest singer-turned-opposition MP Kyagulanyi, known as Bobi Wine, after banning his concert in capital Kampala. Court 29 April charged Kyagulanyi for his involvement in illegal protest in 2018 and remanded him in prison. Protests in several areas of Kampala against his arrest 30 April led to clashes between police and protesters. Highest court 18 April endorsed constitutional changes removing age limit of 75 years for presidential candidates, enabling President Museveni to contest 2021 elections. In west, following 2 April kidnapping of U.S. citizen and Ugandan tour guide in Queen Elizabeth National Park on border with DR Congo, Ugandan authorities arrested eight people for involvement in kidnapping and 4 April arrested over 40 Rwandans near park for being in country without necessary immigration papers; unidentified kidnapers 7 April released American and Ugandan after safari

company paid ransom. After Rwanda late Feb restricted travel across two of three principal border crossings with Uganda (Katuna and Cyanika), Rwanda relaxed restrictions at Gatuna, allowing Rwandans to enter Uganda during daytime, returning before end of day.

Southern Africa

➔ **Angola** Court 24 April ordered release of 40 supporters of Cabinda Independence Movement (MIC), which seeks independence for Cabinda exclave in west, arrested in Feb; eleven supporters remained detained.

➔ **Comoros Islands** Opposition continued to reject President Assoumani's win in March presidential elections and, alongside EU and African Union (AU), called for inclusive dialogue, but govt pursued repression of opposition and media. AU, regional bodies, EU and other international actors reported irregularities in polls, and opposition challenged results at Supreme Court, but latter confirmed results 2 April. Opposition body challenging Assoumani's rule, National Transitional Council (NTC), welcomed EU and AU backing for inclusive dialogue, calling on international bodies to impose sanctions and nullify results. Govt continued repression; court 6 April said NTC chairperson Mohamed Soilihi, arrested in March, and eight others would be prosecuted for seeking to "destabilise state". After govt released Soilihi 8 April, he withdrew accusations of election rigging and distanced himself from NTC. In protest at govt's clampdown on media, private media outlets 2 April declared two-week boycott of govt press conferences and other events.

➔ **Lesotho** PM Thabane 6 April suspended parliament in apparent attempt to avoid vote of no confidence.

➔ **Madagascar** President Rajoelina 21 April scheduled referendum on whether to change constitution, disband senate and give more powers to regions for 27 May, same day as legislative election, but in face of opposition from judiciary and opposition parties he 26 April postponed referendum without setting new date.

➔ **Mozambique** Security forces kept up operations against suspected Islamist militancy in Cabo Delgado province in far north. President Nyusi 12 April visited Mocimboa da Praia and Palma districts, Cabo Delgado province, promising to reinforce patrols and saying security forces had captured several militant bases, including one in Nangade district early April, killing seven militants. Court 23 April released on bail two journalists detained in Jan while reporting on insurgency. Attorney general 24 April said govt would intensify cooperation with northern neighbour Tanzania to halt "cross-border" attacks. Court 25 April sentenced 37 people to prison for involvement in attacks. Court in South Africa 8 April ruled that former Mozambican Finance Minister Manuel Chang could be extradited from South Africa to U.S. where he is wanted for alleged involvement in govt's undisclosed \$2bn loan that U.S. says was fraudulent.

➔ **South Africa** Ahead of 8 May general elections, residents protested against lack of services early April in townships around Johannesburg and Tshwane, as well in Cape Town and Port Elizabeth; in several places protesters blocked roads and clashed with police, who used tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse them.

➔ **Zimbabwe** Amid persistent economic crisis, govt continued efforts to implement political and economic reforms. Govt-led national dialogue that started in Feb continued, but main opposition party Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and five smaller parties still refused to take part. Police 4 April said 375 protesters had been convicted on charges relating to Jan protests which security forces violently suppressed. Govt mid-April published draft Maintenance of Peace and Order Bill to replace much criticised Public Order and Security Act (POSA); NGOs highlighted that new draft bill retained some controversial provisions and parliament 24 April opened public consultations on draft. Amid deteriorating economic situation, govt and International Monetary Fund (IMF) 10 April agreed on reforms designed to facilitate Zimbabwe's reengagement with international community. UN human rights experts 4 April said economic reforms were hurting poorest in country most. Govt 8 April said it would begin to pay compensation to thousands of farmers who lost land under former President Mugabe. Tensions continued within opposition ahead of MDC congress in May; violent incidents reported at local MDC party offices since late March. MDC Sec Gen Douglas Mwonozora and VP Elias Mudzuri announced their intention to challenge incumbent President Nelson Chamisa, but in all provinces party nominated Chamisa as candidate for party leader.

