

Africa

Central Africa

➔ **Burundi** **Authorities continued crackdown on opposition, and Supreme Court convicted 34 individuals of involvement in 2015 coup attempt against former President Nkurunziza.** In Rumonge province, police 31 Jan-2 Feb arrested five civilians suspected of complicity with armed groups. In Bujumbura Rural province's Kanyosha commune, ruling party CNDD-FDD youth wing Imbonerakure 14 Feb assaulted four members of opposition party National Congress for Freedom (CNL) and 28 Feb clashed with CNL party meeting attendees, leaving 12 injured on both sides. In Cibitoke province, National Intelligence Services mid-Feb arrested seven civilians for allegedly cooperating with Kinyarwanda speakers in illegal gold trade; armed forces late Feb killed at least two and captured 16 Kinyarwanda-speaking armed group members in Mabayi commune. CNL leader Agathon Rwaso 14 Feb denounced judicial harassment of opposition, said over 140 CNL members remain behind bars despite having served their sentence or been acquitted. Meanwhile, in decision released 2 Feb but dating back to 23 June 2020, Supreme Court convicted in absentia 34 individuals to life imprisonment for involvement in failed coup against former President Nkurunziza in 2015; those convicted include former VP Bernard Busokoza, former president of opposition party Front for Democracy in Burundi (FRODEBU) Jean Minani, and opposition figure Alexis Sinduhije, whom authorities accuse of leading rebel group RED-Tabara. After President Ndayishimiye late Jan asked National Council of Communication (CNC) to reopen dialogue with media outlets banned in 2015, CNC 1 Feb held follow-up meeting with several of them; gathering however excluded media in exile. Director of Burundian Union of Journalists same day welcomed "step in the right direction". EU 2 Feb formally restarted dialogue with Burundi, which was interrupted in 2016; in letter to EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, 43 EU parliamentarians 5 Feb opposed resumption of dialogue and cooperation, citing continued human rights violations by Burundian authorities, including arbitrary arrests, torture and enforced disappearances.

➔ **Cameroon** **Violent attacks between govt forces and separatists continued in Anglophone regions, leaving dozens dead; jihadist attacks decreased in Far North.** In North West region, govt forces 1 Feb killed two separatists including senior commander near regional capital Bamenda; 6 Feb killed four separatists and captured four others in Ntankah village, also freed four hostages. Security forces 11 Feb beat brother of suspected separatist combatant to near death in Ndu town and circulated video of ordeal on social media, sparking outcry; in response, authorities 15 Feb arrested eight security forces. Armed separatists 15 Feb killed elite army unit (BIR) captain in Kumbo town and 18 Feb killed seven soldiers in IED attacks in Babessi town. In South West region, separatists 2-4 Feb blocked Buea-Kumba highway to stop people from attending semi-final of football championship in Limbe city, killing three security forces at Mbalangi village 3 Feb. Suspected armed separatists 4 Feb fired shots at NGO Médecins Sans Frontières ambulance near Muyuka town, wounding healthcare worker. Armed forces overnight 7-8 Feb killed seven separatists including two

prominent leaders during raid in Mbalangi town near Kumba city. Separatists 13 Feb killed three traditional chiefs and kidnapped 30 villagers in Essoh-Attah village. NGO Human Rights Watch 26 Feb said govt forces had killed one civilian and raped at least 20 women during raid on Ebam village in March 2020. In regional capitals Buea and Bamenda, former separatists who have been enrolled in Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration Program 1 and 15 Feb protested against living conditions and failed reintegration promises; in live TV program, former separatist fighter 6 Feb voiced his regret in dropping his weapons and abandoning fight for independent Southern Cameroon state. Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Parolin visited Cameroon 28 Jan-3 Feb and lobbied for peace in Anglophone conflict. Meanwhile, Fulani gunmen 22-23 Feb killed five civilians in Nwa town (North West) near border with Nigeria. In Far North region, amid lull in Boko Haram (BH) attacks, sporadic clashes between armed forces and BH 10-15 Feb left at least 11 jihadists dead.

➡ 🌟* **Central African Republic Armed forces and allies pushed back rebel coalition, but renewed fighting could erupt around 14 March run-off elections.** Army, with support from Rwanda and Russia, launched counter-offensive operations against rebel Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC), partially reopening capital Bangui's road lifeline to neighbouring Cameroon 16 Feb. Govt forces and their allies recaptured Bossembélé and Yaloké towns (Ombella-M'Poko prefecture) 4-5 Feb; Bossemptélé and Bozoum towns (Ouham-Pendé prefecture) 7 and 25 Feb respectively; Bouar, Baboua, Cantonnier and Beloko towns (Nana-Mambéré prefecture) 9-11 Feb; Bambari and Ippy towns (Ouaka prefecture) 17-19 Feb; Bossangoa, Benzambé and Kambakota towns (Ouham prefecture) 24-26 Feb; death toll unknown. CPC rebels 9 Jan ambushed UN peacekeeping force (MINUSCA) convoy 24km north of Bangassou, injuring two peacekeepers; next day reportedly kidnapped Russian mercenary and killed several others near Bambari. Clashes between CPC rebels and armed forces 16 Feb reportedly left at least 14 civilians dead in Bambari; NGO Amnesty International 24 Feb called for investigation. Govt-sponsored demonstrations 12 Feb erupted in Bangui against Angola-led regional efforts to establish dialogue between govt and rebel coalition. Meanwhile, Constitutional Court 1 Feb proclaimed results of Dec 2020 legislative elections, saying 22 out of 140 deputies elected in first round, including five ruling party candidates, while 61 seats require second round and new elections will be held for 57 seats in constituencies where elections could not take place due to insecurity. Main opposition coalition COD-2020 next day rejected results and announced withdrawal from electoral process, citing irregularities and violence; signs of internal dissent however appeared with prominent coalition member rejecting boycott. President Touadéra 13 Feb scheduled run-offs and rerun of first-round elections for 14 March. At start of their trial before International Criminal Court, former anti-Balaka warlords Alfred Yekatom and Patrice-Edouard Ngaïssona 16 Feb pleaded not guilty of crimes against humanity and war crimes in 2013-2014.

