

Africa

Central Africa

➔ **Cameroon Violence in Anglophone regions continued amid Africa Cup of Nations tournament; jihadists attacked govt positions in Far North.** Clashes between army and security militias continued, albeit at lower levels, in Anglophone North West (NW) and South West (SW) regions. Despite Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) tournament during month, notably in Anglophone towns of Limbe and Buea, separatists continued attacks, including 5 Jan launched IED in Limbe, wounding three civilians. Dozen armed men 12 Jan also attacked neighbourhoods in Buea town: IED at police checkpoint near stadium hosting AFCON's training wounded three policemen, crossfire during army retaliation subsequently killed three civilians. Separatists 8 Jan detonated IED and attacked patrol in Bafut town (NW), wounding five soldiers. In regional capital Bamenda (NW), unidentified gunman 11 Jan shot dead Senator Henry Kemende, opposition Social Democratic Front (SDF) leader and Anglophone minority advocate in parliament. Also in Bamenda, separatist same day shot dead two people in failed kidnapping attempts. In SW, separatists 19 Jan killed at least one soldier in Muyuka town; 14 Jan abducted eight workers in Tiko town. Separatists 25 Jan crossed over into francophone West region, attacking soldiers in Galim town, Bamboutos division, killing at least one. In Far North, ethnic clashes 10 Jan flared up in Kousseri town, Logone-et-Chari division, after army in Dec arrested member of Choa community, which reportedly provoked riots that left at least two soldiers and one civilian killed. Jihadi militants continued to carry out attacks, notably 12 Jan on army's position, killing one in Talakachi town, Mayo-Moskota division. Militants same day killed two civilians near Nigeria border in Mozogo town, Mayo Tsanaga division. Cameroon army 10 Jan killed two Boko Haram fighters in Mayo Moskota; 28 Jan killed four Boko Haram fighters who had attacked military post near Tourou locality, Mayo Tsanaga.

➔ **Central African Republic Govt forces and Russian allies continued to clash with rebel groups, tensions over surrenders of UPC rebel group rose, and Russia renewed diplomatic engagement.** Russian Wagner group, currently overstretched with over 2,000 personnel, relied more and more on national armed forces and anti-balaka fighters during month; group continued to carry out attacks, notably 6 Jan on mining site in Bambari reportedly killing at least 17 people, including civilians, in Pandé area (west); follows visit from Wagner heads to CAR in late Dec reportedly concluding need to strengthen presence around mining sites instead of military engagements across country. In Ouaka prefecture (centre), internal division within rebel Union for Peace in CAR (UPC) leadership 6 Jan prompted 100 combatants to surrender to military forces; fighters now held by Wagner Group in Bambari base. Soldiers 15 Jan killed former UPC officer who had surrendered. In Ouham-Pendé prefecture (north west), national armed forces by local militias reportedly committed serious abuses on Fulani civilians, notably 9 Jan killed one in Bozoum town. Meanwhile, rebel group Retour, Reclamation, Rehabilitation (3R) stepped up use of landmines, posing serious threat to civilians and UN forces and hampering humanitarian assistance delivery. Fighting also reported in Haute-Kotto on Bria-Ndélé axis, where Russian paramilitaries and armed forces joined operation against UPC rebels, killing at least 13 civilians 16-17 Jan; UN mission MINUSCA subsequently launched enquiry. Meanwhile, Russia appeared to adjust strategy through 10 Jan appointment of Alexander Bikantov as

new ambassador after six-month gap; former Russian Ambassador Vladimir Titorenko, who had left CAR in July 2021, was openly supportive of Touadéra and vocal on social media against political opposition and rebel leaders. National dialogue and regional roadmap announced by Touadéra in March 2021 still at standstill. Luanda roadmap adopted during Sept 2021 Great Lakes summit not implemented yet as govt forces and armed groups continue to violate unilateral ceasefire decided by Touadéra in mid Oct; Angolan and Rwandan diplomats 14 Jan met president to explore possible ways forward to support roadmap.

