

Africa

Central Africa

➔ 🇸🇩* **Burundi** Presidential and legislative elections held 20 May were marred by allegations of fraud and irregularities, and post-electoral crisis loomed after opposition challenged provisional results before Constitutional Court, raising risk of violence in June. Electoral commission 25 May said ruling party CNDD-FDD presidential candidate Évariste Ndayishimiye defeated main rival Agathon Rwasa from opposition National Congress for Freedom (CNL) party with 68% of vote in presidential election; same day announced CNDD-FDD won 72 of 100 National Assembly seats with 68% of vote in legislative elections. Rwasa immediately rejected provisional results and 28 May filed appeal to Constitutional Court, citing widespread fraud and irregularities by CNDD-FDD, including ballot stuffing and expulsion of CNL observers from polling stations. Meanwhile, president of Electoral Commission 27-28 May revealed provisional results had not been fully verified and withdrew them from commission's website; 29-30 May republished same provisional results online. In lead-up to vote, authorities 8 May applied fourteen-day COVID-19 quarantine on electoral observers from East African Community regional bloc, de facto preventing observation mission from monitoring polls, while violent confrontations between CNDD-FDD and CNL members continued. Notably, clashes between CNDD-FDD and CNL supporters in Bujumbura and Kirundo provinces 3-4 May left one dead and seventeen injured. Members of Imbonerakure, youth wing of CNDD-FDD, reportedly stripped twenty CNL supporters of their voter cards in Muyinga province 6 May and injured five others during CNL meeting in Bubanza province 15 May. CNL 28 May said authorities arrested 600 CNL supporters during electoral campaign and on election day, with 423 still detained. Authorities in Ngozi province 25-26 May sentenced several CNL representatives to up to one year in prison for reportedly using forged documents on voting day. Military 8 May clashed with Rwandan forces at maritime border on Lake Rweru; one govt soldier reportedly killed.

➔ **Cameroon** Violence persisted in Anglophone North West and South West regions and jihadists continued to launch attacks against civilians and security forces in Far North despite ongoing security operations. Military 4 May said troops killed 22 Anglophone separatists including leading separatist fighter "General Aladji" in week-long military operation in North West, notably around Bafut town; locals said thirteen civilians died during raids. Separatists launched several attacks 10 May, killing soldier in village of Akwaya and new mayor of Mamfe city (both South West), and Fulani civilian near Ntumbaw village (North West), reportedly in retaliation for killing of two civilians by suspected Fulani bandits in area same day. Army 13 May reportedly clashed with separatists in Ekombe village, South West and Ndu town, North West; number of casualties unknown. Suspected separatists 25 May killed shopkeeper they accused of spying for govt forces in North West region's capital Bamenda. Govt soldiers 28 May reportedly killed civilian in Mbiame town (North West) and four others in South West region's capital Buea. Jihadist violence continued in Far North. In Mayo-Sava department, suspected jihadists 11 May killed three civilians in Makoulahe area; days later, local mob

killed individual reportedly involved in attacks and handed over two other suspects to authorities. In Mayo-Tsanaga department, suspected jihadists 14 May killed two civilians in Majague locality. In Logone-et-Chari department, Boko Haram splinter group Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) 26 May attacked Soueram military base near Nigerian border, two soldiers and five militants killed. Meanwhile, security forces 8 May killed suspected jihadist in Gakara village, and 20 May killed three suspected jihadists in operation along Kolofata-Yegoua road, both Mayo-Sava department. Govt's response to COVID-19 crisis continued to spark tensions. Health workers in capital Yaoundé central hospital 3 May held one-day strike over lack of protective equipment. Authorities 11 May arrested six volunteers of opposition leader Maurice Kamto's fundraising initiative, banned by govt in April, for distributing masks and hand sanitiser in Yaoundé.

➔ **Central African Republic** Clashes between armed groups persisted in north east following flare-up in violence late April, while attacks by armed groups continued in west and increased in south east. In Bamingui-Bangoran prefecture in north east, Runga-led armed group Popular Front for the Central African Renaissance (FPRC) on one hand, and allied forces of ethnic Gula Patriotic Rally for the Renewal of Central Africa (RPRC) and ethnic Kara Movement of Central African Liberators for Justice (MLCJ) on the other, clashed around Ndélé town first week of May, leaving eight dead including civilians; further clashes between FPRC and RPRC outside Ndélé 12 May left four combatants and two civilians dead. In attempt to curb violence and reassert state presence, govt 10 May deployed troops to Ndélé for first time since 2012 alongside reinforcements from UN mission (MINUSCA). Special Criminal Court 8 May opened investigation into allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during clashes in Ndélé 6, 11 March and 29 April, while MINUSCA forces 19 May arrested nine RPRC rebels including former Séléka leader Azor Kalite and eight other rebels for alleged role in 29 April violence. In west, armed group Return, Restitution and Rehabilitation (3R) launched attacks in Nana-Mambéré prefecture, occupying town of Baboua 30 April-5 May and reportedly killing civilian in Niem-Yéléwa commune 22 May. President Touadéra 12 May inaugurated deployment of first battalion of special mixed security units (USMS) – stipulated under Feb 2019 peace deal and comprising demobilised armed group members and soldiers – in town of Bouar, also Nana-Mambéré prefecture; Abbas Sidiki, leader of 3R incorporated into USMS forces, reportedly left Bouar next day to protest against Touadéra's guard and protocol. In Haut-Mbomou prefecture in south east, MINUSCA and govt forces 19-25 May repelled multiple attacks by armed group Union for Peace in the Central African Republic (UPC) around Obo town; at least 20 UPC combatants killed and nine arrested. UPC chief Ali Darassa 28 May denied UPC involvement in fighting in Obo, and accused govt forces of killing civilians.