↓ **Chad President Déby's sixth term bid sparked unrest and raid on house of opposition presidential candidate Yaya Dillo turned deadly; intercommunal violence persisted.** Ruling Patriotic Salvation Movement 6 Feb chose Déby as candidate for April presidential election. Hundreds of opposition and civil society members same day demonstrated against Déby's sixth

term bid in capital N'Djamena and across country's south, defying ban on protests; police fired tear gas and arrested at least 14 in N'Djamena, while a dozen members of opposition party Les Transformateurs, including party leader Succès Masra, sought refuge at U.S. embassy. Masra 12 Feb left U.S. embassy after U.S. diplomats said they had received assurances from govt that he "would be allowed to return home unhindered". Police 13, 20 and 27 Feb used tear gas to disperse opposition protests in N'Djamena and southern Chad and reportedly arrested scores of people. Security forces 28 Feb raided home of opposition presidential candidate Yaya Dillo – a former rebel leader and relative of Déby – in N'Djamena, leaving at least two killed and five wounded; Dillo said presidential guards attacked him and his family while govt said security forces came to arrest Dillo but faced armed resistance and had to retaliate; authorities immediately shut down internet in N'Djamena amid mounting tensions. Meanwhile, 15 opposition parties 2 Feb created coalition to field joint candidate in upcoming presidential election, and 9 Feb elected political newcomer Théophile Bongoro as candidate; opposition heavyweight Saleh Kebzabo's and four other parties however withdrew from coalition few days later citing irregularities in election process. Intercommunal violence continued notably in south east, where farmer-herder clashes 15-16 Feb left 35 dead and several injured in Mouraye town, Salamat province. At G5 Sahel summit held in N'Djamena, Déby 15 Feb announced immediate deployment of 1,200 troops to tri-border area between Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger; deployment decided in early 2020 was delayed due to insecurity in Lake Chad basin. French President Macron next day ruled out downsizing military forces in Sahel (see Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger entries).

➔ **DR Congo** **Deadly violence continued unabated in east while President Tshisekedi continued to shift balance of power in his favour following end of coalition with predecessor Joseph Kabila.** In North Kivu province, armed group Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) 5-28 Feb launched several attacks on civilians in Beni territory, leaving over 60 dead. In Walikale territory, clashes between Mai-Mai Nyatura militia and armed group Nduma Defence of Congo-Renovated (NDC-R) 8 Feb left at least four dead, while clashes between NDC-R factions 13 Feb killed six. In Nyiragongo territory, unidentified gunmen 22 Feb attacked World Food Programme convoy on Goma-Rutshuru road, killing Italian ambassador Luca Attanasio and two others. In Ituri province's Irumu territory, suspected ADF militants 14 Feb killed at least 16, mostly civilians, in Ndalya village; 24-27 Feb killed at least ten in two villages. Also in Irumu, armed group Patriotic and Integrationist Force of Congo (FPIC) 23 Feb killed 11 civilians in Mugangu village; armed forces 27-28 Feb recaptured FPIC stronghold of Mwanga, killing 16. In Djugu territory, armed forces and armed group Cooperative for the Development of Congo 20 Feb clashed in Mungwalu commune, reportedly leaving 27 dead. In South Kivu province's Fizi territory, Twirwaneho coalition of Banyamulenge militias 16 Feb attacked Kabingo armed forces base, killing soldier. In Haut-Katanga province, Bakata-Katanga separatist militia 14 Feb attacked Kimbebe and Kibati presidential guard camps in country's second-largest city Lubumbashi; six militiamen, four soldiers and one civilian reportedly killed. Meanwhile, Tshisekedi continued to dismantle past coalition with former President Joseph Kabila's Common Front for Congo (FCC); over half of senators 2 Feb filed petition calling for removal of Senate bureau chief, Kabila's ally Alexis Thambwe, who resigned 5 Feb. National Assembly 3 Feb elected former FCC member

Christophe Mboso as president and Tshisekedi's close ally Jean-Marc Kabund as first VP; Kabund had been removed from this position in May 2020 amid power struggle between Tshisekedi and Kabila. Tshisekedi 15 Feb appointed Sama Lukonde – former head of state mining company Gécamines – as PM; Lukonde 22 Feb launched consultations to form govt. Health minister 7 Feb declared new Ebola outbreak in North Kivu.

Horn of Africa

➔ **Djibouti Opposition parties announced boycott of upcoming presidential election.** Opposition parties Union for National Salvation and RADDE late Jan-early Feb said they would not field any candidates in presidential election scheduled for April, alleging National Electoral Commission favours govt and needs extensive reforms; move follows announcement of President Guelleh's bid for fifth term in early Jan. Amid wave of arrests following Jan attacks by armed opposition group Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy (FRUD-armé) against security forces in Tadjourah region, Djiboutian League for Human Rights late Jan, 3 and 6 Feb accused govt of arresting civilians based on their kinship rather than actual connections to FRUD-armé.