➔ **Chad Transitional authorities made progress ahead of May national dialogue; banditry and intercommunal tensions ran high in east.** President of Transitional Military Council (CMT) Mahamat Idriss Déby lifted some obstacles to allow rebels' participation in dialogue. Notably, authorities 18 Jan released 22 former armed group combatants detained at N'Djaména central prison; move followed two amnesty laws enacted 31 Dec covering over 300 rebels and political dissidents charged with "wrongful beliefs", "terrorism" and/or "harming the integrity of the State". Chadian delegation mid-Jan travelled to Qatar's capital Doha to discuss Feb pre-dialogue with armed groups – initially planned late Jan in Qatar, later rescheduled to 27 Feb. Representatives of "politico-military" movements 21 Jan met in Italy's capital Roma, at invitation of Sant'Egidio community, for dialogue consultation; representatives reiterated their will "to contribute to the solution of the Chadian crisis". After Déby's declaration late Dec that dialogue conclusions will be binding and draft constitution will be endorsed by referendum, five opposition parties and civil society groups 7 Jan welcomed announcement, but requested formal written commitment. Opposition party Les Transformateurs next day held major meeting in capital N'Djaména, while group of 14 opposition parties and high-ranking officials created new coalition, Convergences des Organisations Politiques. Meanwhile, banditry activities and intercommunal tensions increased in east, notably in Sila province, on border with Sudan's Darfur. Unidentified gunmen 1 Jan attacked two people in Abdi town; four gunmen 11 Jan assaulted man prompting clashes with security forces, one assailant killed. In Hadjer Beyda village, local administration 12 Jan conducted mediation mission after land disputes escalated. Déby 14 Jan expressed concerns about Sudan's situation as "it could have repercussions on us". Also in east, in Abéché city in Ouaddaï region, security forces 24-25 Jan suppressed demonstration against 29 Jan inauguration of district head (*chef de canton*), reportedly leaving at least 11 dead and more than 80 injured; four ministers subsequently travelled to Abéché to appease tensions and territorial administration minister 26 Jan suspended contested local leader and Dar Ouaddaï sultan. In Lake Chad region (west), over a thousand 13 Jan fled Massakani village and sought shelter in new internally displaced persons site.

Great Lakes

➔ **Burundi Insecurity persisted across country, armed forces and ruling party youth wing reportedly clashed with RED-Tabara rebel group in eastern DRC, and authorities continued to mend ties with neighbours.** President Ndayishimiye 1 Jan held public forum during which he reiterated anger at country's judiciary, threatened to fire public servants, notably magistrates, and said mining and energy sectors' lack of professionalism explains country's low ranking in economic indexes; Ndayishimiye also rehabilitated local elected officials previously accused of corruption and acknowledged torture cases at hands of intelligence services. Insecurity persisted across country with six incidents involving ruling party

youth wing Imbonerakure alongside intelligence and security officials reported 1-13 Jan; notably, Imbonerakure 9 Jan beat to death suspected thief on Musugi hill (Kanyosha commune, Bujumbura Rural province). Macabre discoveries in Cibitoke province and beyond in Makamba and Rumonge provinces (south west) continued: locals of Makamba's Mabanda commune 5 Jan found the body of unidentified young man, while local administration ordered his burial before identification. Tensions late-Dec-early Jan rose as DR Congo (DRC)-based Burundian rebel group RED-Tabara along with local Mai Mai militia 2, 6 Jan clashed with Burundian armed forces and Imbonerakure in DRC's South Kivu province; Burundian govt around 7 Jan denied army presence in DRC while media reports alleged dozens of soldiers injured and some killed during incidents. Meanwhile, Rwanda and Burundi pursued reconciliation efforts. Rwandan president 10 Jan received Burundian delegation led by Foreign Minister Ezekiel Nigibira to strengthen bilateral relations and prepare ground for meeting between two presidents. Authorities 12 Jan also received Ugandan defence minister to discuss regional security and 16 Jan signed Memorandum of Understanding for \$900mn deal on railway construction with Tanzania.

➔ **DR Congo Ugandan and Congolese armies continued joint operations against ADF jihadist group in east, while influential National Assembly VP announced his resignation after security incident.** Uganda army and Congolese counterparts continued joint operations against Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in North Kivu (NK)'s Beni territory amid ADF extension beyond Beni area. Ugandan and Congolese military leaders 15 Jan met in Beni area to discuss new operational axes against ADF and ways to secure construction projects, including Kasindi-Beni-Butembo-Goma roadworks. Armies 11 Jan jointly arrested ADF small faction leader Benjamin Kisokeranio in Uvira city (South Kivu). Govt 14 Jan extended state of siege in Ituri and NK provinces; protest against state of siege 24 Jan turned violent in Beni city and left one dead. In Ituri, armed group continued violent attacks. Notably, presumed ADF 4 Jan killed 17 in Irumu territory's Idobu forest. Also in Irumu, Patriotic and Integrationist Force of Congo (FPIC) 15 Jan raided church leaving 11 dead and dozens injured. Cooperative for the Development of Congo militia 14 Jan stepped up attacks in Djugu and Mahagi territories and killed nine. In NK, ADF 5 Jan killed two on Mbau-Beni axis; 12 Jan looted health centre in Watalinga chiefdom and same day reportedly killed seven in Kisima-Vutoholya. In NK, March 23 rebel group late Jan launched several deadly attacks; notably group 23 Jan attacked army in Nyesisi village, Rutshuru territory, reportedly leaving tens of military killed. In largest cities like Goma, criminality ran high leaving mid-Jan three killed, notably well-known musician Black Balume. On political front, National Assembly's influential VP and President Tshisekedi's ally Jean-Marc Kabund 14 Jan announced resignation over "bullying, humiliation and torture" showing emerging political fault lines and potentially spelling uncertainty for ruling Sacred Union coalition; move followed clash between Kabund's security officer and Republican Guard tasked to protect Tshisekedi as guards reportedly ransacked Kabund's residence 12 Jan. Sacred Union members and Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS) deputies 17-18 Jan dissociated themselves from Kabund, called for resignation and reaffirmed Tshisekedi as sole authority; UDPS National Disciplinary Commission 29 Jan removed Kabund from party's interim presidency and struck him off permanently.