➔ **Chad** Govt faced mounting criticism over alleged poor coordination of COVID-19 response, while Boko Haram (BH) threat persisted. After ruling party's ally Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP) 12 May joined opposition and civil society's calls for better management of COVID-19 crisis, President Déby 15 May dissolved organisation in charge of govt response and created new structure under his personal leadership. National Assembly same day extended COVID-19 state of emergency by two months. Opposition figure Félix Romadounngar 17 May called for postponement of legislative elections scheduled for Dec due to delays in election

preparations caused by COVID-19. Amid mounting discontent over impunity for people close to Déby, coalition of human rights organisations 14 May called for arrest of Déby's brother Saleh Déby Itno, accused of involvement in killing of herder in April near his home in Bardé, 30km south east of capital N'Djamena; National Human Rights Commission opened investigation and 26 May summoned Saleh Déby for hearing on case. Jihadist group BH 7 May published video reportedly showing execution of two soldiers taken prisoner in recent clashes with security forces in Lake Chad province in west. Explosive device 10 May killed three Chadian UN mission in Mali (MINUSMA) peacekeepers on patrol in Mali's Kidal region.

➔ **DR Congo** Armed groups continued to target civilians in north-eastern Ituri province and eastern North Kivu province, and tensions with Zambia increased over border dispute in Tanganyika province. In Ituri, new chief of armed group Cooperative for Development of Congo (CODECO) 4 May called for group to end violence, but attacks against civilians persisted throughout month. Notably, suspected CODECO rebels 10 and 17 May killed at least 30 civilians in attacks on villages in Djugu and Mahagi territories, while govt forces 7-25 May killed 40 CODECO rebels in Djugu. Also in Ituri, suspected members of armed group Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) 17-18 May killed eight civilians and one soldier in Kelele and Ndalya villages. In North Kivu province, ADF rebels 8-24 May killed at least 25 civilians in attacks in Beni territory. In South Kivu province, local Maï-Maï militia commander and 120 combatants 20 May surrendered in Walungu territory. In Tanganyika province, Twa militiamen 18 May and 26 May killed four civilians in Nyunzu territory. Govt 8 May accused Zambia of planning to annex areas of Congolese territory on west shore of Lake Tanganyika; Zambian govt immediately denied accusations and said troops were stationed in border area to protect Zambian villages from attacks by unidentified armed individuals coming from DRC. President Tshisekedi 28 May welcomed Congo-Brazzaville's President Sassou-Nguesso's offer to mediate dispute. Trial of Tshisekedi's former chief of staff and president of Union for the Congolese Nation party, Vital Kamerhe, over embezzlement charges started 11 May. Police 23-24 May forcefully dispersed pro-Kamerhe demonstrators in Bukavu city in east. Amid persistent tensions within ruling coalition, parliament 25 May voted to remove Tshisekedi's ally and First Vice-President of National Assembly Jean-Marc Kabund from office; hundreds of Kabund's supporters next day protested against his dismissal in capital Kinshasa and other cities.

➡ **Rwanda** Military clashed with Burundian forces at maritime border on Lake Rweru and French authorities arrested Rwandan genocide suspect Félicien Kabuga. Rwandan Defence Forces (RDF) 8 May reportedly killed Burundian soldier during border clashes on Lake Rweru; defence ministry said RDF retaliated after they came under fire from Burundian soldiers while ordering Burundian fishermen who had crossed into Rwandan waters to return to Burundi. French police 16 May arrested Rwandan fugitive Félicien Kabuga, under international indictment since 1997 for alleged role in funding Hutu militias during 1994 genocide, near Paris. French authorities 27 May ruled to transfer Kabuga to branch of International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals – current UN-backed tribunal tasked with completing remaining judicial cases related to Rwandan genocide – in Arusha city, Tanzania. High Court Chamber for International Crimes in Nyanza town next day sentenced former politician Ladislas Ntaganzwa to life imprisonment after finding him guilty of crimes during 1994 genocide.