➔ **Eritrea Govt continued to be accused of perpetrating serious international crimes in Ethiopia's Tigray region.** EU 8 Feb called for withdrawal of Eritrean forces from Tigray, said they were "fuelling the conflict" and "exacerbating ethnic violence"; govt next day rejected accusation, denounced "appalling" statement and criticised EU for past support to Tigray People's Liberation Front-led Ethiopian govt. NGO Human Rights Watch (HRW) 11 Feb accused Asmara of committing serious abuses including "extrajudicial killings" alongside Ethiopian federal forces in Tigray in past few months. NGO Amnesty International 26 Feb accused Eritrean troops of killing hundreds of civilians in Axum city in Nov massacre that "may amount to a crime against humanity"; govt same day dismissed "preposterous accusations". Tigray conflict continued to affect Eritrean refugees. UN refugee agency (UNHCR) 5 Feb reported "infiltration of armed actors", killings and abductions in Eritrean refugee camps in Tigray, as well as "forced returns to Eritrea at the hands of Eritreans forces"; said 15,000-20,000 Eritrean refugees are currently dispersed across Tigray and cut off from access to UNHCR. Meanwhile, United Arab Emirates (UAE) started to dismantle military base in Assab port after recently ending operations in nearby Yemen; UAE accused of contributing to Ethiopia's drone campaign in Tigray. Govt 24 Jan-1 Feb released 70 prisoners, mostly Evangelical and Orthodox Christians, who had been imprisoned in past 12 years; move follows early Dec release of 24 Jehovah's Witnesses, including prominent conscientious objectors. UN special rapporteur on human rights in Eritrea, Mohamed Abdelsalam Babiker, 24 Feb highlighted lack of tangible improvement in human rights situation in Eritrea, notably on issue of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience. HRW 26 Feb called on AU not to endorse Eritrea's bid for re-election at UN Human Rights Council.

➔ **Ethiopia Deadly clashes in disputed border areas with Sudan continued, and fighting persisted in Tigray regional state amid serious humanitarian crisis.** As number of troops grew on both sides, Ethiopian forces

along with local militias and Sudanese army throughout month clashed in Al-Fashqa and nearby Al-Qureisha border regions, killing several Sudanese security personnel and civilians, and leaving unknown number of Ethiopian forces dead. Khartoum 14 Feb accused Ethiopian forces of entering Sudan, condemned “aggression” and “unacceptable escalation”. Mauritanian media 17 Feb reported AU had tasked AU Special Envoy to Sudan Mohamed el Hacem Lebatt with mediating border dispute. In Tigray regional state in north, fighting continued between Tigray’s and federal govt’s forces. EU 8 Feb called for withdrawal of Eritrean forces from Tigray, said they were “fuelling the conflict” and “exacerbating ethnic violence”; Eritrea next day rejected accusation (see Eritrea). U.S. Sec State Antony Blinken 27 Feb called for “immediate withdrawal” of Eritrean and Amhara regional forces from Tigray and cessation of hostilities. NGO Human Rights Watch 11 Feb accused Ethiopian federal forces of having carried out “apparently indiscriminate shelling of urban areas” in Tigray in Nov. Security forces mid-Feb violently suppressed anti-govt protests in regional capital Mekelle and other towns, death toll unclear. UN 4 Feb said humanitarian situation in Tigray “extremely alarming” and “continues to deteriorate rapidly”, 19 Feb said Tigray faced “very critical malnutrition situation”. In Oromia region in centre, demonstrators early to mid-Feb took to streets, demanding release of prominent Oromo politicians – detained since June – after they launched hunger strike late Jan; security forces early Jan reportedly shot and killed protester in Borana zone. Amid accusations that United Arab Emirates (UAE) contributed to Ethiopia’s drone campaign in Tigray, authorities 3 Feb said they had arrested 15 individuals for allegedly planning to attack UAE embassy in Ethiopia. Amid stalled AU-led negotiations between Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt over filling and operation of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on Blue Nile River, Egypt 24 Feb endorsed Sudan’s proposal for quadripartite mediation by AU, EU, U.S. and UN.

➔ **Kenya** **Al-Shabaab continued to stage attacks in north east, and power struggle between President Kenyatta and VP Ruto persisted.** In Mandera county in north east, Al-Shabaab militants 8 Feb raided Jabibar village, killing one police reservist and one civilian. In neighbouring Wajir county, Al-Shabaab militants 15 Feb attacked police camp in Khrof Arar area, no casualties reported. Amid power struggle between Kenyatta and Ruto, ruling Jubilee Party 8 Feb expelled six senators allied to party leader Ruto for “disciplinary violations”; Political Parties Dispute Tribunal next day suspended senators’ expulsions until appeal hearing, denounced unfair trial by Jubilee Party’s disciplinary committee. Jubilee Party 9 Feb replaced senate majority whip Irungu Kang’ata. Kenyatta 12 Feb called on dissatisfied govt officials to resign, falling short of naming Ruto; 17 Feb replaced eight pro-Ruto senior govt officials. Kenyatta and de facto ally, opposition leader Raila Odinga, continued to inch toward constitutional reform, which Ruto has so far opposed; more than 24 out of 47 county assemblies 23 Feb had voted in favour of draft bill, surpassing required threshold to submit bill to parliament for approval. At border with Somalia, Somali soldiers 1 Feb shot and killed one Kenyan security personnel and injured two others. International Court of Justice 12 Feb rejected Nairobi’s request to postpone March hearing on Kenya-Somalia maritime border dispute.