➔ **Uganda Authorities held in custody prominent novelist, considered restoring ties with Rwanda, and claimed military successes in DR Congo.** Court 4 Jan ordered unconditional release of novelist Kakwenza Rukirabashaija, who was arrested late Dec for having reportedly insulted President Museveni and his

son, Lt Gen Muhoozi Kainerugaba, on Twitter; 11 Jan charged Rukirabashaija with offensive communication, and 25 Jan ordered release on bail on medical grounds following allegations of torture in detention. Ruling National Resistance Movement-affiliated group early month proposed constitutional change to voting system, suggesting parliament could elect president in replacement of direct voting; govt declined to comment while critics including Norbert Mao, leader of opposition Democratic Party (DP), argued move would benefit President Museveni; president 23 Jan rejected proposal, stating parliament does not represent views of the entire population. Amid ongoing disarmament exercise in north east, security forces mid-month clashed with Karamajong pastoralists in Kotido and Napak districts, leaving 12-year-old herder dead in Abim district. Army throughout month continued joint military operation against Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) militants in eastern DR Congo, claiming several successes including arrest of ADF leader Benjamin Kisokeranio 12 Jan (see DR Congo). While formal talks with Rwanda have yet to resume, news mid-month surfaced about possible rapprochement with Kigali after Gen Muhoozi 16 Jan called in tweet Rwandan President Kagame “family” and warned “those who fight him” to “be careful”. Rwandan foreign ministry next day announced Ugandan Ambassador Adonia Ayebare met Kagame; Muhoozi 22 Jan visited Rwandan capital Kigali and met Kagame to discuss restoring bilateral ties. Rwandan foreign ministry 28 Jan announced reopening of Gatuna border between Rwanda and Uganda from 31 Jan.

Horn of Africa

➡ **Eritrea** **Alleged Eritrean attacks in Tigray region drew renewed scrutiny on country’s sustained role in Ethiopia’s civil war.** Tigray govt 9 Jan said Eritrean military previous day launched “fresh attacks” on Tigray forces near Sheraro town in north-western Tigray. In rare interview to state media, President Isaias Afwerki 8 Jan used bellicose rhetoric saying his troops would strive to prevent Tigray forces from attacking his country; also said unexpected withdrawal of Ethiopian federal forces from Tigray in June 2021 was “tactical setback”.

➡ **Ethiopia** **Despite lull in large-scale fighting since late Dec, airstrikes and skirmishes continued notably in western Tigray.** Fighting near Abala town along Tigray-Afar border continued to block only available route for humanitarian supplies to Tigray region; aid trucks unable to enter Tigray since 14 Dec. Medical staff at Tigray’s largest hospital 5 Jan attributed 117 deaths at facility to insufficient medical supplies, without providing dates, while UN World Food Programme 14 Jan warned aid operations “about to grind to a halt” as vital supplies running out. UN human rights office same day said airstrikes allegedly carried out by Ethiopian air force in Tigray region had killed at least 108 civilians and injured another 75 since 1 Jan, said attacks could amount to war crimes. Notably, airstrike on camp for internally displaced people in Tigray’s Dedebeit area 8 Jan killed over 50 people. In phone call with PM Abiy, U.S. President Biden 10 Jan raised concerns about airstrikes, civilian deaths and detentions under state of emergency. Federal govt 26 Jan decided to lift months-long state of emergency citing improving security situation. Meanwhile, govt 7 Jan said it would open dialogue with political opposition and released six former Tigray People Liberation Front leaders, notably founding member Sebhat Nega; also released Oromo Federalist Congress leaders Jawar Mohammed and Bekele Gerba, and journalist and opposition leader Eskinder Nega. UN Sec-Gen Guterres same day lauded “significant confidence-building step”. Security forces intensified offensive against Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) in

Oromia region, with fighting early to mid-Jan expanding to West and East Hararghe Zones, Jimma Zone, Kellef Wollega Zone and all zones of Shewa surrounding capital Addis Ababa; OLA also reported aerial attacks in East Wollega Zone. Clashes late-Jan intensified in West Gujji Zone, with OLA forces reportedly taking control of Torre and Shamole towns. State media 7 Jan said Jaal Odaa Qabsoo, leader of OLA Eastern Command, captured in Harar city. Abdulwahab Mahdi, former leader of rebel group Benishangul-Gumuz People's Liberation Movement, 5 Jan escaped from prison in Asosa city; regional officials said he might have crossed into Sudan.