Horn of Africa

➡ **Ethiopia** Ethnic violence flared up in several regions and tensions erupted with Sudan following cross-border attack by militia. In Somali region in east, inter-clan clashes 1-3 May reportedly left at least two dozen dead in Erer and Afdheer zones. Ethnic Afar 11 May reportedly launched raid on ethnic Somalis in town of Madaane; initial attack and subsequent fighting left at least eight dead on both sides. In Amhara region in north, ethnic clashes 16 May reportedly killed eleven in Agew Awi zone; unidentified gunmen 31 May shot and killed two local officials in North Wollo zone. In Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' region in south, land dispute triggered clashes between ethnic Misqan and Mareqo leaving at least six dead in Gurage zone 18 May. In Oromia region in centre, fighting between armed opposition faction Oromo Liberation Army and police early May left at least a dozen police officers and unknown number of insurgents dead in Guji area; local sources accused security forces of killing around a dozen civilians in Kellem Wellega and West Wellega zones 19-26 May; authorities denied claims. In Tigray region in north, ruling party Tigray People's Liberation Front 4 May said it may organise regional elections as planned in Aug despite postponement of general elections due to COVID-19; PM Abiy 7 May warned against "unconstitutional attempts to undertake illegal elections". Also in Tigray, police 17 May shot man dead for reportedly violating COVID-19 restrictions in regional capital Mekelle. Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt took steps to revive negotiations over Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on Blue Nile river. All three countries 21 May agreed to resume tripartite negotiations between water ministers (see Nile Waters). Cross-border attack by militia allegedly supported by Ethiopian army 28 May left at least one Sudanese soldier dead in Sudan's Al-Qadarif province; Sudan 30 May summoned Ethiopian envoy; Ethiopia next day called for joint investigation into incident.

⚡ **Kenya** President Kenyatta brutally wrested control of ruling party, triggering exclusion of senators aligned with deputy president and deputy party leader, William Ruto, from key positions; intercommunal violence broke out in west, and Al-Shabaab kept up attacks against security forces in north east and east. Ruling Jubilee Party (JP) sec gen and Kenyatta ally, Raphael Tuju, 2 May confirmed changes to party's governing body despite objections from allies of deputy party

leader Ruto; 4 May formalised coalition agreement JP had signed in 2017 with Kenyan African National Union (KANU) party. Kenyatta 11 May presided over meeting of newly formed coalition attended by pro-Kenyatta senators but without participation of Ruto's allies, senators present voted to replace pro-Ruto JP leadership in senate; ousted senators next day filed complaint with Constitutional Court to block their replacement. Purges of Ruto-aligned senators from key Senate positions continued until month's end; notably, Senate deputy speaker was ousted 22 May. In border area between Narok and Nakuru counties in west, clashes between ethnic Kipsigis and Maasai reportedly left eight dead 23-27 May. In Wajir county in north east, Al-Shabaab militants 16 May raided Khrof Arar police camp, police reportedly killed three militants. Security forces night of 16-17 May launched airstrikes on Al-Shabaab hideouts along Somalia border, "heavy casualties" reported. In Garissa county in east, police 18 May repelled Al-Shabaab attack on Bura-East-Garissa Lappset road. In capital Nairobi, hundreds protested 4 May after police allegedly beat to death man violating COVID-19 curfew; hundreds 7 and 11 May demonstrated against total lockdown of their predominantly Muslim neighbourhood (Eastleigh) following spike in COVID-19 cases there as residents said measure singled out Muslim community. In Somalia's southern Bay region, Kenyan-registered aeroplane carrying COVID-19 medical supplies 4 May crashed killing all six passengers including four Kenyans; Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia next day launched joint investigation as media reports emerged that Ethiopian soldiers may have shot aeroplane down. International Court of Justice 22 May postponed hearing on Somalia-Kenya maritime border dispute from 8-12 June to March 2021 following Nairobi's request for delay on account of COVID-19 pandemic.

↑ ✂ **Nile Waters** After U.S.-facilitated talks broke down in Feb, Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt took steps to revive negotiations over filling and operation of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on Blue Nile river, triggering hopes of de-escalation in coming weeks. In letter to UN Security Council early May, Egypt's govt said Ethiopia's plan to start filling GERD's reservoir in July with or without agreement "poses a serious threat to the region's peace and security" and stressed need for comprehensive agreement between three countries. Khartoum 12 May reiterated refusal to sign "partial agreement" for first phase of dam's filling proposed by Addis Ababa. In video conference 21 May, Ethiopia's PM Abiy and Sudan's PM Hamdok agreed to resume tripartite negotiations among water ministers; Cairo immediately welcomed move. Sudan's water minister 25 May held separate meetings with Egyptian and Ethiopian counterparts to discuss arrangements for resumption of negotiations.

