

Africa

Central Africa

➔ **Burundi** Ahead of presidential elections in May, ruling party CNDD-FDD chose Evariste Ndayishimiye as its candidate, and its youth wing alongside authorities continued to harass main opposition party National Congress for Freedom (CNL). At CNDD-FDD congress in capital Gitega 26 Jan, delegates chose party's sec gen Ndayishimiye over national assembly president Pascal Nyabenda, both nominated by President Nkurunziza, to be party's presidential candidate. Parliament 21 Jan passed law that will grant Nkurunziza villa, around \$530,000 and status of "supreme leader" when he vacates presidency. CNDD-FDD youth wing, Imbonerakure, 4 Jan beat CNL member's father in Mwaro province; 5 Jan attempted to kill CNL member in Kirundo province reportedly for refusing to join CNDD-FDD. Imbonerakure and authorities 6-29 Jan arrested at least fifteen CNL members in Mwaro, Gitega and Makamba and Muyinga provinces. Local residents in Cibitoke province night of 30-31 Jan beat three Imbonerakure suspected of theft; one died 31 Jan. Authorities 16-20 Jan detained journalist who reported on mismanagement of public funds in Karusi province. National Intelligence Service 8-13 Jan arrested three members of two teachers' unions, including presidents of both, after they protested against withholding of portion of teachers' wages; authorities 21 Jan released two presidents. High Court of Bubanza 30 Jan sentenced four journalists arrested in Oct to two and a half years in prison. European Parliament 16 Jan adopted resolution condemning human rights violations against opposition and press, calling on authorities to investigate arbitrary arrests, beatings and killings, and calling for extension of EU sanctions and imposition of UN Security Council sanctions. Rwanda 8 Jan said it was prepared to engage in talks to normalise relations with Burundi.

↓ **Cameroon** Ahead of parliamentary and local elections 9 Feb, separatist militants stepped up attacks in Anglophone regions in west often targeting electoral staff and materials while military intensified deadly raids and deployed 700 additional gendarmes; in Far North Boko Haram (BH) maintained high rate of attacks on civilians and military. Separatists 5 Jan said they would enforce lockdown (restriction on movement, closure of schools and businesses) in Anglophone regions 7-12 Feb to prevent voting and celebration of youth day 11 Feb, anniversary of 1961 independence plebiscite. Govt 7 Jan deployed 700 additional gendarmes to Anglophone areas. North West region saw most intense violence. Army raid in Donga Mantung 1 Jan left six dead. Villagers angered by separatists' abuses early Jan chased them from their camps in Ngoketunjia. Suspected separatists 5 Jan kidnapped at least five officials in Babessi. Separatists 7 Jan burned down electoral body's office in Donga Mantung. Security forces 12-20 Jan killed at least sixteen in several villages and burned down hundreds of houses. Clashes between two separatist groups in Meluf 18 Jan left at least six dead. Security forces 26 Jan killed separatist commander in Bui. Army raids 28-29 Jan killed four in Mbiame and Nkambe. In South West region, separatists 13 Jan killed soldier in Muyuka; 16 Jan ambushed security forces near Mamfe, death toll unknown. Security forces 18-23 Jan killed at least eight civilians and three separatists. In predominantly Francophone West region, Anglophone separatists 7 Jan attacked gendarmerie post in Bangourain. In Far North, almost daily BH attacks on villages and military outposts 3-28 Jan left 26 villagers and eleven militants dead.

📌🔴* **Central African Republic** Fighting escalated between armed groups and between ethnic communities in Birao in north east and in Bria in east leaving several dozen dead; violence could intensify further in Feb. In far north east, armed group Popular Front for the Central African Renaissance (FPRC), whose two main leaders are ethnic Runga, continued to advance on Birao, capital of Vakaga prefecture, held by ethnic Kara rebel group Movement of Central African Liberators for Justice (MLCJ). FPRC 16 Jan kidnapped MLCJ commander and killed his two bodyguards near Birao. MLCJ next day began violent campaign against ethnic Runga and Sara civilians, destroying hundreds of homes in Birao and surrounding villages. Clashes between FPRC and MLCJ near Birao reportedly left at least twenty dead 19-21 Jan. In east, FPRC killed suspected member of anti-balaka self-defence group near Bria 9 Jan prompting anti-balaka to kill two ethnic Sara. FPRC infighting erupted in Bria 24 Jan between ethnic Runga on one side and Kara and Gula on other leading to nearly 50 deaths according to local authorities. In north west, anti-balaka combatants 23 Jan killed Fulani civilian, sparking clashes later that day in Batangafo between anti-balaka and members of armed group Central African Patriotic Movement (MPC), reportedly leaving eight dead. In centre, clashes in Alindao 9 Jan between army and armed group Union for Peace in the Central African Republic (UPC) left three soldiers and eleven UPC dead. FPRC, UPC and MPC 13 Jan jointly denounced govt's delayed implementation of Feb peace deal and called for talks. In capital Bangui, former transitional President Michel Djotodia 10 Jan returned from six-year exile and next day President Touadéra granted him audience to welcome him back. Touadéra 21 Jan finally met former President Bozizé, who returned from exile clandestinely mid-Dec but remains under national arrest warrant. UN Security Council 31 Jan eased arms embargo on CAR.