↓ 🌟 **Somalia** **Deadly clashes erupted between security forces and opposition supporters after President Farmajo’s mandate expired;**

deadlocked electoral process could spark more violence in March.

Farmajo and heads of federal member states 3-5 Feb met in Galmudug state capital Dhusamareb but failed to break deadlock over organisation of parliamentary and presidential elections; conditions for holding polls in Gedo region, Jubaland state, among main stumbling blocks. Opposition bloc of 15 presidential candidates 8 Feb said it no longer recognised Farmajo as president after his term expired that day, called for formation of Transitional National Council to lead country to elections; federal govt however maintained by month's end – on basis of Sept legislation – that govt can stay in power until elections are held. After opposition bloc 14 Feb called for protests, federal govt 17 Feb banned public gatherings, citing rise in COVID-19 cases. Security forces and opposition supporters 19 Feb clashed in capital Mogadishu, leaving at least eight dead. Subsequently, Jubaland and Puntland state presidents pulled out of 21 Feb election talks between Farmajo and heads of federal member states. PM Roble and opposition bloc 25 Feb met in Mogadishu, agreed to launch investigation into 19 Feb clashes, delay protest planned for 26 Feb and continue discussion over political situation. Meanwhile, Al-Shabaab attacks 1-21 Feb left at least 26 security personnel and civilians dead in Mudug, Galguduud, Hiraan, Middle Shabelle and Lower Shabelle regions. In Mogadishu, Al-Shabaab suicide bombing 13 Feb killed at least one civilian; suspected Al-Shabaab militants next day shot and killed three civilians; two separate Al-Shabaab bombings 28 Feb left at least two security personnel and a civilian dead. Counter-insurgency operations also continued. Security forces 2-28 Feb reportedly killed several dozen Al-Shabaab combatants in Galguduud, Middle Shabelle, Lower Shabelle, Lower Juba and Bay regions. In Hirshabelle state, security forces and clan militia opposed to Nov 2020 state presidential election outcome 4 Feb clashed in Hiraan regional capital Beledweyne, death toll unknown. At border with Kenya, Somali soldiers 1 Feb shot and killed one Kenyan security personnel and injured two others.

➡ **Somaliland Electoral tensions emerged ahead of polls scheduled for May, and inter-clan violence continued in Togdheer region in centre.** Parliament's upper house 2 Feb approved electoral commission's Jan scheduling of parliamentary and local elections for 31 May; President Bihi next day signed decree confirming poll date. In capital Hargeisa, police 8 Feb arrested two opposition Justice and Welfare Party (UCID) candidates for parliament and Hargeisa city council; UCID chairman immediately called for their release and accused Bihi of interfering in election process. UCID late Feb said nine party candidates in Awdal region (west) arrested in regional capital Borama, accused minister of commerce of interfering in selection of candidates in Awdal. In Togdheer region, inter-clan clashes 5 Jan left at least one dead in Buhoodle town. After Somaliland suspended all UN programs in Oct in protest at UN-Somalia cooperation agreement, Bihi 3 Feb received UN Envoy to Somalia James Swan.

➡ **South Sudan Govt faced mounting pressure to implement fully Sept 2018 peace agreement as country celebrated first anniversary of transitional unity govt, while intercommunal violence persisted.** Body monitoring unification of armed groups into single army – a peace agreement provision – 4 Feb said “protracted delays” in training, graduation and deployment of unified national army “detrimental to lasting peace”. Govt 15 Feb missed self-imposed deadline to finalise appointment of state and local officials, graduate first

cohort of unified national army and reconstitute new national assembly. President Kiir 20 Feb formed first state govt, appointing Central Equatoria's state ministers, county commissioners, chairpersons for state commissions and other officials; 22 Feb formed Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Warrap and Unity states' govts. Jieng Council of Elders, grouping of prominent ethnic Dinka politicians and elders formerly aligned with Kiir, 19 Feb called on latter and former rebel leader turned VP Riek Machar to step aside in next election, said they symbolise "failure of leadership and political deadlock". Intercommunal violence persisted. Notably, in Lakes state in centre, clashes between Rumbek East and Yirol West counties reportedly left two soldiers and three civilians dead 1 Feb, and three others killed 9-10 Feb; in Warrap state, also centre, two separate intercommunal clashes 2-3 Feb left eight dead, while unidentified gunmen 9 and 13 Feb killed 27 civilians; in Upper Nile state in north east, suspected ethnic Nuer militia 2-3 Feb killed at least 23 people. South Sudan Council of Churches and civil society organisations 15 Feb jointly called on govt to stem intercommunal and other violence, internal displacement and soaring inflation. UN 19 Feb noted "massive escalation" in localised violence since signing of peace agreement in late 2018, said scope of violence now "far exceeds" that of 2013-2019.