➡ **Somalia** Al-Shabaab attacks persisted in south and capital Mogadishu and intensified in Puntland state in north where security forces also confronted Islamic State (ISIS)-Somalia. In south, Al-Shabaab militants 3-7 May killed at least two civilians in Lower and Middle Shabelle regions. Counter-insurgency operations 10-31 May left at least 70 Al-Shabaab dead in Middle Juba, Lower Juba, Lower Shabelle, Bay, Hiraan and Gedo regions. In Lower Shabelle, Middle Juba and Bay regions, string of Al-Shabaab and unclaimed bombings 24-31 May killed at least fourteen soldiers and fourteen civilians; according to local elders, soldiers 27 May abducted and killed seven aid workers and one civilian suspected of sympathising with insurgents in Middle Shabelle region, army denied involvement. In Puntland in north, ISIS militants 9 May attacked security forces in city of Bosaso, leaving

soldier and at least two militants dead; in following days, security forces shot and killed ISIS militant and arrested four others in Bosaso. Al-Shabaab 14 May launched attack on military base near Bosaso leaving soldier and three assailants dead; 17 May detonated suicide bomb in Mudug region's capital Galkayo killing at least four including Mudug governor. In capital Mogadishu, Al-Shabaab continued to target security personnel reportedly killing at least five throughout month. In north and centre, clan militias 3-19 May clashed over land disputes reportedly leaving at least ten dead in Mudug and Galguduud regions. Fighting 23 May reportedly broke out between clan militia and army leaving at least eight dead in Mudug region. In Bay region in south, Kenyan-registered aeroplane carrying COVID-19 medical supplies 4 May crashed in Bardale area killing all six Somali and Kenyan passengers; amid media reports that Ethiopian soldiers may have shot aeroplane down, Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia next day launched joint investigation. International Court of Justice 22 May postponed hearing on Somalia-Kenya maritime border dispute from 8-12 June to March 2021, after Kenya requested delay on account of COVID-19. UN Security Council 29 May extended mandate of African Union mission (AMISOM) until Feb 2021.

➤ **Somaliland** Amid COVID-19 pandemic, govt 17 May scolded Somalia for claiming it had delivered medical supplies to contested areas of Somaliland, and rejected Mogadishu's release of data about number of COVID-19 cases in Somaliland, which it considered incorrect information. On occasion of anniversary of self-proclaimed independence from Somalia 18 May, President Bihi reiterated willingness to engage in talks with Somalia federal govt over Somaliland's claim to sovereignty which Mogadishu does not recognise, but said govt would submit its case for independence to international courts if talks did not achieve desired result. Bihi same day pardoned 365 prisoners. Defence minister 27 May condemned Egypt's alleged arms delivery to Somalia, saying it was "violating the arms embargo on Somalia".

↓ **South Sudan** Intercommunal violence between ethnic Murle and ethnic Lou Nuer surged in east leaving hundreds dead; negotiations over local power-sharing between President Kiir and former rebel leader turned VP Riek Machar remained stalled, while clashes between govt and holdout rebel group escalated in south. Intercommunal violence flared up in east and centre. In Jonglei state in east, ethnic Murle 16-17 May reportedly attacked several ethnic Lou Nuer villages in Uror county leaving up to 300 dead. In Warrap state in centre, attack by unidentified assailants 14 May left twelve dead in Apuk North county. In Lakes state, also in centre, inter-clan violence reportedly left fifteen dead 18 May. Kiir 7 May said meeting of six-member unity presidency same day had yielded consensus over appointment of state governors, with six states going to Kiir's Sudan People's Liberation Army-In Government, three to Machar's Sudan People's Liberation Army-In Opposition (SPLA-IO), and contested Upper Nile state to South Sudan Opposition Alliance. Machar immediately rejected purported deal and called on chairman of official peace monitoring body to intervene, who 9 May referred dispute to regional bloc Intergovernmental Authority for Development. Clashes between govt forces – in places together with SPLA-IO – and rebel group National Salvation Front (NAS), which refused to be part of Sept 2018 peace agreement, flared up in Central and Western Equatoria states in south. Fighting, which erupted after Jan truce between govt and non-signatory armed groups broke down in April,

displaced thousands of civilians in Central Equatoria; NAS claimed it had repelled attack by govt forces trying to take back territory from insurgents in Katigiri village 5 May, killing four soldiers; govt forces 4-14 May reportedly raided NAS positions in several villages in Lainya county. President Kiir 15 May removed Machar from COVID-19 taskforce and appointed VP Hussein Abdelbagi as new chairman. UN Security Council 29 May extended South Sudan arms embargo and targeted sanctions against individuals until May 2021.

↓ **Sudan** Intercommunal violence flared up in west, east and south amid delays in peace talks between transitional govt and rebel groups and stalled implementation of transitional arrangements; border tensions erupted with Ethiopia. Intercommunal violence in west, east, and south left at least 80 killed. In South Darfur state in west, clashes between ethnic Fellata and Reizegat left 30 civilians dead 5 May. In Kassala state in east, ethnic Nuba and Beni Amer clashed 5-10 May, reportedly leaving at least ten killed. In South Kordofan state in south, clashes between ethnic Nuba including army soldiers and ethnic Hawazma including members of paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) reportedly left 26 dead 12-13 May in state capital Kadugli; gunmen wearing RSF uniforms 13 May reportedly killed nine civilians in El Berdab village outside Kadugli and next day killed five civilians in Kadugli. After govt and rebel coalition Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF) failed to meet self-imposed 9 May deadline to reach comprehensive peace deal, South Sudanese mediators 17 May announced new deadline of 20 June. Following internal disagreements over reform of SRF, Sudan Liberation Movement/Army faction led by Minni Minnawi 18 May split from rebel coalition. Cabinet, Sovereign Council, and opposition coalition Forces of Freedom and Change 3 May postponed appointment of Transitional Legislative Council due 9 May amid disagreements over allocation of seats. Govt pursued efforts to bridge differences between Egypt and Ethiopia over filling and operation of latter's Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on Blue Nile river. All three countries 21 May agreed to resume tripartite meetings among water ministers. Sudan's water minister 25 May held separate meetings with Egyptian and Ethiopian counterparts (see Nile Waters). Govt 30 May summoned Ethiopian envoy after cross-border attack by Ethiopian militiamen, allegedly backed by Ethiopian army, left at least one Sudanese soldier dead in Gadarif city in east 28 May. Amid protests against water shortages in Khartoum state, govt early May deployed additional 1,365 police at 200 checkpoints to enforce lockdown there, 8 May extended it until 19 May.