Sahel

➔ **Burkina Faso** Deadly incidents continued almost daily in several areas, especially in north and east, attributed to jihadist activity, banditry or intercommunal violence, and President Kaboré began talks with opposition ahead of 2020 elections. Notably in Sahel region in north, killing of ethnic Fulse religious leader in Arbinda 31 March by suspected ethnic Fulani jihadist militants triggered intercommunal violence that according to govt left over 60 dead. Also in north, suspected jihadist attack on Djika village 19 April left at least seven people dead; suspected jihadists shot dead four people in Liki 23 April; suspected jihadists attacked church in Silgadji 28 April killing priest and five worshippers; some twenty unidentified gunmen attacked town hall and burned police station in Gorgadji 29 April. In east, suspected jihadists attacked school in Maytagou 26 April killing six. Burkina Faso and Mali 11 April said joint operation Kapidgou in border area killed 24 militants. Kaboré initiated political dialogue to prepare for 2020 general elections and facilitate constitutional referendum; Kaboré 4 April met Zéphirin Diabré, head of opposition party Union for Progress and Change (UPC). Kaboré 12 April met Ivorian Minister of Defence Hamed Bakayoko to discuss security issues in sub-region. As part of Accra Initiative aimed at fostering regional cooperation against common security threats, Burkina Faso took part in meeting in Togolese capital Lomé 18 April to plan deployment of joint forces along Burkina Faso's borders; representatives from Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Togo also attended. Trial of those responsible for Sept 2015 failed coup attempt opened 9 April, next session postponed to 30 April.

➔ **Mali** Massacre of ethnic Fulani late March spurred pressure on govt, including mass protests, forcing PM Maïga and cabinet to resign; ethnic violence continued in centre and could escalate in May, as violence and banditry continued in north. Heeding calls of political and religious leaders, tens of thousands protested in

capital Bamako and other cities 5 April to denounce govt's failure to stop violence in centre and demand PM Maïga's resignation. President Keïta 16 April said govt would increase troops, UN peacekeepers and French Barkhane forces in centre. PM Maïga and cabinet resigned 19 April, hours before parliament was set to vote on no-confidence motion. Keïta 22 April appointed former Minister of Economy and Finance Boubou Cisse as new PM. In centre, massacre of Fulani at Ogossagou late March exacerbated tensions between Fulani and Dogon communities and fuelled support to their respective militias. Dogon self-defence group Dan Na Ambassagou announced withdrawal from Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reinsertion program 8 April citing insecurity. Residents in Koro 13 April prevented arrest of local Dan Na Ambassagou commander. French Barkhane vehicle detonated mine in Foulseré, Mopti region 2 April, one doctor killed. Bombings in centre 1-22 April killed six civilians, five soldiers and one UN peacekeeper. Unidentified gunmen 11 April attacked Tiofoli in Mopti region killing one. Al-Qaeda linked militants 21 April killed at least eleven soldiers in Guire, claiming attack was revenge for Ogossagou massacre. In Mopti region, unidentified gunmen 25 April killed at least fifteen in Bouldé; 27 April attacked military vehicle in Acharane, killing one soldier. In north, unidentified assailants 3 April fired at UN camp in Kidal, injuring two peacekeepers. Two unidentified gunmen night of 5-6 April killed one civilian in Gao region. Unidentified assailants killed local commander of pro-govt armed group Movement for the Salvation of Azawad (MSA) in Talataye, Gao region 7 April. Unidentified gunmen 11 April killed one MSA officer and at least one other in Ménaka region. Army vehicle detonated mine in Ménaka region 18 April, two soldiers killed. Pro-govt armed group Self-Defence Group of Imrad Tuareg and Allies (GATIA) 24 April accused army of arresting and executing three Tuaregs in Gao region. Expert committee on constitutional reform 1 April submitted new draft constitution, which includes creation of senate and permanent electoral commission and substitution of regional council with regional assembly.

➡ **Niger** Boko Haram (BH) continued attacks in south east near border with Nigeria and suspected jihadists kept up attacks in west near border with Mali. In Diffa region in south east, BH militants 9 April attacked gendarmerie camp, killing two. Unidentified gunmen 13 April killed one in Biri Boula, Diffa region. After governor of Diffa region imposed stricter curfew, civil society organisations 15 April launched "ville morte" protest against restrictive security measures, shutting down economic activity in Diffa town; governor 19 April reverted curfew to previous hours. BH 26 April attacked Doctors without Borders office in Maïné Soroa, Diffa region. In west, bombing killed at least five soldiers in Tahoua region bordering Mali 20 April. Suspected jihadists night of 26-27 April killed Tuareg chief in Inatès, near border with Mali. Thousands of school students protested in capital Niamey 9 April against poor education conditions; protests turned into riots, with students burning tyres and vandalising and looting public and private goods. Security forces used teargas to disperse protesters and arrested 92; all released ten days later.

West Africa

➡ **Côte d'Ivoire** Political leaders continued efforts to strengthen their hands ahead of 2020 presidential elections. President Ouattara 3 April appointed 33 new senators, including some politicians who had defected from opposition party

Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI) of former President Bédié, notably former PDCI MP Allomo Paulin Kouassi and former president of Gbeké council Abonouan Jean Kouassi. PDCI disciplinary council 4 April expelled from party VP Duncan, Presidency Sec Gen Patrick Achi and four other officials for creating pro-Ouattara branch, PDCI-Renaissance, in Dec. Former President Gbagbo – in Belgium on conditional release from International Criminal Court (ICC) – made efforts to regain control of party he founded, Popular Ivorian Front (FPI), from legally-recognised president Pascal Affi N'Guessan; latter late March refused to step down, but three FPI executives resigned to side with Gbagbo. International Criminal Court 11 April said it would release Gbagbo if he was accepted by country that would cooperate in enforcing any future court decisions, thus including sending Gbagbo back to The Hague for retrial. Defence Minister Bakayoko 12 April met Burkina Faso President Kaboré in Ouagadougou to discuss regional security; spokesman of former parliament speaker and now opposition leader Guillaume Soro 14 April said meeting part of plan by Ouattara to deliver Soro to authorities of Burkina Faso, where Soro has been mentioned in trial of those held responsible for 2015 failed coup.