➡ **Kenya Amid longstanding intercommunal tensions, spate of deadly attacks in Lamu county signalled risks of escalating violence in area in lead-up to August polls.** Unidentified assailants 1-9 Jan killed at least 14 people in Lamu county (south east near Somalia border), including six in Widho village near Mpeketoni town 2-3 Jan. Govt blamed al-Qaeda affiliate Al-Shabaab for violence, but locals said killings related to hostility between Kikuyu and Swahili communities, with political race for governor seat in Lamu reportedly worsening longstanding intercommunal tensions over land. Suspected Al-Shabaab gunmen 26 Jan ambushed and injured five court officials in Lango la Simba area, also in Lamu. In neighbouring Garissa county, suspected Al-Shabaab militants 10 Jan ambushed and killed four police officers on Liboi-Kulan axis; police 17 Jan killed 15 suspected Al-Shabaab militants in Boni forest. Minibus 31 Jan ran over explosive device in Mandera county (north east near Somalia border), leaving at least 13 dead; police blamed Al-Shabaab. French embassy in Nairobi 27 Jan warned of risk of impending terrorist attack targeting foreigners in capital; police subsequently scaled up security. After Meru county Senator Mithika Linturi 8 Jan called to "remove" opponents of presidential hopeful Deputy President William Ruto during rally in Eldoret town, Rift Valley region, authorities next day detained him arguing divisive rhetoric could ignite electoral violence. In boon for President Kenyatta and his preferred successor, Orange Democratic Movement's Raila Odinga, National Assembly 5 Jan and Senate 26 Jan passed controversial bill changing way political parties can field candidates; bill's opponents, notably Ruto, argue bill will allow Odinga, who is currently struggling to form coalition, to push for one close to polls. Electoral commission 17 Jan started second mass registration voter drive, after first round in Oct-Nov registered 1.5mn new voters, far from 6mn target.

➡ **Somalia As long-delayed electoral process inched forward, tensions ran high in Puntland and Hirshabelle states, and deadly Al-Shabaab attacks continued.** PM Roble 9 Jan struck deal with state leaders to complete long-delayed Lower House elections by 25 Feb; further slippage likely, however, as only a quarter of seats selected by late Jan. Leaders same day also re-committed to addressing political interference in elections, signalling little meaningful effort to counter ongoing manipulation. PM Roble pursued efforts to gain upper hand in power struggle with President Farmajo: Internal Security Minister and Roble ally Abdullahi Mohamed Nur 1 Jan ordered intelligence agency acting head and Farmajo ally Yasin Abdullahi Farey to withdraw officers from Mogadishu Airport; Roble 23 Jan reversed controversial Farmajo decision to designate Ogaden National Liberation Front (nationalist movement seeking self-determination for ethnic Somalis in Ethiopia) as terrorist organisation. Amid standoff between Puntland state President Deni and former Puntland Security Forces Commander Mohamoud Osman Diyano, violence continued in Puntland's Bosasso city: two grenades 16 Jan exploded, killing one, and bomb blast 26 Jan killed one and injured another two. In Hirshabelle state, fighting 30 Dec-2 Jan erupted in Hiraan region's capital Beledweyne between forces loyal to Hiraan Governor Ali Jeyte and Hirshabelle President Guudlaawe on one hand, and local militia on the

other, reportedly leaving eight killed. Federal security forces 26 Jan deployed to city following fruitless efforts to reach accommodation; Roble stated he did not authorise operation, raising doubts over military discipline. Al-Qaeda-affiliated Al-Shabaab continued to extend territorial reach. Group early Jan advanced on Balcad-Jowhar road in Middle Shabelle region (Hirshabelle state) and temporarily took over Baxdo and Cada Kibir villages in Galguduud region, signalling continued expansion of operating radius within Galmudug state. Al-Shabaab also launched series of attacks in capital Mogadishu. Notably, car bomb 12 Jan killed at least eight people outside airport compound; suicide bombing 16 Jan seriously injured govt spokesperson Mohamed Moalimmu on Maka al-Mukarama road; and suspected militants 22 Jan shot and killed former Hiraan Governor Abdirahman Ibrahim Ma'ow, who was running for Hirshabelle MP, in Mogadishu's Wadajir district.

➡ **Somaliland Supreme Court issued key ruling on selection of new political parties ahead of presidential election.** Supreme Court 16 Jan ruled new political parties should be selected before year's end in accordance with constitution which stipulates political arena limited to three parties and party licenses awarded every ten years. Opposition parties UCID and Waddani – who could lose party status and thus ability to compete in polls – in following days accepted ruling but said govt could use selection process as excuse to delay presidential election slated for 13 Nov.