➔ **Tanzania** President Magufuli continued to downplay risk posed by COVID-19 and silenced critics of govt's response. Main opposition party Chadema 1 May instructed its MPs to boycott parliamentary sessions and self-quarantine for at least two weeks, called on govt to suspend parliament, after two MPs and one minister died from undisclosed illnesses late April; 11 May expelled four of its MPs who continued to attend parliament. After Magufuli 3 May cast doubt on credibility of national health laboratory, health minister next day dismissed laboratory's head and formed special committee to investigate handling of COVID-19 samples. Magufuli 16 May dismissed Deputy Health Minister Faustine Ndugulile, reportedly after he criticised govt-issued COVID-19 advice. Despite reports by U.S. embassy of epidemic's "exponential growth" across Tanzania, govt 18 May lifted suspension of international commercial flights and quarantine requirements for those arriving into country; Magufuli 21 May ordered high schools and universities to reopen 1

June. Zambia 10 May closed its border with Tanzania following surge of COVID-19 cases in border areas, 15 May partially re-opened border for cargo. Court 29 May found leader of opposition Alliance for Change and Transparency Zitto Kabwe guilty of sedition, after he alleged some 100 people had died in clashes between herders and police in Kigoma in 2018; court set Kabwe free but effectively banned him from making public statements for one year; Kabwe's party same day denounced "censorship" ahead of general elections planned for Oct, said they would appeal judgement. Chadema chairman Freeman Mbowe and seven party figures 18 May lodged appeal with High Court against 10 March ruling that found them guilty on several counts, including inciting sedition.

➡ **Uganda** Small group of activists demonstrated 18 May in capital Kampala over "slow distribution" of govt relief food to vulnerable people amid COVID-19 crisis; police detained several activists, including prominent academic Stella Nyanzi over accusations of "inciting violence". President Museveni same day said govt would start easing lockdown 2 June. Military 3 May said it had suspended rotation of troops deployed as part of peacekeeping mission in Somalia and training mission in Equatorial Guinea after Ugandan soldier in Somalia tested positive to COVID-19 late April. Following agreement with Rwanda to normalise relations late Aug, govt 15 May said it would release some 170 Rwandans from prison. High Court in Kampala 13 May declared illegal police orders barring musician-turned-opposition-leader Bobi Wine, who plans to run for president in 2021 elections, from holding concerts.

Southern Africa

➡ **Lesotho** PM Thabane resigned 19 May after parliament 11 May voted motion of no-confidence against him and demanded his resignation by 22 May. Former Finance Minister Moeketsi Majoro sworn in as new PM 20 May. Court of Appeal 29 May revoked Thabane's wife Maesaiah's bail and ordered her re-arrest on murder charges over 2017 killing of Thabane's ex-wife.

↓ **Malawi** Political tensions rose and deadly clashes erupted between ruling party and opposition supporters as Supreme Court of Appeal struck down President Mutharika's appeal against 2019 presidential election rerun; new elections now scheduled for 23 June. Amid persistent political tensions following controversial presidential election last year, supporters of ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and its partner, United Democratic Front (UDF), early May clashed with opposition United Transformation Movement (UTM) and Malawi Congress Party (MCP). Notably, fighting erupted between DPP and UTM members in Thyolo, Phalombe and Mulanje districts 1 May; MCP supporters assaulted DPP monitors and party district governor in Dowa district next day; unidentified assailants overnight 4-5 May threw petrol bomb on UTM office in capital Lilongwe, leaving three dead and prompting international calls for restraint next day. Unidentified assailants 29 May attacked convoy of VP and UTM leader Saulos Chilima who was campaigning in Phalombe and Mulanje districts, reportedly leaving several journalists injured. Supreme Court of Appeal 8 May rejected Mutharika's appeal against Constitutional Court's 3 Feb ruling which ordered rerun of 2019 presidential election; same day ruled electoral commission (MEC) should

use voter registry and candidate list from nullified elections, prompting MEC to end voter registration process launched in April. MEC 13 May brought date of election rerun forward from 2 July to 23 June; parliament's legal affairs committee 21 May endorsed new date. MEC Chair Jane Ansah resigned same day following months of nationwide protests and rebuke from courts and parliament over her mismanagement of 2019 election.