📌🌐* **Benin** Security forces cracked down on opposition protests before and after 28 April parliamentary elections which voters largely boycotted after authorities banned opposition parties from taking part; unrest could escalate in May. Electoral commission early March banned five opposition parties from participating in poll, with result that all candidates came from two parties, both allied to President Talon. NGOs documented violent repression of opposition protests 1 and 4 April. Former presidents Nicéphore Soglo and Thomas Boni Yayi 19 April called for election boycott and led protests against ban, prompting violent crackdown. Following internet blackout on election day 28 April, initial results 29 April showed two Talon-allied parties, Progressive Union and Republican Bloc, winning 47 and 36 seats respectively; voter turnout 23%. Opposition supporters protested results in economic capital Cotonou 1 May, setting up barricades; authorities dispersed crowds with tear gas and soldiers reportedly encircled home of Boni Yayi.

➡ **Guinea** More intense confrontation loomed between camp of President Condé and opposition as 81-year-old leader looked intent on changing constitution so that he can run for third term in 2020 elections. Leading opposition and civil society figures 3 April launched coalition National Front for the Defence of the Constitution (FNDC) to oppose constitutional reform; figures included Cellou Dalein Diallo leader of main opposition party Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea (UFDG). Diallo 4 April asked security forces not to follow Condé blindly. Three people who were arrested late March in Coyah for unveiling banner saying “No to a third term” were released 5 April. PM Fofana 6 April said “God gave health to our leader... to push Guinea to happiness”.

➡ **Guinea-Bissau** Following 10 March legislative elections, ruling party and opposition faced off over appointment of two vice presidents of parliament. Opposition parties Movement for a Democratic Alternative G-15 (MADEM G-15) and Party for Social Renewal (PRS) 24 April announced court action against ruling African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) due to its attempts to block their nominees for first and second vice presidents. Mission from regional bloc Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) arrived in capital Bissau 30 April to help break impasse.

➡ **Nigeria** Boko Haram (BH) continued attacks in north east, security forces ramped up operations against bandits in north west and herder-farmer violence flared in some north central and southern states. In north east, two BH factions kept up insurgency in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states despite operations by military and troops from neighbouring countries in Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF). Notably, Islamic State West Africa Province 1 April claimed it had killed five soldiers and posted video of killing online; military said three of five killed in video were vigilantes. In Adamawa state, BH attacked village near Madagali 29 April, killing 26 people. In Yobe state, army 9 April repelled BH attack on Damaturu killing some twenty militants. Shekau faction continued suicide attacks in Borno state: two suicide bombers 6 April killed nine people in Jere near state capital Maiduguri; two suicide bombers 11 April killed themselves and two others in Monguno. Army early April reported MNJTF had killed sixteen BH in Borno state, including “high-ranking commander” Malloum Moussa. Army 13 April said joint Nigeria-Cameroon operation killed 27 insurgents in Borno state. In north west, security forces stepped up operations to counter banditry and other criminal violence; airstrikes and ground operations killed estimated 120 suspected bandits mainly in Zamfara state, but also some in Katsina and Kaduna states. Bandit attacks continued, particularly in Zamfara and Katsina states, killing over 50 people. Clashes between bandits and vigilantes 7 and 9 April in Katsina state left 44 people dead. Violence between herders and farming communities continued in north central zone – Nasarawa, Kaduna and Kogi states – leaving some 45 people dead; incidents also reported in Anambra and Delta states in south, leaving eleven people dead. Significant communal violence in Rivers, Taraba, Benue and Ebonyi states left at least 72 people dead, as kidnapping for ransom continued in several states. Buhari 25 April began 11-day “private visit” to UK, where he has spent several months since 2015 for medical treatment. Police 30 April reported over 1,000 people killed in crime-related violence and 685 kidnapped countrywide Jan-April 2019.

➡ **Togo** Opposition launched new protests calling for constitutional reforms to limit number of presidential terms. Clashes between security forces and protesters in Bafilo, Kara region in north, where govt had denied opposition authorisation to protest, left one protester dead 13 April. As part of Accra Initiative, aimed at fostering regional cooperation against common security threats, representatives of Burkina Faso, Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Togo met in capital Lomé 18 April to plan deployment of joint forces along border of Burkina Faso to stem spread of suspected jihadist insurgency. Using intelligence from Burkina Faso authorities, Togolese security forces early April arrested over twenty suspected jihadists from Burkina Faso in northern Togo and transferred them to Burkina Faso.