➡ **Sudan Deadly clashes in disputed border areas with Ethiopia continued, rebel coalition joined govt following Oct 2020 peace agreement, and protests over deteriorating economic situation held nationwide.** Amid troop build-up on both sides, Sudanese army and Ethiopian regular and irregular forces clashed throughout month in Al-Fashqa and nearby Al-Qureisha border regions, killing several Sudanese security personnel and civilians and leaving unknown number of Ethiopian forces dead. Khartoum 14 Feb accused Ethiopian forces of entering Sudan, condemned "aggression" and "unacceptable escalation", 20 Feb threatened to expel Ethiopian UN peacekeepers stationed in disputed Abyei area between Sudan and South Sudan. Mauritanian media 17 Feb reported AU had tasked Special Envoy to Sudan Mohamed el Hacem Lebatt with mediating border dispute. Following Oct 2020 peace deal with rebel coalition Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF), Sovereign Council 4 Feb integrated three SRF members; PM Hamdok 8 Feb appointed seven SRF and 18 members of political coalition Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) to cabinet; new cabinet sworn in 10 Feb. In Central Darfur state, holdout rebel group Sudan Liberation Movement/Army led by Abdel Wahid al-Nur 4 Feb said it had repelled attack by "govt militias" in Rukona area, killing 24 and capturing one. Demonstrations over deteriorating economic situation, including rising price of basic commodities, held countrywide; police early Feb reportedly arrested some 100 protesters including in North Kordofan state's capital Obeid, and seven states had declared state of emergency by 11 Feb. Authorities 11-12 Feb detained four senior figures of dissolved National Congress Party, ruling party under former President Bashir, for allegedly fomenting unrest. Central Bank 21 Feb sharply devalued Sudanese pound in move to address vast gap between official and black-market rates, and to secure debt relief. Amid stalled AU-led negotiations with Egypt and Ethiopia over filling and operation of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on Blue Nile River, govt 18 Feb proposed quadripartite mediation by AU, EU, U.S. and UN, drawing support from Egypt.

➡ **Tanzania President Magufuli admitted prevalence of COVID-19 in country amid rise in high-profile cases.** Chief State Secretary John Kijazi and semi-autonomous Zanzibar archipelago's first VP Seif Sharif Hamad mid-Feb died of COVID-19; Hamad early Feb had become first person in Tanzania to publicly reveal COVID-19 infection since Magufuli declared country coronavirus-free in April 2020. At Kijazi's funeral, Magufuli 19 Feb acknowledged spread of "respiratory disease". Head of World Health Organization Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus 20 Feb urged govt to take "robust action" to curb spread of COVID-19; Magufuli next day called on citizens to take precautions and wear face masks. Meanwhile, police 15 Feb arrested Moravian Church Bishop Emmaus Mwamakula, a vocal govt critic, at his home in economic capital Dar es Salaam and next day released him on bail; move comes after Mwamakula in Jan called for demonstrations on 16 Feb as part of campaign for constitutional reform and formation of independent electoral commission. Mwamakula released 16 Feb but demonstrations did not take place. Ruling party Chama Cha Mapinduzi's Publicity Secretary Humphrey Polepole 10 Feb told parliament that Magufuli did not intend to run for third term in 2025; opposition Alliance for Change and Transparency recently accused ruling party MPs of toying with idea of extending presidential tenure beyond constitutional two-term limit.

➡ **Uganda Opposition continued to challenge President Museveni's re-election, and accused govt of human rights violations.** Prominent academic and political activist Stella Nyanzi early Feb said she had fled to neighbouring Kenya late Jan, citing govt's crackdown on dissent. Opposition National Unity Platform (NUP) leader Bobi Wine 1 Feb lodged complaint with Supreme Court against outcome of 14 Jan presidential election; after Supreme Court 16 Feb rejected additional evidence submitted by Wine on grounds of missed deadline, Wine 22 Feb withdrew petition, citing court's "unprecedented bias, partiality and double standards". U.S. State Department 23 Feb called for "credible" investigations into election-related incidents, said U.S. would consider "range of targeted options" to ensure those responsible are held accountable. Meanwhile, Wine 2 Feb claimed around 3,000 NUP supporters had been arrested or abducted by authorities since deadly clashes erupted between NUP protesters and security forces in Nov; 15 Feb released list of 243 people allegedly abducted by security forces under Museveni regime. In response, parliament 4 Feb summoned Internal Affairs Minister General Jeje Odongo, who denied any govt wrongdoing. In national address, Museveni 13 Feb dismissed abduction claims. Military court 15 Feb denied bail to 36 NUP supporters. Wine 17 Feb petitioned UN Human Rights Office in capital Kampala over alleged human rights abuses and abductions of his supporters in run-up to and following elections; security forces same day attacked journalists covering petition delivery, leaving at least four severely injured; U.S. Ambassador to Uganda Natalie E. Brown immediately condemned violence against journalists and called for transparent investigation. Military court next day sentenced seven members of military police to up to three months' detention for involvement in violence. Meanwhile, govt 10 Feb partially lifted social media ban imposed ahead of last month's election; Facebook however remained blocked. Earlier in month, International Criminal Court 4 Feb found former commander of armed group Lord's Resistance Army Dominic Ongwen guilty of 61 war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in early 2000s; Ongwen's lawyer 8 Feb appealed ruling.

Southern Africa

➡ **Angola Security forces' deadly crackdown on protesters caused outrage.** In joint statement, NGO Amnesty International and Angolan rights group OMUNGA 2 Feb confirmed security forces had killed at least ten people during heavy crackdown on protesters in Cafunfo mining town, Luanda Norte province, since 30 Jan, said unconfirmed reports revealed high number of activists still unaccounted for, and called for prompt investigation; meanwhile, opposition parties UNITA and CASA-CE joined calls for investigation into killings. Police chief Paulo de Almeida late Jan-early Feb said security forces 30 Jan foiled armed attack on Cafunfo police station by secessionist group Lunda Tchokwe Protectorate Movement (LTPM), leaving six dead and 20 injured; LTMP president, José Mateus Zecamutchima, however maintained police went on "shooting spree" against unarmed protesters 30 Jan, leaving at least 25 dead and many missing. Authorities 9 Feb detained Zecamutchima on charges of rebellion; his lawyers 26 Feb raised concern about absence of due process.