➤ **Mozambique** Jihadist violence persisted in rural areas in far north, President Nyusi sought regional support against insurgency, and armed dissident faction of Renamo continued to attack civilians in centre. Suspected jihadists launched dozens of attacks in Cabo Delgado province in far north. Notably, Islamist militants 2 May reportedly killed 34 civilians in two villages in Quissanga district; 11 and 16 May allegedly killed fifteen civilians in Miangalewa village, Muidumbe district. Security forces 13 May killed 42 jihadists on Chinda-Mbau axis in Mocimboa da Praia district, next day repelled attack in Quissanga district, killing eight jihadists. Al-Qaeda 22 May for first time claimed attack in Mocimboa da Praia district. Militants flying Islamic State (ISIS) flag 28 May occupied Macomia town; govt 31 May said security forces killed 79 Islamist militants, including two senior leaders, in counter-offensive to retake Macomia. Nyusi and regional bloc Southern African Development Community (SADC) troika including Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe 19 May met in Zimbabwean capital Harare to discuss security situation in Mozambique; in final communiqué, parties urged SADC member states to lend support to Mozambique against jihadist insurgency in Cabo Delgado, reportedly prompting talks between South Africa and Mozambique on possible South African assistance. Renamo dissident faction, which calls itself Renamo Military Junta, continued to launch attacks on transport routes in Sofala province in centre, killing one civilian in Nhamatanda district 17 May. Renamo Military Junta leader Mariano Nhongo 29 May claimed security forces had recently abducted several people in Nhamatanda, Sofala province, and Gondola, Manica province, on suspicion of supporting group. Trial of seven police and one civilian accused of killing prominent election observer Anastacio Matavele in Oct, ahead of presidential election, started 12 May in southern city of Xai-Xai. Nyusi 28 May extended COVID-19 state of emergency until 30 June.

➤ **Zimbabwe** Amid growing discontent over govt's handling of COVID-19 crisis and food shortages, authorities targeted opposition figures and journalists, while rift within opposition widened. Opposition party Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) alleged security forces 13 May abducted MDC politician and MP Joana Mamombe and two other MDC female youth leaders who were protesting in capital Harare against govt's failure to provide food and other assistance to those in need during COVID-19 lockdown, and later sexually assaulted them; Justice Minister Ziyambi 19 May said women were lying about abduction. Authorities 27 May charged Mamombe and MDC youth leaders for participating in protest despite COVID-19 ban on public gatherings and allegedly inciting "public violence"; court 28 May released them on bail. Police 22 May arrested journalists Frank Chikowore and Samuel Takawira, who were investigating MDC members' abduction, for allegedly breaching COVID-19 social distancing rules; court 26 May released journalists on bail. Govt 16 May extended COVID-19 lockdown indefinitely. After Supreme Court late March declared Nelson Chamisa's leadership of MDC illegitimate and appointed party's former Deputy President Thokozani Khupe

interim leader, Chamisa and Khupe continued to vie for control of party. Following request by MDC faction led by Khupe, parliament speaker 5 May expelled four Chamisa-aligned MPs from parliament, prompting Chamisa's faction to suspend participation in parliament 7 May; High Court 29 May dismissed Chamisa's appeal against speaker's decision. Govt 5 May denied reports it had deployed troops to fight Islamist insurgency in neighbouring Mozambique (see Mozambique).

Sahel

➔ **Burkina Faso** Amid continued jihadist attacks in north and east, fighting between competing jihadist groups persisted along border with Mali and security forces faced new accusations of exactions against civilians. In Sahel region in north, militants from jihadist Group to Support Islam and Muslims (JNIM) and Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP) clashed in Soum and Oudalan provinces early month, reportedly forcing three ISWAP groups to flee region toward east; further clashes between militants 16 May in Soum province reportedly left several middle-ranking ISWAP officers killed. Meanwhile, clashes between militants and security forces continued in Sahel region: suspected ISWAP militants 11 May killed eight soldiers near Kankanfogouol artisanal mining site in Yagha province, army reportedly killed twenty militants in ensuing clashes. UN refugee agency 4 May accused security forces of injuring 32 Malian refugees suspected of complicity with jihadists in Mentaou camp, Soum province 2 May. Violence also persisted in North, Centre-North and East regions, exacting heavy toll on civilians. In North region's Loroum province, suspected JNIM explosive devices 14 and 18 May killed at least one soldier and seven local volunteers fighting alongside security forces in Banh district; suspected jihadists 29 May killed at least fifteen civilians in attack on Titao-Sollé axis. In Centre-North region, civilian volunteers fighting alongside security forces 3 May reportedly killed nine civilians in Bam province. Suspected jihadists 30 May attacked humanitarian convoy on Foubé-Barsalogho axis, killing at least ten including five civilians. In East region, suspected jihadists same day attacked Kompiembiga livestock market, killing 25 civilians. Civil society accused security forces of summary executions after twelve individuals arrested 11 May near town of Fada N'Gourma, also East region, died in custody. Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire 11 May launched first joint military operation in border area, reportedly killing eight suspected jihadists and arresting 38 on both sides of border by 24 May.