➡ **Chad** Boko Haram (BH) kept up attacks in west, govt lifted state of emergency in east and north after five months, and wrangling continued over timetable for long-delayed parliamentary elections. In Lake Chad province in west, BH militants killed at least four and kidnapped four in Alom 11 Jan. Suspected BH suicide bombing in Kaïga-Kindjiria night of 19-20 Jan left at least nine dead. Skirmish between army and BH in Tetewa 27 Jan left six soldiers dead. Another suspected BH attack on Choua island in Lake Chad night of 29-30 Jan left three Chadian soldiers, one female civilian and 21 BH militants dead. President Déby 30 Jan replaced army chief of staff Gen Taher Erda with Gen Abakar Abdelkérîm Daoud. 1,200 Chadian soldiers 3 Jan returned from Nigeria where they had been fighting BH since Feb 2019. French President Macron and G5 Sahel heads of state including Déby met in Pau, France 13 Jan and agreed to step up military cooperation with France to counter jihadist threat in Sahel. French minister of armed forces and Swedish defence minister in N'Djamena 20 Jan discussed possible deployment of Chadian troops to Mali-Burkina Faso-Niger border area. Govt 25 Jan lifted state of emergency in Tibesti province in north and Ouaddaï and Dar Sila provinces in east declared in Aug following deadly clashes. Electoral commission (CENI) 6 Jan proposed to hold parliamentary elections 9 Aug, but ruling coalition and opposition rejected date saying rainy season would hinder polls. Déby requested CENI and National Framework for Political Dialogue, platform comprising ruling coalition and opposition, to draw up realistic timetable. Police 25 Jan prevented meeting of opposition movement-turned-party Les Transformateurs in capital N'Djamena. Public sector workers 7 Jan launched nationwide strike demanding govt reinstate their salaries cut in 2016 as part of austerity measures; govt 9 Jan agreed to gradually reinstate portions of salaries and strikers returned to work next day.

↓ **DR Congo** Fighting escalated in Ituri province in north east between security forces and armed groups, militia attacks on civilians surged in Beni territory, North Kivu late Jan, and tensions persisted between President Tshisekedi and allies of former President Kabila. In Ituri, clashes between security forces and armed group Cooperative for Development of Congo (CODECO) in Djugu and Mahagi territories 1-22 Jan left at least 43 dead. Fighting between army and unidentified rebels 5 Jan killed sixteen rebels in Ngongo and Lipri. Unidentified gunmen 15 Jan attacked police station in Irumu killing six. Attack by unidentified assailants in Mahagi territory 19 Jan left nine dead. Mai-Mai raid in Mambasa 19 Jan left three dead. Suspected CODECO attacks in Djugu territory 27-28 Jan left three dead. In North Kivu, security forces made gains against armed group Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) but failed to stop attacks against civilians. Army operation that led to capture of ADF stronghold Madina 9 Jan reportedly left 40 militants and 30 soldiers dead. In Beni territory, ADF rebels stepped up attacks on civilians killing six 22 Jan, at least 36 28 Jan, and at least 21 two days later. In Beni and Lubero territories, Mai-Mai attacks and clashes between Mai-Mai and security forces 6-31 Jan left fifteen dead. Suspected members of rebel group Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda 15-23 Jan launched attacks in Rutshuru territory that left twelve dead. Mai-Mai militiamen night of 6-7 Jan attacked Ebola centre in Beni territory leaving three dead. Tshisekedi 19 Jan suggested that he might dissolve national assembly if it obstructs him. Jeannine Mabunda, national assembly president and member of Kabila's coalition, 21 Jan said move could amount to high treason. After opposition members late Dec-early Jan suggested Rwanda intended to annex territory in east, Rwandan FM 8 Jan described remarks as harmful for Rwanda-DRC relations.