➡ **Mozambique Govt forces launched large-scale offensive against Islamist insurgents in far north Cabo Delgado province, and authorities announced death of newly-appointed armed forces chief of staff.** Govt forces and their allies 5 Feb launched offensive in Muidumbe and Mocimboa da Praia districts in bid to retake port town and district capital Mocimboa da Praia, which has been under insurgents' control since Aug 2020. Notably, armed forces 8-11 Feb conducted helicopter strikes on insurgent positions along Messalo River, which marks border between Muidumbe and Mocimboa da Praia, death toll unknown. Insurgents mid-month started to resist govt's offensive, notably attacking security forces in Diaca and Roma villages, Mocimboa da Praia, 15-16 Feb, and wounding soldier in raid on armed forces base in Xitaxi locality, Muidumbe, 16 Feb. In Palma district, aid convoys 2 and 6 Feb reached district capital Palma amid reports of food shortages; military escorted convoys along Nangade-Palma axis, which insurgents have recently targeted in attempt to cut off Palma from supply routes. Also in Palma, insurgents 19 Feb attacked administrative post of Quionga on border with Tanzania, killing four, and 26 Feb killed six in nearby Quirinde village. In Nangade district, insurgents 22-25 Feb killed nine civilians in three villages; govt forces 25 Feb pursued insurgents near Luneque village, killing six. NGO Médecins sans Frontières early Feb returned to Macomia district after eight-month suspension of its activities due to insecurity. President Nyusi 3 Feb offered amnesty to Islamist insurgents, promising there will be no retaliation against those who surrender. Govt 8 Feb announced death of armed forces chief of staff, General Eugenio Mussa, less than three weeks after his appointment; Mussa reportedly died of COVID-19. Govt 12 Feb said Southern African Development Community extraordinary summit on Cabo Delgado insurgency, cancelled in Jan due to COVID-19, will take place in "May or June". Authorities 16 Feb expelled British journalist Tom Bowker after six years reporting on Mozambique; move follows late-Jan withdrawal of his accreditation. Meanwhile, Paulo Filipe Nguirande, chief of staff of Renamo Military Junta, armed dissident faction of opposition Renamo party, 12 Feb demobilised in Gorongosa district, Sofala province (centre).

➔ **Zimbabwe Authorities continued to repress opposition and civil society.** In capital Harare, authorities 1 Feb arrested MP Joana Mamombe, a member of Nelson Chamisa-led faction of main opposition party Movement for Democratic Change (MDC-A), and two female MDC-A youth leaders, Cecilia Chimhiri and Netsai Marova, during anti-govt protest; Mamombe and Chimhiri later charged with “obstructing or hindering police officer performing duty during [COVID-19] lockdown”, while Marova was released without charge; High Court 9 Feb granted Mamombe and Chimhiri bail. High Court 1 Feb granted bail to Job Sikhala, MDC-A vice chairman who was arrested in Jan on charges of “publishing or communicating false statements prejudicial to the state”; 19 Feb granted bail to student activist Allan Moyo, who was arrested in Dec 2020 for allegedly inciting violence. Authorities 20 Feb arrested 12 MDC-A members at gunpoint for allegedly breaching COVID-19 regulations in Chinhoyi city, Mashonaland West province; all 12 released on bail 22 Feb. Meanwhile, MDC-A 6 Feb called on armed forces to “rein in some of its rogue elements” amid allegations that soldiers killed civilian and assaulted many others for allegedly violating COVID-19 regulations in Midlands province in recent weeks. UN Human Rights Office 12 Feb expressed “concern” after NGO Human Right Watch previous day accused govt of using COVID-19 to crack down on journalists and opposition. UK 1 Feb imposed sanctions, including travel ban and asset freeze, on four security chiefs over allegations of human rights violations, notably crackdown on anti-govt protesters and opposition, since 2017. EU 19 Feb renewed arms embargo against Zimbabwe and asset freeze against state-owned company Zimbabwe Defence Industries for one year, citing “need to investigate the role of security force actors in human rights abuses”.

Sahel

➔ **Burkina Faso Jihadist violence persisted mainly in north and PM Christophe Dabiré was sworn in.** In Sahel region in north, jihadist activity continued. In Seno province, suspected Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) militants 1 Feb stormed Demni and Gountoudjie villages, killing two civilians and seizing livestock; 4 Feb killed imam and seized livestock in Adoudie village. In neighbouring Oudalan province, suspected ISGS militants 18 Feb killed at least nine civilians between Markoye and Tokabangou villages; army 23-24 Feb killed 11 suspected jihadists in ground and air operation in several areas. In Yagha province, IED 23 Feb killed two civilians near Mansila town. Also in Sahel region, clashes between al-Qaeda-linked Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM) and ISGS militants 8-12 Feb left at least 17 ISGS and four JNIM combatants dead in Oudalan and Soum provinces. In Centre North region’s Sanmatenga province, suspected ISGS militants 3 Feb killed four in Raogo village; 10 Feb clashed with volunteers fighting alongside security forces (VDPs) in Kogowendé village, leaving two civilians dead. In Cascades region in south west, members of JNIM-affiliated Katiba Macina 9 Feb reportedly attacked Ouou gendarmerie in Comoé province, killing one gendarme. Authorities 8 Feb closed Tambili mining site in South West region following late Jan attack by armed villagers on Djikando mining site in South West region that killed eight. Meanwhile, PM Christophe Dabiré was sworn in 4 Feb; Dabiré same day presented govt’s roadmap with focus on peace and

security, institutional reform and economic recovery; also expressed openness to dialogue with jihadist groups. G5 Sahel summit 15-16 Feb held in Chad's capital N'Djamena; French President Macron announced Paris would not downsize military forces in Sahel until at least mid-2022, called for "civilian surge" to complement military efforts, and continued to oppose dialogue with jihadist leaders.