➡ **South Sudan Breakaway Kitgwang faction of VP Machar's forces signed agreement with President Kiir to become part of 2018 peace deal, prompting end of Machar-Kitgwang hostilities; intercommunal violence persisted.** Talks between Kitgwang faction officials – who broke away from Machar's Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-In Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) in Aug 2021 – and Kiir's govt 11 Jan started in Sudan's capital Khartoum; both sides 16 Jan reached agreement for Kitgwang faction to become part of 2018 peace deal and be integrated within South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF). Machar next day ordered his forces to stop hostilities with Kitgwang forces, saying 2018 ceasefire between SSPDF and SPLM/A-IO now applies to Kitgwang. Meanwhile, SPLM/A-IO forces 8-14 Jan clashed with SSPDF in Upper Nile state, resulting in at least three fatalities; SPLM/A-IO around 24 Jan accused SSPDF of attacking its position in Unity State's Koch county twice in last two weeks. Suspected SPLM/A-IO forces 10-12 Jan attacked local chief and other civilians in Jur River county, Western Bahr El Ghazal state; at least two killed on both sides. Meanwhile, holdout rebel group National Salvation Front (NAS) 13 Jan claimed to have repelled SSPDF attack on NAS positions in Central Equatoria state's Juba county 5 Jan; also said authorities arrested 14 civilians including local chiefs, women and youth on charges of supporting NAS. Intercommunal violence continued in several states. In Jonglei state, suspected ethnic Murle armed group 23 Jan killed at least 32 ethnic Dinka people in Baidit locality, Bor South county. In Lakes state, intercommunal clashes between Atuot-Luac and Jieleek clans 8 Jan left one dead in Yirol West county. In Northern Bahr el Ghazal state, violence by Sudanese pastoralists reportedly spiked in late Dec-early Jan. Notably, state authorities said Masseriya tribesmen from Sudan 4 Jan launched attack in Yihn Pabol area in Aweil East county, leaving two dead and four injured. World Food Programme Representative in South Sudan Matthew Hollingworth early Jan warned year ahead could be country's hungriest ever as "food insecurity is at horrific levels".

↓ **Sudan Abdalla Hamdok resigned as PM, leaving military in full control of transition and provoking unprecedented political blockage amid ongoing mass protests.** PM Hamdok 2 Jan resigned after failing to name

civilian govt six weeks after his reinstatement by military. EU and Troika group (U.S., UK and Norway) 4 Jan called for appointment of new PM in accordance with 2019 Constitutional Declaration, which gives political coalition Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) prerogative to select PM; head of Sovereign Council and leader of Oct coup Gen Abdel Fattah al-Burhan next day rejected call. UN Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) 8 Jan announced dialogue process between stakeholders to try to salvage country's transition to democracy and in following days met with 2020 Juba Peace Agreement signatories. FFC 16 Jan vowed to support UN-brokered dialogue, but Sudanese Professionals Association 9 Jan and Local Resistance Committees, grassroots networks, around same day rejected any negotiations with military. Thousands of pro-military demonstrators 26 Jan rallied outside UNITAMS office in capital Khartoum to protest against UN talks. Mass anti-military protests continued on near-daily basis with heavy crackdown by security forces bringing number of protesters killed since Oct coup to at least 79; notably, in one of deadliest days since coup, security forces 17 Jan killed seven protesters in Khartoum. In rare public statement, head of judiciary 20 Jan condemned violence against protesters. U.S. 20 Jan said it would not resume economic assistance unless violence ceases and civilian-led govt is restored. In Darfur, joint forces including paramilitary Rapid Support Forces and former rebel soldiers – recently created as per 2020 Juba Agreement – 10 Jan looted former headquarters of UN-AU mission (UNAMID) in North Darfur's capital El-Fasher, stealing vehicles and equipment; incident comes after gunmen late Dec looted World Food Programme warehouses in El Fasher, prompting agency to suspend operations across North Darfur. In West Darfur state, renewed tribal violence starting 20 Jan killed nine and displaced over 15,000 near El Geneina city. Sovereign Council Deputy Chairman Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo "Hemedti" 22 Jan met Ethiopian defence minister in Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa to discuss bilateral relations in first official visit since border dispute flared up in Dec 2020.

➔ **Tanzania Tensions ran high within ruling party as President Suluhu Hassan continued to consolidate power.** After National Assembly Speaker (and late President Magufuli loyalist) Job Ndugai late-Dec criticised "excessive" foreign borrowing, several ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi party leaders in following days said country's debt is sustainable. Suluhu Hassan 4 Jan condemned politicians decrying economic policies for political interest, without naming Ngudai, who resigned 6 Jan; ruling party 20 Jan nominated National Assembly Deputy Speaker Tulia Ackson as its candidate for speaker position. Suluhu Hassan 8 Jan announced cabinet reshuffle replacing several ministers with loyalists. Newly appointed Minister for Information, Communication and Information Technology Nape Nnauye mid-Jan said Suluhu Hassan had given green light to amend controversial media law that gives ministry sweeping powers to ban and punish media outlets; also said govt aims "to provide a conducive working environment for journalists" and ensure their "freedom and rights will be promoted and protected". Suluhu Hassan 28 Jan met Mozambican president in Pemba town in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado province to discuss Islamist insurgency in province neighbouring Tanzania.