➔ **Rwanda** Rwanda's relations with its neighbours remained tense. After opposition members in DR Congo (DRC) late Dec-early Jan suggested Rwanda intended to annex territory in east DRC, FM 8 Jan described remarks as harmful for Rwanda-DRC relations. Amid strained Rwanda-Uganda relations, Uganda 8 Jan released nine Rwandans. In north near Ugandan border, security forces 18 Jan shot and killed one Ugandan and two Rwandans suspected of smuggling. Rwandan FM 8 Jan said Rwanda was prepared to engage in talks with Burundi to normalise diplomatic relations. Judicial authorities 23 Jan sentenced six members of unregistered opposition party FDU-Inkingi arrested in Sept 2017 to 7-12 years in prison for "threatening the security of the state".

Horn of Africa

➔ **Djibouti** London Court of International Arbitration 15 Jan ruled for sixth time in favour of Dubai-based company DP World in dispute between it and govt over control of Doraleh Container Terminal; court said Djibouti broke concession agreement with DP World when it seized terminal and transferred assets to state-owned company in 2018. Djibouti 17 Jan rejected decision.

➔ **Eritrea** Eritrea alongside seven other states bordering Red Sea and Gulf of Aden in Saudi Arabia 6 Jan established regional bloc to improve maritime security.

➔ **Ethiopia** Political violence and counter-insurgency operations continued in Oromia region, parties manoeuvred ahead of elections tentatively set for Aug, and Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan reported some progress in talks to resolve dispute over Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on Blue Nile River creating opportunity

to strike comprehensive agreement in Feb. Security forces early Jan launched counter-insurgency operation against armed opposition faction Oromo Liberation Army in western Oromia, where govt reportedly blocked internet and mobile phone usage. Clashes erupted at Haramaya University in eastern Oromia 11 Jan between security forces and students reportedly protesting counter-insurgency operations in region, some students injured. Residents in Amhara regional state in north late Jan took to streets to protest alleged kidnapping in Oromia of up to 27 students from Amhara. Authorities reportedly arrested at least 75 supporters of opposition parties in Oromia late Jan. After Jawar Mohammed, ethnic Oromo activist and prominent critic of PM Abiy, 30 Dec joined opposition party Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC), OFC, Oromo Liberation Front and Oromo National Party 3 Jan formed Coalition for Democratic Federalism. Electoral board 15 Jan tentatively set 16 Aug as date of general elections. Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan made some progress in GERD talks in Addis Ababa, Khartoum and Washington, agreeing 31 Jan in Washington on various aspects including filling and operation of dam during drought and instructing technical and legal teams to prepare comprehensive agreement for signature by end Feb.

↓ **Kenya** Al-Shabaab stepped up frequency and scale of attacks in north east and east, and President Kenyatta reshuffled his cabinet. After springing two ambushes in Wajir and Mandera counties in north east 28 and 29 Dec respectively, killing two soldiers in first incident, Al-Shabaab 2 Jan ambushed bus in Lamu county in east, separated Muslims from non-Muslims and killed four of latter. Also in Lamu county, Al-Shabaab 5 Jan launched assault on Simba military base in Manda Bay killing three Americans (one soldier and two contractors) and damaging six aircraft; first Al-Shabaab attack on base housing U.S. forces in Kenya. Hours later, three men attempted to break into UK army base in Nanyuki in central Kenya, all arrested. In Garissa county in east, Al-Shabaab 7 Jan attacked police station killing two policemen and 10 Jan killed three teachers. Court 22 Jan allowed police to detain 43 people, including 38 students, arrested day before in capital Nairobi and suspected to be linked to Al-Shabaab. President Kenyatta 14 Jan announced changes to cabinet, including switching Monica Juma and Raychelle Omamo, cabinet secretaries for foreign affairs and defence respectively.

↓ 🌐* **Somalia** Al-Shabaab continued to attack security forces and civilians, tensions mounted in Galmudug as rival camps appointed parallel parliaments, and in coming weeks militia fighting could erupt in Jubaland state in south. In capital Mogadishu, Al-Shabaab killed at least six people 8-11 Jan. In Lower Juba, Lower Shabelle and Middle Shabelle regions in south, clashes between Al-Shabaab and security forces and Al-Shabaab attacks 7-25 Jan left at least sixteen soldiers and civilians dead, and some 80 militants. U.S. airstrikes 3-27 Jan left nine Al-Shabaab militants dead. In Bosaso, on Puntland's coast in north, security forces 6 Jan killed four suspected members of Islamic State (ISIS)-Somalia. Suspected ISIS militants shot dead former official in Bosaso 21 Jan. In Galmudug, following standoff between federal govt and Sufi paramilitary group Ahlu Sunnah Waa-Jama'a (ASWJ) over latter's seats in new parliament, electoral committee appointed by federal govt 3 Jan approved twenty ASWJ MPs, mid-Jan announced new state parliament and postponed election of president to 2 Feb. Incumbent state President Ahmed Geele Haaf 4 Jan announced parallel electoral committee which 19 Jan announced rival parliament in Galkayo; rival parliament 30 Jan elected Haaf as state president.