➔ **Mali** Jihadist and intercommunal violence continued unabated in centre, and infighting between competing jihadist groups persisted in north and centre. In Mopti region in centre, Bambara Dozo hunters 5 May stormed Fulani village of Djongué Ouro, Djenne circle, killing at least twelve; attack reportedly in retaliation of 3 May raid on neighbouring village of Djongué Bambara by suspected jihadists which reportedly killed four. Security forces and Dogon militia Dan Na Ambassagou 13 May reportedly killed six jihadist militants in Dioungani area, Koro circle; three militiamen also killed. Security forces 15 May said they killed around 30 suspected jihadists in previous day raid near border with Burkina Faso. Unidentified assailants 23-27 May reportedly killed at least 28 civilians in several attacks on ethnic Dogon villages in Bankass, Bandiagara and Koro circles. Security forces continued to face allegations of extrajudicial killings. Notably, army 10 May

reportedly killed six Fulani civilians in Dinangourou, Koro circle. Infighting between jihadist groups continued in north and centre throughout month, with jihadist Group to Support Islam and Muslims (JNIM) reportedly driving out Islamic State (ISIS)-affiliated combatants from most of northern Gao region, and JNIM-affiliated Katiba Macina reportedly inflicting heavy losses on ISIS factions in inner Niger Delta area of Mopti region. After Constitutional Court late April annulled 5.2% of total votes in second round of legislative elections held 19 April, resulting in ruling party winning ten additional seats in National Assembly, protests broke out early May in several cities, including capital Bamako, Sikasso and Kati, leaving several injured. National Assembly 11 May elected ruling party MP Moussa Timbiné as president. After protests against COVID-19 curfew erupted in several cities early May, including Kayes, Bamako and Bandiagara, govt 9 May lifted curfew throughout country.

➔ **Niger** Govt and regional forces confronted jihadist militants in south east near border with Nigeria, while jihadists continued to launch attacks in west near Mali and Burkina Faso. In Diffa region in south east, Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) 3 May attacked border post near Diffa city, killing at least two soldiers. Military in joint operation with Nigeria same day intercepted column of vehicles of suspected jihadists near Dumba'a village, killing fifty. Govt 13 May said joint regional force MNJTF 11 May killed 25 Boko Haram (BH) insurgents in operation south of Diffa city and 50 others in Lake Chad area of northern Nigeria. Suspected BH militants 18-19 May attacked Blabrine military base, killing at least twelve soldiers; seven militants also killed. Jihadist attacks continued in west. In Tillabery region, suspected jihadists 9 May killed at least twenty civilians in attacks on three villages in Anzourou area. In Tahoua region, suspected jihadists 31 May attacked Intikane refugee camp killing three civilians. Ambassador to UN reportedly obtained cancellation of UN Security Council meeting scheduled 14 May to present UN peacekeeping mission in Mali (MINUSMA) report that found evidence of 34 extrajudicial killings by Nigerien forces in Mali 1 Jan-31 March. NGO Amnesty International 8 May accused authorities of using COVID-19 state of emergency to stifle dissent, citing at least ten arbitrary arrests since March; govt 13 May authorised places of worship to reopen and lifted nightly curfew on capital Niamey.

West Africa

➔ **Côte d'Ivoire** Amid political manoeuvring and positioning ahead of presidential election planned for 31 Oct, opposition voiced further concerns over electoral framework, and military launched its first joint anti-insurgency operation with Burkina Faso against suspected jihadists in north. After electoral commission 6 May said electoral census operations initially scheduled 18 April-2 May would take place 10-24 June, former President Bédié's Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire same day said timeframe was "unrealistic" and 30 days were needed to complete revision of electoral list; 18 May condemned current revision of electoral code by ordinance and accused govt of trying to avoid parliamentary debate. Authorities continued legal proceedings against former PM and self-declared candidate to presidential election Guillaume Soro. Public prosecutor 5 May said security forces in recent weeks arrested nineteen individuals suspected of coup-plotting, including

five civilians and fourteen military personnel; arrests conducted after investigators found stock of weapons and ammunition at headquarters of Soro's Generations and People in Solidarity party in economic capital Abidjan. In cabinet reshuffle 13 May, President Ouattara dismissed Higher Education and Scientific Minister Albert Toikeusse Mabri, leader of Union for Democracy and Peace in Côte d'Ivoire (UDPCI) and potential presidential candidate, and appointed Albert Findé, Toikeusse's main rival within UDPCI, as minister for integration, in alleged attempt to isolate Toikeusse. International Criminal Court 28 May authorised under certain conditions ex-President Gbagbo and pro-Gbagbo rebel leader and former Youth Minister Charles Blé Goudé to leave their European cities of residence following their acquittal last year of crimes against humanity, potentially opening way for their return to Côte d'Ivoire. Ouattara 8 May lifted COVID-19 curfew and other restrictions throughout country except in economic capital Abidjan, where measures remained in place until 15 May. Military 24 May said eight suspected jihadists were killed and 38 others arrested in first joint anti-insurgency operation with Burkinabè forces launched 11 May in cross-border region north east of Ferkessedougou city.