➡ **Mali** **Tensions remained high between interim authorities, on one hand, and opposition and civil society, on the other, while jihadist violence continued in centre.** Coalition of opposition and civil society groups (M5-RFP) 4 Feb condemned govt's alleged "convergence of interests" with previous regime and 1 Feb dissolution of electoral commission (CENI); govt said CENI members' mandate had come to an end, but M5-RFP feared dissolution may be part of strategy to influence course of 2022 presidential election. Acting PM Moctar Ouane 15 Feb met with political parties to discuss institutional reforms and 2022 elections; 19 Feb unveiled govt's national action plan, including commitment to press ahead with elections and openness to dialogue with jihadists; National Transitional Council 22 Feb approved plan. In central Mopti region's Douentza circle, jihadists continued to launch deadly attacks on national and international forces: al-Qaeda-linked Group to Support Islam and Muslims (JNIM) combatants 3 Feb killed nine soldiers in attack on Boni army base, prompting retaliatory French airstrikes that killed 20 militants; suspected JNIM fighters 10 Feb raided UN mission (MINUSMA) camp near Kerena village, killing one UN peacekeeper and wounding 27 more. Elsewhere in Mopti, suspected jihadists 17-18 Feb killed at least nine people in Bandiagara circle; suspected JNIM combatants 25 Feb attacked Dialloubé military outpost, Mopti circle, and gendarmerie post in Bandiagara circle, killing nine gendarmes, and 28 Feb stormed three Dogon villages in Bandiagara and Bankass circles, killing nine people. In Timbuktu region (north), French drone strike 1 Feb reportedly killed 15 JNIM-affiliated Ansarul Islam combatants in Gourma-Rharous circle. Further east in Kidal region, Algiers peace accord follow-up committee 11 Feb met in Kidal city for first time since 2015; attendees – including ex-rebel Coalition of Azawad Movements and govt representatives – discussed demobilisation and reintegration of former rebels into army. G5 Sahel summit 15-16 Feb held in Chad's capital N'Djamena; French President Macron announced France would not downsize military forces in Sahel until at least mid-2022, called for "civilian surge" to complement military efforts, and continued to oppose dialogue with jihadist leaders.

↓ **Niger** **Post-election violence flared as opposition rejected victory of ruling-party candidate Mohamed Bazoum in 21 Feb presidential runoff.** Second round of presidential election between ruling-party candidate Bazoum and former President Mahamane Ousmane 21 Feb disrupted by deadly incident in Dargol commune, Tillabery region (near Mali border) as landmine killed seven poll workers. Electoral commission 23 Feb announced provisional results, saying Bazoum won with 55.75% of vote. Ousmane same day rejected results, citing electoral fraud, and his supporters immediately took to streets in capital Niamey; police fired tear gas to disperse protesters who reportedly ransacked at least one police station and several shops. In Dosso city, about 100km south of Niamey, protesters same day reportedly burnt down political party premises. Ousmane 24 Feb claimed victory with 50.3% of vote, reiterating that

fraud had been committed “pretty much everywhere” and prompting protesters to confront security forces in Niamey’s central market area and south-western town of Kollo. Govt 25 Feb said two died in post-election violence and 468 were arrested; also accused opposition figure Hama Amadou, who was barred from running in presidential election, of being “main person responsible” for unrest; after Amadou next day turned himself in to police in Niamey, police detained him over these allegations. Regional body ECOWAS and UN 25 Feb jointly condemned post-election violence and called on all actors to exercise restraint. Meanwhile in Tillabery region (south west), jihadist activity continued albeit at lower intensity than in Jan: suspected Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) militants 5 Feb seized livestock in Kailou Kouara village, Ouallam department. In Maradi region (south), unidentified gunmen conducted series of attack in Guidan-Roundji department: 5 Feb attacked Guilbadi village, killing at least one and wounding four others; 8 Feb killed student and seized livestock in Dan Mani village, and same day shot three dead in Gaja village. G5 Sahel summit 15-16 Feb held in Chad’s capital N’Djamena; French President Macron announced France would not downsize military forces in Sahel until at least mid-2022, called for “civilian surge” to complement military efforts, and continued to oppose dialogue with jihadist leaders.