ASWJ 21 Jan rejected federal govt-led process and announced third rival parliament, which 29 Jan elected ASWJ leader Sheikh Mohamed Shakir as state president. Four presidential candidates 22 Jan said they would boycott presidential polls, accusing federal govt of hijacking process. In Jubaland, state's VP replaced mayor of Baardheere after latter expressed support for federal govt, prompting Mogadishu to deploy troops to Baardheere where tensions ran high end month. Federal parliament's upper house 6 Jan approved petroleum law, but Puntland President Deni deemed it unconstitutional on grounds that federal states had not been consulted. In Saudi capital Riyadh 6 Jan, eight countries on Red Sea and Gulf of Aden including Somalia established regional bloc to ensure maritime security.

➔ **Somaliland** Agreement to end long-running dispute over electoral commission unravelled while govt and rebel leader signed peace agreement ending rebellion in Sanaag region in east. After opposition parties Waddani and Justice and Welfare Party (UCID) late Dec granted govt until 10 Jan to dissolve new electoral commission and reinstate its predecessor, President Bihi 13 Jan told UCID and Waddani that govt could not legally disband it. UCID and Waddani accused Bihi of renegeing on agreement and called on commission to resign. In Sanaag, following mediation by elders, Colonel Arre, rebel leader who defected from Somaliland to Puntland in 2018, signed peace agreement with govt 2 Jan; as part of deal, army is to absorb rebel soldiers, Arre agreed to go into exile. Sanaag residents 15 Jan opened fire on convoy of Puntland's deputy information minister, no casualties. Unidentified assailants 21 Jan shot and killed police officer in Awdal region in west. In Saudi capital Riyadh, eight countries bordering Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, excluding Somaliland, 6 Jan formed regional bloc to ensure maritime security; govt next day said it did not recognise bloc. Coast guard 24 Jan chased away Djiboutian ship installing submarine communications cable.

➔ **South Sudan** President Kiir and main rebel leader Riek Machar failed to close gap between their positions on outstanding issues raising risk that they fail to reach agreement by 22 Feb deadline to form unity govt potentially triggering new violence; govt struck ceasefire agreement with armed groups that did not sign Sept 2018 deal; fighting continued in west. Deadlock persisted over number and borders of states: Kiir insisted on maintaining or increasing existing 32 states, while opposition groups pushed for 23 states plus Abyei. South African deputy president David Mabuza, invited to mediate by Kiir and Machar, 16 Jan proposed that 90-day arbitration committee of foreign, regional, and international representatives settle issue; South Sudan Opposition Alliance (SSAA) and Machar's Sudan People's Liberation Army-In Opposition (SPLA-IO) rejected proposal, demanding issue be resolved before formation of unity govt. Unification of govt and rebel forces into national army made some progress with SPLA-IO troops early Jan starting to move to cantonment sites in Jonglei, Torit and Wau states. Govt and opposition coalition South Sudan Opposition Movements Alliance (SSOMA), who refused to be part of Sept 2018 peace deal, 13 Jan signed Rome Declaration in Italy, agreeing to cease hostilities, discuss mechanisms to resolve differences, and guarantee humanitarian access. Ceasefire took effect 15 Jan, no major violations by end month. Kiir 29 Jan granted amnesty to all SSOMA factions. Second round of talks expected in Feb. Fighting continued between govt forces and armed groups in Maiwut county, Gambella region near border with Ethiopia. Suspected nomadic Misseriya herders from Sudan 22 Jan reportedly killed 32 people and burnt houses in Dinka village of

Kolom, in disputed Abyei area. U.S. 8 Jan imposed sanctions on VP Gai for allegedly ordering murder of opposition figure Aggrey Idri Ezibon and human rights lawyer Dong Samuel Luak in 2017.