Southern Africa

➔ **Mozambique Islamist militants retained offensive capacity in Cabo Delgado province in far north, notably launching series of attacks in Meluco, Macomia and Nangade districts.** Series of attacks, some claimed by

Islamic State (ISIS), marked first sustained offensive in Meluco district since start of Cabo Delgado conflict, with a dozen incidents recorded in Jan. Notably, militants 2 and 4 Jan targeted two villages located on N380 road between Macomia and Pemba cities; 15 Jan struck Mitepo village, advancing toward district capital; and 27-28 Jan killed 15 people in Mitambo, Iba and Muaguide villages. Militants also struck villages located on N380 road in Macomia district: repeated raids on Nova Zambezia village killed a dozen people throughout month; militants 4 Jan attacked nearby Nova Vida village, and 6 Jan killed two in Nashi Bandi village. Simultaneous campaign in Meluco and Macomia showed insurgents' capacity to bracket Macomia on both sides of major axis that connects city to both Mueda and Pemba. Violence also peaked in Nangade district in north-western Cabo Delgado, with attacks in eight villages leaving at least 20 civilians killed 7-23 Jan; notably, militants 15 and 23 Jan attacked Limualamuala village, less than 10km from Nangade town, killing nine civilians and prompting other to flee. Militant attack on Alberto Chipande (known locally as Nachipande) village in northern Mueda district 8 Jan killed two, including at least one local militia member; ISIS claimed attack. Rwandan and Mozambican forces 29 Jan killed two militants, including suspected leader of 2020 offensive on Mocímboa da Praia, Tanzanian national Tuahil Muhidim, in operation in Mocímboa da Praia district. Rwanda and Mozambique 10 Jan agreed to expand security forces co-operation against militants in Cabo Delgado, paving way to extension of Rwandan troops' stay. Southern African Development Community heads of state 12 Jan agreed to extend Standby Force Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) deployment in Cabo Delgado, but gave no detail on envisaged timeframe; three to six-month period allegedly envisaged, contingent on available funding.

➔ **Zimbabwe Authorities scheduled long-delayed by-elections for March, and main opposition party changed name.** Zimbabwe Electoral Commission 6 Jan announced by-elections to fill 28 vacant parliamentary seats and 105 local govt positions will take place 26 March; by-elections, which govt had banned in Oct 2020 citing COVID-19 pandemic, are seen as mini-general elections ahead of 2023 harmonised polls (which cover local, parliamentary and presidential contests). Youth Coalition on Electoral Reforms 21 Jan expressed "concern over the increasing threat of political violence", said "young people being coerced to attend political party meetings against their will". Main opposition leader Nelson Chamisa 24 Jan announced he had registered new party called Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC), de facto dropping contested Movement for Democratic Change name and sidestepping factional squabbles and legal disputes. On registration day for by-election candidates, CCC 26 Jan submitted more than one candidate in a handful of wards to contest in municipal elections in Bulawayo and Masvingo cities, risking to divide votes; party Spokesperson Fadzayi Mahere 27 Jan blamed "technical glitch". Mnangagwa 10 Jan fired controversial State Security Minister Owen Ncube for "conduct unbecoming of a minister"; Ncube, who was implicated in violent factional clashes relating to recent provincial elections, has been on U.S. and UK sanctions lists for several years in connection with human rights violations. Trial of freelance journalist Jeffrey Moyo 12 Jan kicked off at Bulawayo magistrates' court, two days later adjourned to 14 Feb; Moyo faces accusations of helping two *New York Times* journalists enter Zimbabwe last year using fake accreditation documents.

Sahel

↓ **Burkina Faso Soldiers toppled President Kaboré in military coup amid growing public anger at govt's inability to stem widespread**

violence. Hundreds 22 Jan protested notably in capital Ouagadougou to denounce insecurity and call on Kaboré to resign, defying gathering ban and erecting barricades; security forces responded with tear gas. Soldiers next day staged mutinies at several army barracks in Ouagadougou, Kaya city and elsewhere, and overnight 23-24 Jan attacked Kaboré's residence. Soldiers under leadership of Third Military Region Commander Lt Col Henri-Paul Sandaogo Damiba 24 Jan declared military junta now in charge; also announced suspension of constitution, dissolution of parliament and govt. Hundreds next day celebrated Kaboré's ouster notably in Ouagadougou. West Africa's regional bloc ECOWAS 28 Jan suspended country from its governing bodies but stopped short of imposing sanctions, and African Union 31 Jan suspended country until constitutional order is restored. Military junta same day claimed it had restored constitution and appointed Damiba as interim head of state. Earlier in month, authorities 11 Jan said they had arrested Lt Col Emmanuel Zoungrana, leader of 12th Commando Regiment, alongside seven soldiers over alleged coup attempt. Meanwhile in Sahel region (north), suspected jihadists 11 Jan killed at least six soldiers in complex attack in Oudalan province. Clashes between al-Qaeda-affiliated Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM) and Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) 2 Jan left at least nine dead (mainly ISGS) in Oudalan. Burkinabé and French forces 15-23 Jan reportedly killed around 60 suspected jihadists in country's north. In Centre-North region, suspected jihadists 1-2 Jan killed four volunteers fighting alongside security forces (VDPs) in Namentenga province; 5 Jan killed 11 civilians in Sanmatenga province's Pensa department. In East region, VDPs and Koglweogo community defence militia 21-23 Jan confronted suspected jihadists in Komondjari province; around 25 reportedly killed on all sides. In Cascades region (south west), JNIM 2 Jan killed two VDPs in Comoé province; military and VDPs same day dismantled presumed JNIM base in same area killing ten. In Boucle du Mouhoun region (west), suspected JNIM 1 Jan killed one soldier in Sourou province; army killed at least 29 militants in response.