➔ **Guinea** Deadly protests erupted amid mounting popular discontent over govt's handling of COVID-19 crisis, while political tensions remained high following contested legislative elections and constitutional referendum in March. Amid COVID-19 outbreak, protests erupted 12 May in Coyah and Dubreka prefectures over alleged police racketeering at roadblocks erected to restrict access to capital Conakry; clashes between protesters and security forces reportedly left six killed. Demonstrators protesting against recurring electricity blackouts same day clashed with security forces in Kamsar area near mining city of Boké, leaving one protester dead. President Condé 15 May announced one-month extension of COVID-19 state of emergency, easing of curfew rules in Conakry, and lifting of curfew in rural areas. Authorities continued to detain members of coalition of opposition parties and civil society groups National Front for the Defence of the Constitution (FNDC), which opposes new constitution on grounds that it could allow President Condé to run for third term. Authorities 12 May charged FNDC senior official Saïkou Yaya Diallo, arrested 7 May, with "assault, violence, threats and public insults". Leader of main opposition party Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea (UFDG) Cellou Dalein Diallo 17 May said security forces had arbitrarily arrested eight UFDG officials in Kégnéko town, Mamou prefecture 14 May, and urged population to mobilise against Condé. Authorities 26 May acknowledged for first time that 30 people had died in clashes in south-eastern town of N'Zérékoré following March votes, and blamed FNDC for stoking violence.

➔ **Guinea-Bissau** New President Embaló moved toward constitutional reform and failed to meet regional bloc ECOWAS-imposed deadline to form new govt. Embaló 11 May announced creation of expert commission to propose constitutional amendments by mid-Aug; move follows ECOWAS calls in late April for constitutional reform. NGO Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime published new report 11 May alleging that Embaló's presidency might be prompting resurgence in cocaine trafficking, citing his suspected close ties to drug lords in military; notably, several police agents apparently left country in recent weeks after alleged threats and intimidation by military, reportedly leading to slowdown in drug-related investigations. Embaló failed to meet ECOWAS-imposed

deadline of 22 May to form new govt, as four out of five MPs within PM Nabiam's Assembly of the People United-Democratic Party of Guinea-Bissau, including MP Marciano Indi, continued to reject alliance with Embaló, saying 2019 coalition agreement with leading party in parliament, African Party for the Independence of Guinea, remains valid; unidentified individuals same day reportedly briefly abducted MP Indi near capital Bissau. Embaló 26 May extended COVID-19 state of emergency into June.

➡ **Nigeria** Banditry and other violence continued unabated in north west, communal violence flared across several states notably in Middle Belt, and jihadist attacks persisted in north east. In north west, armed groups' attacks killed at least 160 civilians in Katsina, Niger, Zamfara, Kaduna and Sokoto states despite ongoing security operations. In Katsina state, unidentified gunmen killed at least 21 in attacks 13-17 May, and fifteen 28 May. In Niger state, gunmen 13 May kidnapped four construction workers in Erena town, later demanding ransom. In Zamfara state, gunmen 19 May killed at least fifteen in Tsafe area. In Kaduna state, armed attacks on villages 11-21 May killed at least 35 in Kajuru area. In Sokoto state, gunmen 27 May attacked several villages in Sabon Birnin area, killing at least 74 people. Military 28 May reported 392 bandits and others killed in operations in north west 6-28 May. In Middle Belt, communal violence flared across Adamawa, Taraba and Benue states, leaving at least 80 dead. In Taraba state, fighting between Ichen and Tiv ethnic groups killed eight in Bali area 10 May; gunmen killed eight ethnic Fulanis in Wukari area 19 May. In Adamawa state, Hausa and Chabo communities 14-15 May clashed in Lamurde town, killing 48. In Benue state, communal and bandit violence killed at least eight in Guma area throughout month. Fulani herders 12 May clashed with farming communities in Adamawa and Benue states, at least eight killed. In north east, military 1-17 May reportedly killed 215 suspected members of Boko Haram (BH) factions – Abubakar Shekau's group (JAS) and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). However, jihadist attacks continued in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states. Notably, suspected insurgents 17 May killed at least twenty civilians in Gajigana village, Borno state. Federal govt's human rights protection agency National Human Rights Commission 10 May said it had received 104 complaints of human rights violations by security forces enforcing COVID-19 lockdown including eleven extrajudicial killings 13 April-4 May.

➡ **Sierra Leone** Amid COVID-19 restrictions, riots erupted early May leaving at least three dead and fuelling political tensions. Riot erupted 6 May over COVID-19 restrictions in town of Tombo outside Freetown, leaving at least two protesters and one police officer dead. President Bio in televised address 8 May accused opposition party All People's Congress (APC) of inciting violence and terrorism; APC next day denied claims. Court 22 May charged former minister of social welfare and APC politician Sylvia Blyden, arrested 1 May, with several offences, including seditious libel and publication of false news; Blyden released on bail 29 May.