➡ **Sudan** Security forces quelled mutiny by former members and peace talks with rebel groups continued. Army and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) 14 Jan put down mutiny by forces from former National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) dissatisfied with severance pay; NISS operations units disbanded in July 2019 when agency was reconfigured as General Intelligence Services (GIS). Mutineers opened fire, blocked roads in capital Khartoum and North Kordofan's capital El-Obeid and briefly closed two oil fields in East Darfur; two people killed. RSF head Mohamed Hamdan "Hemedti" same day alleged former NISS head Salah Gosh helped instigate mutiny. Sovereign Council head Abdel Fattah al-Burhan next day announced replacement of GIS Director Abu Bakr Mustafa Damblab with army intelligence chief. After fighting erupted late Dec in West Darfur's capital el-Geneina between Arab groups and Masalit tribe leaving over 60 dead, delegation including PM Hamdok and Hemedti 1 Jan went to city and urged tribal leaders to settle conflict. Peace talks between govt and rebel groups continued in South Sudanese capital Juba ahead of 14 Feb deadline to negotiate comprehensive deal. Abdelaziz al-Hilu, leader of rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) faction, 1 Jan extended ceasefire in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, but govt continued to resist his wish that talks address question of state secularism. Malik Agar, leader of another SPLM-N faction, 17 Jan concluded talks with govt on political agenda; 24 Jan signed preliminary deal granting special status to South Kordofan and Blue Nile, paving way for militants to integrate into army. Rebel faction Sudan Liberation Movement led by Minni Minnawi 24 Jan accused govt of backtracking on pledges, prompting govt and rebel coalition Sudanese Revolutionary Front to reaffirm commitment to peace process. Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan made progress in talks to resolve dispute over Ethiopia's dam on Blue Nile, agreeing 31 Jan in Washington on various aspects and instructing technical and legal teams to prepare comprehensive agreement for signature by end Feb.

➡ **Uganda** Govt continued to repress opposition and took steps to normalise relations with Rwanda, while relations with Kenya soured over trade dispute. Police 6 Jan prevented musician-turned-opposition leader Bobi Wine from holding first public meeting following Dec announcement that he would run for president in 2021 general elections: police fired tear gas to disperse Wine's supporters, detained him for staging allegedly illegal outdoor assembly instead of indoor gathering. Following agreement to normalise relations with Rwanda late Aug, military court in Kampala 7 Jan dropped espionage charges against nine Rwandans. In northern Rwanda near Ugandan border, security forces 18 Jan shot and killed one Ugandan and two Rwandans suspected of smuggling. Uganda-Kenya tensions rose after latter seized Ugandan milk shipments 27 Dec, 6 and 12 Jan on suspicion that they had been imported illegally. Ugandan govt 16 Jan said seizures contravened East African Community Customs Union Protocol, demanded Kenya immediately release shipments and cover any financial loss incurred.

Southern Africa

➔ **Angola** Following court decision in Dec to freeze bank accounts of Isobel dos Santos, daughter of former President dos Santos, and her husband over significant state losses, newspapers 19 Jan published investigation into leaked documents which detailed her alleged corruption and misappropriation of funds. Chief prosecutor 20 Jan indicted her for embezzlement and money laundering. She denied wrongdoing.

➔ **Lesotho** PM Thabane 14 Jan announced he would resign, without setting date, following recent allegations connecting him to 2017 murder of his former wife Lipolelo Thabane. Allegations became public after police commissioner implicated Thabane in legal documents following attempts by Thabane to suspend him from office. Police 10 Jan issued arrest warrant for Thabane's current wife after she refused to meet authorities to answer questions over murder; her current whereabouts are unknown.

➔ **Malawi** Opposition continued to challenge President Mutharika's victory in May 2019 election amid ongoing protests, including over alleged police abuses. Thousands of protesters 9 Jan marched to police headquarters in capital Lilongwe over alleged sexual violence by police during demonstrations in Oct, threatened further protests if police failed to make arrests. Police 11 Jan arrested opposition figure Jessie Kabwila on charges of inciting violence during protest. Anti-corruption body 13 Jan said it had opened probe into alleged attempts to bribe judges presiding over opposition's petition to annul May election results. Tens of thousands of supporters of NGO Human Rights Defenders Coalition 16 Jan took to streets in Lilongwe, with smaller rallies in Blantyre and Mzuzu, demanding alleged bribers be named and arrested; police 22 Jan arrested and charged prominent banker Thomson Mpinganjira in connection with case; court same day declared arrest warrant void, forcing police to release him. EU election observation mission 8 Jan said it would postpone release of its report on May elections until after court ruling expected early Feb.

➔ **Mozambique** Suspected Islamist militants continued to attack civilians and security forces in far north and, as attacks on civilians continued in centre, armed dissident faction of opposition party Renamo threatened to escalate violence there. In Cabo Delgado province in far north, militants 3 Jan killed at least four people in ambush on minibus in Macomia district on Palma-Pemba axis; and 16 Jan killed three civilians near Roma, Mocimboa da Praia district. Militants 18 Jan killed one civilian and kidnapped two women in Manica village, Macomia district; 25 Jan attacked villages of Namaluco, Cagembe and Nagruvala in Quissanga district, killing at least three civilians. Islamic State (ISIS) 23 Jan claimed responsibility for attack on military base in Mbau same day that left 22 soldiers dead. In centre, police 5 Jan arrested six suspected members of dissident Renamo faction in Dondo, Sofala province. Following threats in Dec by faction, which calls itself Renamo Military Junta, to carry out attacks until govt denied that Renamo leader Ossufo Momade represented party, group's leader Mariano Nhongo 13 Jan warned he would start targeting civilians and businesses. Momade 16 Jan ruled out dialogue with dissidents. Unidentified gunmen 20 Jan raided Macorococho village, Nhamatanda district in Sofala province, killing four people and looting medicine. Police continued

to probe alleged links between Renamo MPs and attacks in centre, arresting and questioning several Renamo MPs throughout Jan.