↓ **Mali Regional bloc ECOWAS imposed new economic sanctions after interim authorities announced five-year transition; Russian mercenaries reportedly deployed across country.** Interim authorities 1 Jan presented five-year transition timeline to West Africa's regional bloc ECOWAS; revised timeline includes constitutional referendum in Jan 2024, legislative elections in Nov 2025 and presidential elections by Dec 2026. Coalition of 100 political parties and 60 civil society groups next day condemned "attempt to confiscate power by force and trickery" and called on military to respect Sept 2020 transition charter. ECOWAS 9 Jan imposed sweeping economic sanctions and announced closure of borders between ECOWAS member states and Mali. China and Russia 11 Jan at UN Security Council blocked French-drafted statement endorsing sanctions. Tens of thousands 14 Jan protested across country in support of junta, chanting anti-ECOWAS and anti-French slogans. On state TV, PM Choguel Maïga next day strongly condemned sanctions but stressed authorities keen to pursue dialogue with ECOWAS. Junta 26 Jan called on Denmark to immediately withdraw its troops from European Task Force Takuba, saying country lacked permission to deploy its 90 soldiers; Denmark next day denied claim but confirmed it would pull out troops. After French FM Le Drian 28 Jan said junta was "out of control", Bamako 31 Jan gave French ambassador 72 hours to leave country. Meanwhile, reports of deployment of operatives from Russian private military company Wagner Group kept emerging. French newspaper *Le Monde* 6 Jan and head of U.S. Africa Command Gen Stephen Townsend 20 Jan alleged presence, notably in central regions, of hundreds of Russian mercenaries. Violence continued in Mopti region (centre), where clashes between army, reportedly joined by Wagner operatives, and al-Qaeda-

linked Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims-affiliated Katiba Macina 3 Jan reportedly left several militants and soldiers killed and one Wagner element injured in Bandiagara area. Mortar attack 22 Jan killed French soldier in Gao region (north east). Soldiers faced accusations of exactions in southern Koulikoro region's Nara district, including killing between 18 and 31 ethnic Fulani and Soninke civilians in Boudjiguire village 31 Dec and another two people in neighbouring Guiré village 3 Jan.

➡ **Niger** **Violence persisted mainly in south west but also south east, and corruption scandal re-emerged weakening President Bazoum.** In Tillabery region (south west), Al-Qaeda-affiliated Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM) launched several attacks on security forces: gendarmerie vehicle 7 Jan hit explosive device likely planted by JNIM militants on Torodi-Makalondi axis (Torodi department), leaving at least three gendarmes killed; JNIM 15 Jan stormed mixed position of National Guard, customs and forest guards in Torodi department, killing one national guard. Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) also staged several attacks in south west, notably ambushing National Guard convoy between Sanam village in Tillabery and Tebaram village in neighbouring Tahoua region 3 Jan; five national guards killed. Spate of kidnappings continued in Diffa region (south east). Suspected Boko Haram Bakura faction or Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) combatants 3 Jan abducted three women in Gorodi village (Diffa department); all three next day escaped as air force conducted strikes on militants' hideout. Suspected Bakura faction 5 Jan also kidnapped seven women and girls in Klakamana village (N'Guigmi department). Also in Diffa region, security forces 29 Jan reportedly repelled ISWAP attack on Chetima Wangou military camp, killing ten militants. In first major drug interception in Niger, police 2 Jan seized 214kg of cocaine – worth around \$9mn – in local official's vehicle at Tourayyat checkpoint in Agadez region (north). After legal document late Dec revealed govt had refused to bring civil action against those accused of having embezzled over FCFA12bn (\$20mn) of defence ministry's funds, president's office 6 Jan insisted settlement allowed state to recover full amount and reaffirmed authenticity of Bazoum's commitment to combat corruption; statement comes after Moussa Tchangari, sec gen of NGO Alternative Espaces Citoyens, 29 Dec said govt feared inquiry would reveal senior administration officials or prominent politicians' involvement.

West Africa

➡ **Benin** **New IED attack targeted military near border with Burkina Faso.** Army vehicle 6 Jan struck explosive device likely planted by al-Qaeda-affiliated Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM) militants in Tanguiéta commune, north-western Atakora department; two soldiers killed. Military Chief of Staff Patrick Aho 21 Jan lamented “deleterious” security situation, said series of jihadist attacks since late Nov augurs “challenging year ahead”.