West Africa

➡ **Côte d’Ivoire Preparations for legislative elections scheduled for 6 March moved forward, while supporters of former President Gbagbo stepped up pressure for his return.** Ahead of March election, govt Ombudsman Adama Tounkara toured western and central constituencies – where opposition enforced electoral boycott in Oct 2020 presidential election – to call for reconciliation and unity; Reconciliation Minister Kouadio Konan Bertin 11 Feb called for peaceful election. Candidates 18 Feb signed code of good conduct, pledging to stay away from violence and hate speech; campaign started 26 Feb. Opposition remained divided in two main camps: on one hand, platform Together for Democracy and Sovereignty (EDS), close to Gbagbo, along with Henri Konan Bédié’s Democratic Party of Côte d’Ivoire, and on the other, Pascal Affi N’Guessan’s branch of Ivorian Popular Front (FPI) with Albert Mabri Toikeuse’s Union for Democracy and Peace in Côte d’Ivoire. Meanwhile, Assoa Adou, sec gen of Gbagbo’s FPI wing, 11 Feb urged govt to create conditions for Gbagbo’s return in “reasonable timeframe”; govt has maintained Gbagbo’s return is conditioned by proceedings at International Criminal Court, where prosecution’s appeal of his 2019 acquittal of crimes against humanity is still pending. Bertin mid-Feb said he would soon visit Ghana and Europe to meet pro-Gbagbo cadres living in exile, including former Gbagbo Minister Charles Blé Goudé, and possibly Gbagbo himself; Assoa Adou 24 Feb said Gbagbo would return to Côte d’Ivoire mid-March. PM Hamed Bakayoko 18 Feb flew to France to receive treatment for “chronic fatigue”. Head of French foreign intelligence agency Bernard Emié 1 Feb warned Sahel-based jihadist groups aimed to spread to and target Côte d’Ivoire; govt 3 Feb said army had been put on high alert.

➡ **Guinea Authorities continued to stifle dissent, and took steps, along with Sierra Leone, to diffuse border tensions.** Court in Dixinn,

Conakry region, 3 Feb rejected complaint by Cellou Dalein Diallo, leader of main opposition party Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea (UFDG), against security forces' occupation of UFDG's headquarters since Oct; Diallo 18 Feb appealed decision. Dixinn court 8 Feb sentenced blogger and opposition figure Mamadi Condé alias "Madic 100 Frontières", arrested days after Oct presidential election, to five years in prison for spreading "threats, violence and insults" including messages "of a racist or xenophobic nature"; opposition denounced politically motivated trial. Meanwhile, ruling party Rally for the Guinean People (RPG) faced internal dissension. In press conference, newly formed group of dissatisfied RPG members 12 Feb criticised party leadership for "systematically abandoning" their supporters; days later, group's leader Ibrahima Doumbouya alleged security forces had followed and threatened him, and vowed to call for protests. NGO Amnesty International 2 Feb said authorities must investigate deaths in detention of at least four people, including three UFDG members, in last two months, and end wave of arrests targeting at least 400 opposition and civil society members across country since Oct 2020 election. After Sierra Leone's president late Jan accused Guinean troops of regularly entering border village of Yenga, both govts 16 Feb signed framework agreement for cooperation; 18 Feb reopened border, which Guinea had closed ahead of presidential election in Oct 2020. Health Minister Rémy Lamah 13 Feb declared new Ebola outbreak in first such resurgence since 2013-2016 epidemic that left over 2,500 people dead; govt next day held emergency strategy meeting.

➡ **Guinea-Bissau** Former PM Aristide Gomes 12 Feb left country to neighbouring Senegal; Gomes had sought refuge in UN premises in capital Bissau in early 2020 as authorities initiated several investigations against him.

↓ **Nigeria** **Criminal groups abducted hundreds in north west, while ethnic and regional tensions ran high in south amid farmer-herder conflict; meanwhile, tensions rose in south east between govt and Biafra secessionists.** Criminal groups in Feb reportedly killed at least 112 and kidnapped over 450 people, mostly in Katsina, Kaduna, Sokoto and Zamfara states (north west), but also in Niger state (Middle Belt). Notably, armed group 17 Feb abducted 42 students and school personnel in Niger state, released them 27 Feb; 26 Feb kidnapped 279 girls in Zamfara state. Meanwhile, Auwalun Daudawa, who masterminded Dec 2020 abduction of 344 students in Katsina state, 8 Feb laid down arms along with five of his troops. Amid rise in herder-farmer and intercommunal violence in south since Jan, clashes between ethnic Hausa and Fulani on one hand, and ethnic Yoruba on the other, early Feb killed two dozen people in Oyo state capital Ibadan (south west). Nobel laureate in literature Wole Soyinka 6 Feb warned situation could spiral into civil war and former President Abdulsalam Abubakar 16 Feb said it could lead to "point of no return". In Imo state (south east), security forces stepped up operations against Eastern Security Network (ESN), paramilitary wing of outlawed secessionist group Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB); army 18 Feb deployed helicopters and hundreds of troops in Orlu and Orsu areas, razing several ESN camps; IPOB same day said govt had triggered "second Nigeria-Biafra war". Boko Haram (BH) attacks continued in Borno state (north east) despite military operations. Army 9-10 Feb repelled insurgent attacks on base in Rann town and on Askira Uba town, killing at least 50 combatants. BH splinter group Islamic State West Africa Province 15 Feb killed at

least seven soldiers in Marte area; next day launched coordinated attacks in Marte and Gubio areas, death toll unknown; 19 Feb raided several villages in Dikwa area, displacing thousands. BH rocket attack on state capital Maiduguri 23 Feb reportedly left 16 dead. Military 15 Feb said troops had killed some 80 insurgents from BH faction led by Abubakar Shekau (JAS) in “recent” operations in Sambisa forest; at least two senior JAS figures reportedly among those killed.

➡ **Senegal Military claimed major gains against separatists in contested Casamance region.** Army 9 Feb said it had overrun three rebel camps in Casamance region in south since launching offensive against separatist Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance in late Jan; move comes after months of lull in longstanding conflict, which last flared up in 2018.