➡ **Zimbabwe** Govt and opposition remained at loggerheads over dialogue mechanism as economic crisis persisted. Nelson Chamisa, leader of main opposition party Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), 2 Jan said he was open to dialogue with President Mnangagwa mediated by former South African President Mbeki. Govt same day reiterated that Mnangagwa would only engage with Chamisa through its own political dialogue initiative. Police 17 Jan raided MDC offices in capital Harare search for “weapons of war”, made no arrests. MDC rally in Harare 21 Jan drew thousands; Chamisa warned supporters to prepare for “year of demos and action” against govt. Police and courts continued to prohibit most demonstrations. Amid continued economic crisis, confederation of unions Civil Service APEX Council 10 Jan rejected govt’s offer to raise public sector wages by 97%; govt 13 Jan offered one-off allowance to stave off strike action; public sector workers 29 Jan accepted 140% salary increase but continued to demand further concessions. Doctors’ association 21 Jan said it had accepted offer by prominent businessman to distribute \$300 monthly allowances over next six months, ending strike that started in Sept. Following rise in gang attacks on mining sites, police mid-Jan arrested over 1,800 people across country for illegally mining gold and complicity in violence.

Sahel

↓ **Burkina Faso** Suspected jihadists stepped up attacks especially against local population in north, leaving over a hundred civilians dead, and continued their attacks in east and south west, while govt moved forward with plan to recruit civilian volunteers to counter jihadist threat. In north near border with Mali, suspected jihadists increasingly targeted civilians: twelve killed in Gasseliki 10 Jan and at least 39 killed in Silgadji 25 Jan, both Soum province, Sahel region; ten killed in Solle, Loroum province in North region 11 Jan; 36 killed in two villages in Sanmatenga province, Centre-North region 20 Jan; explosive device killed fourteen civilians on Toeni-Tougan road, Sourou province in Boucle du Mouhoun region 4 Jan; possibly in retaliation, security forces 6 Jan killed nine suspected Katiba Macina militants, arrested cell leader in Kolerou area in neighbouring Kossi province. In Soum province, security forces 3 Jan repelled attack on gendarmerie in Inata, killing at least ten assailants; explosive device killed five soldiers in Gorguel 17 Jan. Islamic State’s local affiliate 9 Jan claimed past attacks in northern areas where its presence was unconfirmed, including Sanmatenga and Kossi. In East region, suspected jihadists continued attacks, despite lull in clashes with Koglweogo community defence group: civilian killed in Kankandi, Tapoa province 10 Jan; explosive device 28 Jan killed six soldiers on Madjoari-Pama road, Kompienga province. In south west near border with Côte d’Ivoire, suspected members of jihadist Group to Support Islam and Muslims (JNIM) 5 Jan set Ouou gendarmerie on fire in Comoé province, Cascades region; security forces 14 Jan arrested four suspected Katiba Macina militants in Galgouli, Poni province, South-West region. National Assembly 21 Jan passed law enabling security forces to rely on civilian volunteers to fight armed groups. G5 Sahel heads of state including President Kaboré met with French President Macron in Pau, France 13 Jan, agreed to step up military cooperation with France to counter jihadist threat in Sahel.

↓ **Mali** Intercommunal and jihadist violence intensified in centre amid ongoing counter-insurgency operations; France pledged to boost its military presence in Sahel from 4,500 troops to 5,100. In Mopti region in centre, suspected Dogon militiamen 16 Jan attacked Fulani village of Sinda, killing at least fourteen; explosive device 21 Jan killed two soldiers on Boni-Douentza axis; unidentified assailants 22-23 Jan killed six soldiers in Dioungani area. In Ségou region in centre, jihadist coalition Group to Support Islam and Muslims claimed attack against Sokolo military camp that killed twenty soldiers 26 Jan; 29 Jan reportedly captured Sokolo village. French forces continued counter-insurgency operations, notably killing thirty suspected members of jihadist group Katiba Macina south of Mopti 14-15 Jan. Also in centre, protesters demonstrated against UN mission (MINUSMA) in Koro, Bankass, and Bandiagara early Jan. Signatories to 2015 Algiers peace agreement took steps to pacify relations in north east. Delegations from ex-rebel Coalition of Azawad Movements and Platform coalition of pro-govt armed groups held talks in Ménaka 7-8 Jan, signed agreement on security arrangements to prevent confrontation between their respective local factions, committed to join forces against banditry in Ménaka region. Following Dec national inclusive dialogue, govt 11 Jan held meeting with political parties and signatory armed groups to discuss conditions for organising legislative elections before May. Movement of sympathisers of prominent Muslim leader Mahmoud Dicko 15 Jan said it would present list of candidates. Despite 10 Jan protest in capital Bamako against French military presence, President Keïta met with other G5 Sahel heads of state and French President Macron in Pau, France, 13 Jan, agreed to step up military cooperation with France to counter jihadist threat in Sahel; Macron same day pledged additional 220 troops to French Barkhane operation. French govt early Feb said it would deploy 400 more soldiers to focus on border area between Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. PM Cissé 29 Jan pledged to increase size of armed forces by 50% in 2020.