➡ **Côte d'Ivoire** **Authorities blamed opposition for 2020 electoral violence, casting potential shadow over reconciliation process; relations soured with Mali.** Tensions ran high after Special Unit tasked with investigating violence around 2020 presidential election late Dec accused opposition leaders, including former President Bédié and former PM Pascal Affi N'Guessan, of instigating violence that left 85 people killed; unit under leadership of Abidjan Prosecutor Richard Adou also warned that “those who coordinated and funded the civil disobedience [campaign] could be prosecuted”. In response, Bédié's Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI) and former President Gbagbo's African People's Party-

Côte d'Ivoire (PPA-CI) 5 Jan held joint press conference, argued govt had "little interest in national reconciliation"; Affi N'Guessan did not comment. Presidential party next day said "justice and reconciliation are not incongruent" and highlighted ongoing political dialogue was not designed to "grant immunity from prosecution to opposition leaders". As part of political dialogue process, govt and opposition 20 Jan agreed to discuss five priority issues starting 27 Jan: revamp of Independent Electoral Commission, appeasement measures to ease political tensions, revision of electoral register, review of electoral code and national reconciliation. In context of much-needed cooperation against jihadist insurgencies, ties unravelled with neighbouring Mali. After Mali's junta 1 Jan announced five-year transition, President Ouattara emerged as prominent advocate of West African regional bloc ECOWAS' hardline posture vis-à-vis coup leaders. In response, Bamako 10 Jan released Ivorian politician Sess Soukou Mohamed aka Ben Souk; Ben Souk, who is close to former PM Guillaume Soro, had been imprisoned in Mali since Aug 2021 on basis of international arrest warrant accusing him of "undermining state security".

➡ **Guinea Amid concerns over slow transition and junta's interference in judicial sphere, military set up legislative council in charge of defining timetable for elections.** Junta late Dec-early Jan dismissed and replaced Justice Minister Fatoumata Yarie Soumah after she criticised junta's intrusion into judiciary and disagreed with Presidency's Sec Gen Col Amara Camara over her department's inner workings. Over 120 opposition parties 3 Jan formed new coalition Collectif des Partis Politiques around main opposition party Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea with view to proposing electoral schedule. Following consultations between govt and political party leaders 11 Jan, junta 22 Jan set up 81-member National Transitional Council (CNT) to serve as legislative body; CNT includes number of civil society representatives, 15 political party representatives and nine security forces representatives, with prominent civil society activist and election expert Dansa Kourouma appointed CNT president. Interim President Doumbouya 24 Jan dismissed nine senior public officials, accusing them of embezzlement of public funds and forgery, including Head of National Anti-Corruption Agency Sékou Mohamed Sylla. Meanwhile, West Africa's regional bloc ECOWAS 9 Jan maintained sanction regime against junta, including travel ban and asset freeze, regretted transition's "slow progress" and "absence of electoral calendar". Junta next day refused to enforce new ECOWAS sanctions on Malian junta citing "pan-Africanist vision". Following late Dec request, deposed President Condé 17 Jan flew to United Arab Emirates for medical reasons.

↓ **Nigeria Authorities intensified air strikes on armed groups notably in Zamfara state, as criminal violence across North West and in North Central zone killed hundreds.** Military stepped up air and ground operations against armed groups in North West, notably killing over 100 suspected bandits including two of their leaders in air strikes in Gusami forest and West Tsamre village, Zamfara state, 3 Jan. Bold armed group attacks meanwhile killed hundreds across region. In Zamfara, gunmen allegedly fleeing govt airstrikes around 9 Jan killed between 58 and 200 people mainly in Bukkuyum and Anka areas; over 10,000 displaced. In Kebbi state, armed group 14 Jan attacked Dankade village in Danko Wasagu area; at least 16 and up to 50 killed. Niger state authorities 18 Jan said armed groups 1-17 Jan killed 220 people and kidnapped another 200 across Niger state; another 31 including 11 security agents reportedly killed 29 Jan in Niger's Shiroro area. Criminal violence also spread further to North Central zone. Notably, in Taraba state, gunmen 2 and 12 Jan killed 30 vigilantes and six other people in Gassol area. Federal govt 5 Jan designated armed groups in North West as "terrorists", clearing way to apply fuller range of weaponry against them. In north-eastern Borno state,

military operations deterred large-scale jihadist attacks, but state authorities 12 Jan said Guzamala and Abadam areas fully under Boko Haram or Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) control. ISWAP 10 Jan reportedly killed ten soldiers in Buratai village in Biu area. As skirmishes between security forces and separatist group Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)'s armed wing continued in South East, Imo state residents 5 Jan accused security forces of killing 25 civilians in operation starting 30 Dec. President Buhari 5 Jan said he would not seek negotiated settlement to IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu's legal case; closure of political option could fuel more violence. Meanwhile, herder-farmer violence persisted at low level, notably killing eight in Ondo state 3-11 Jan. Ethnic violence between Fulani and Irigwe groups flared in Plateau state, leaving 20 dead in Bassa area 2 and 13 Jan.

➡ **Senegal** **Deadly clashes broke out between Casamance separatists and soldiers in neighbouring Gambia.** Suspected members of separatist Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance 24 Jan killed four Senegalese soldiers from West Africa's regional bloc ECOWAS Mission in The Gambia and took another seven hostage during clash near Bwiam town in Gambia; soldiers killed one suspected rebel and captured another three.