↓ **Niger** Jihadists continued to step up attacks against security forces in west and target civilians in south east, leaving scores dead, while President Issoufou doubled down on commitment to maintain French military presence. Suspected Islamic State (ISIS) militants 9 Jan attacked military base in Chinégodar, Tillabery region in west near Malian border, killing at least 89 soldiers – deadliest single attack against security forces in country’s history, four weeks after suspected ISIS’s Sahel affiliate killed 71 soldiers in same region. Govt 13 Jan removed armed forces chief and army chief. After govt 1 Jan banned use of motorbikes in Tillabery region, hundreds protested 18 Jan in Tillabery against restrictions on free movement and worsening security situation. In Diffa region in south east, suspected Boko Haram militants 9 Jan reportedly kidnapped eighteen civilians in Toumour. After President Issoufou and other G5 Sahel heads of state met with French President Macron in Pau, France 13 Jan and agreed to step up military cooperation with France to counter jihadist threat in Sahel, security forces 17 Jan fired tear gas at protesters in capital Niamey demanding departure of French forces, and Issoufou 20 Jan reiterated commitment to French military presence. Security forces 4 Jan dispersed weeks-long sit-in protest of asylum seekers demanding better living conditions and shorter processing times in front of UN Refugee Agency offices in Agadez; police arrested 335 protesters and forced others back to camp, which some set alight.

West Africa

➔ **Côte d'Ivoire** Ahead of presidential election scheduled for Oct, opposition accused govt of using legal measures to ward off key challengers. Court of Cassation 17 Jan declared itself competent to hear charges of embezzlement of public funds, money laundering and conspiracy against state authority brought against former rebel leader and former national assembly speaker Guillaume Soro, who declared his intention to run for presidential election, after chief prosecutor Richard Adou 23 Dec issued international arrest warrant against him based on alleged audio recording. Soro 21 Jan filed legal complaint at court in Paris – because part of alleged recording was done in France – against Adou and three others for illegally recording him, editing and diffusing tape; 28 Jan said he would take part in Oct presidential election despite arrest warrant. Court in capital Abidjan 30 Dec sentenced pro-Gbagbo rebel leader and former youth minister Charles Blé Goudé *in absentia* to twenty years in prison for crimes during post-electoral crisis in 2010-2011; Blé Goudé remained on parole in The Hague pending outcome of International Criminal Court (ICC) Prosecutor's appeal against his Jan 2019 acquittal of crimes against humanity. Following efforts in 2019 by former President Gbagbo – in Belgium on conditional release from ICC – to regain control of party he founded, Popular Ivorian Front (FPI), from legally-recognised president Pascal Affi N'Guessan, Gbagbo and N'Guessan met in Brussels 4-5 Jan to discuss reorganisation of FPI. N'Guessan 17 Jan said he had asked to be Gbagbo's running mate in Oct 2020 presidential election if former president is nominated as FPI candidate, after Gbagbo vowed to run regardless of his legal status.

➔ **Gambia** Hundreds demonstrated in capital Banjul 26 Jan to demand President Barrow honour 2016 commitment to serve for three-year transitional period only; police cracked down on protesters, reportedly arresting 137, including journalists; several police officers and protesters also wounded; govt same day outlawed protest movement. In audio recordings released 12 Jan, former President Jammeh announced plans to return from exile in Equatorial Guinea. Thousands demonstrated on outskirts of Banjul 16 Jan in support of his return. Govt 19 Jan said Jammeh would face "immediate arrest" and "most serious charges" if he returned. Hundreds 25 Jan marched on outskirts of Banjul calling for justice over human rights abuses under Jammeh's rule.

⚡ **Guinea** Security forces stepped up crackdown on protests against President Condé's alleged plan to run for third term, leaving at least six dead. Following calls by National Front for the Defence of the Constitution, coalition of opposition parties and civil society groups against constitutional change that could pave way for Condé's re-election later this year, protesters gathered 6, 13, 21, 22, and 23 Jan in capital Conakry and other cities. Clashes with security forces left two civilians dead in Conakry 13 Jan, one in regional capital Labé (centre) same day, and three others in Labé 23 Jan. In strongholds of main opposition party Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea in country's centre, protesters 14 Jan vandalised govt buildings in Labé, Lélouma and Pita; 21 Jan reportedly ransacked police station and prison in Dalaba, freeing seventeen prisoners and looting guns; 22 Jan burnt down police station in Télimélé. Govt 24 Jan said constitutional referendum could take place in Feb. Ahead of legislative elections due 16 Feb, President Condé and ministers toured country and

preparations continued. Notably, Condé visited Kindia (west) 6 Jan and PM Fofana visited Kankan (east) 14 Jan. Electoral commission 9 Jan said 40 parties had put forward candidates and released updated electoral roll adding over two million voters, prompting opposition to warn of alleged voter duplicates and irregular enlistment of minors in govt strongholds. Campaign launched 16 Jan. Constitutional Court 9 Jan heard seven members of electoral commission after they filed complaint to denounce commission president's alleged mismanagement.

↓ **Guinea-Bissau** Post-electoral standoff emerged amid allegations of fraud in second round of presidential election late Dec. After national electoral commission (CNE) 1 Jan said former PM Umaro Sissoco Embaló had won with 53.55% of votes, defeated candidate Domingos Simões Pereira of ruling African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) complained of fraud and 3 Jan appealed to Supreme Court to annul results. Supreme Court 11 Jan called on CNE to clarify certain aspects of results. CNE responded to Court's queries and 17 Jan gave final results, confirming Sissoco's victory, but Supreme Court same day insisted it demanded recount. CNE 22 Jan said it had submitted additional documents to Supreme Court, called for Sissoco to be sworn in. Regional bloc Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) acknowledged Sissoco's victory 22 Jan but 30 Jan sent mission to Bissau, insisted CNE should comply with Supreme Court's demand.

➔ **Liberia** Police 6 Jan fired tear gas and water cannon in capital Monrovia to disperse supporters of prominent critic of President Weah and opposition figure Henry Costa protesting against govt and deepening economic crisis. Immigration authorities 11 Jan questioned Costa, accusing him of having forged his travel documents to return to country in Dec ahead of planned protest. Costa reportedly left country 12 Jan. Sierra Leone's authorities 15 Jan detained him at Freetown airport after Monrovia requested his extradition, but Costa reportedly left Sierra Leone to U.S. next day. Govt 17 Jan declared Costa fugitive. Costa next day pledged to return to country in May.

↓ **Nigeria** Two Boko Haram (BH) factions – Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) and Abubakar Shekau's group (JAS) – stepped up attacks in north east while in north west jihadist group Ansaru claimed first attack since 2013 as military continued operations against bandits, amid ongoing herder-related and criminal violence in Middle Belt and Niger Delta respectively. In north east, BH 20 Jan killed local leader of Christian association after abducting him 3 Jan in Adamawa state. In Borno state, military 4 Jan repelled BH attack in Konduga area, six insurgents and four soldiers killed. BH 4 Jan killed three civilians in Chibok area. ISWAP claimed responsibility for 7 Jan attack on Monguno town which killed eight soldiers. In apparent attempt to cut off Borno state capital Maiduguri from rest of country, insurgents attacked travellers on road linking Maiduguri to Yobe state capital, Damaturu: 9 Jan abducted seven, 28 Jan killed three others. BH 20 Jan reportedly killed twenty displaced persons and one soldier in Ngala town. Military 12 Jan reported four ISWAP commanders killed in Lake Chad area; air force 27 Jan reported scores of ISWAP fighters killed in same area 24-25 Jan. Suicide bombers 26 Jan killed three in Gwoza town; 30 Jan killed four in Maiduguri outskirts. In north west, army 12 Jan reported anti-banditry operations in Zamfara and Katsina states 16 Dec-9 Jan killed 106 bandits. Bandits killed 31 people in Zamfara state 14-15 Jan

and at least twenty in Niger state 5-25 Jan. In Kaduna state, gunmen killed around 35 people 6-12 Jan; long-dormant jihadist group Ansaru claimed 14 Jan attack against prominent traditional chief's convoy that killed at least six people. Violence continued in Middle Belt: 30 killed 1 Jan in Tawari town, Kogi state; twelve killed in Kulben village in clash between cattle rustlers and local youths 9 Jan and 23 killed 27 Jan in Kwatas village, both Plateau state. In Niger Delta, pirates 3 Jan killed four navy personnel and kidnapped three foreign workers in Bayelsa state; navy 7 Jan rescued kidnapped men.