

# Africa

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## Central Africa

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↓ **Burundi** **Series of grenade attacks killed at least two and wounded scores; meanwhile, AU and UN missions downscaled in-country monitoring presence.** Unidentified assailants launched five grenade attacks against bus stations and public markets during rush hour in capital Bujumbura 25 May and in Muramvya city 27 May, leaving at least two dead and at least 57 injured; police killed one attacker and arrested five suspects. Govt called violence “terrorism”; motives behind attacks still unclear. In Muramvya province, unidentified armed men 9 May killed at least eight and injured five; police by next day had arrested 32 individuals, including 25 former military officers. Ntahangwa High Court 7 May sentenced former opposition MP Fabien Banciryano to one-year imprisonment for “rebellion and attack on the internal security of the state” after criticising former President Nkurunziza’s “Supreme Guide of Patriotism”; sentence lighter than requested by prosecution. AU Peace and Security Council 7 May announced decision to shut down Human Rights Observers and Military Experts Mission in Burundi by 31 May, and to remove country from agenda citing “significant progress” in political and security situation. UN Sec-Gen Special Envoy’s Office also due to close on 31 May. In neighbouring DR Congo’s South Kivu province ruling party CNDD-FDD youth wing Imbonerakure 19 May clashed with Maï-Maï militiamen aligned with Burundian armed group RED-Tabara in Uvira territory. Rwandan govt 24 May claimed to have killed two National Liberation Front (FLN) rebels crossing the border from Burundi; Gitega denied presence of armed groups hostile to Rwanda on Burundian soil.

➔ **Cameroon** **Violent attacks between govt forces and separatists continued in Anglophone regions; jihadist violence persisted in Far North.** In Njikwa town, North West region (NW), armed forces 6 May burnt homes reportedly killing at least one civilian; 9 May killed separatist in Nwa subdivision; 16 May killed 14 suspected separatists in Bambalang and Tadu villages. In apparent revenge killing for IED which reportedly killed two soldiers 15 May, armed forces 18 May burnt over 50 civilian homes near Bui division capital Kumbo, leaving two dead. Separatists 2 May kidnapped four council workers in Kumbo and 25 May attacked Lassin security post killing five soldiers. In South West region, armed forces 11 May killed separatist commander ‘Njayoh’ in Mbonge town; 14 May killed eight suspected separatists near Buea and in Konye. Separatists 1 May executed two soldiers in Bodam village, Akwaya; 15 May attacked police station in Muea, casualties unknown. Separatist launched other attacks, including with IEDs on 26 May with unclear casualty figures. Govt 10 May held emergency security meeting over increasing use of IEDs by separatists; Defence Minister Beti Assomo said insurgents resorting to IEDs due to dwindling numbers and firepower, claimed at least 24 troops and civilians killed by IEDs within first week of May. U.S. Sec State Antony Blinken 4 May raised Anglophone conflict with French FM Jean-Yves Le Drian at G7 Ministerial Summit in London. In Far North, Boko Haram (BH) continued to launch attacks. BH 9 May killed one civilian in Talla-Massali village, Mayo-Tsanaga division; 15 May killed two civilians in Sanda Wadjiri village,

Mayo Sava division; 17 May killed one civilian in Kerawa village, Mayo-Sava department. BH mid-May released gruesome execution video threatening armed forces in French, first time BH used the language in public threats. Meanwhile, armed forces 4 May killed at least six BH in Soueram village, Logone-et-Chari division, and 16 May killed four BH in Goldavi village, Mayo-Mosokota division. Unconfirmed reports surfaced suggesting BH leader Abubakar Shekau 19 May had blown himself up or was seriously wounded in attempt to kill himself to avoid capture in clash between BH and the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP) in north-eastern Nigeria.

➡ **Central African Republic Govt forces along with foreign allies continued to gain ground against rebels, remaining rounds of legislative polls held without major incidents, and border tensions with N’Djamena flared.** Army, with Rwandan and Russian support, pursued military offensive against rebel Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC), taking back at least 25 towns and villages previously under rebel control for several years; notably, armed forces 9 May regained control of Bakouma town in Mbomou prefecture, under rebel control since 2013. CPC rebels 17 May reportedly killed at least 17 civilians in Grevai village, Nana-Gribizi prefecture; also, CPC continued to harass govt and allied forces through indirect confrontation, including using IEDs along roadsides, with at least seven incidents reported by month’s end. Clashes between rebels from Union for Peace in Central Africa (UPC), which withdrew from CPC in April, and suspected Russian paramilitaries 15-16 May reportedly killed at least 20 civilians in Boyo village, Ouaka prefecture. French media Radio France Internationale 3 May reported it had seen confidential UN peacekeeping force (MINUSCA) reports documenting abuses by Russian combatants against civilians, including 26 extrajudicial executions between Jan and April 2021. Govt same day cast doubt on accuracy of report but said it would establish commission of inquiry to investigate alleged abuses while Russia immediately denounced “fake news”. Tensions with Chad rose as N’Djamena 30 May said CAR soldiers attacked Chadian military post at border, leaving six soldiers dead, and accused Bangui of “war crime” that would “not go unpunished”; CAR next day said “exchanges of fire” at border had left casualties on both sides, suggested joint investigation. Meanwhile, 90 of 140 total MPs, most affiliated with ruling party United Hearts Movement (MCU), 3 May took up their seats in National Assembly, and 5 May elected MCU Secretary General Simplicie Mathieu Sarandji as National Assembly president. Authorities 23 May held parliamentary elections in about 50 remaining constituencies where elections had been postponed due to insecurity; electoral commission 30 May announced MCU had won 11 new seats, bringing total to 36, far from absolute majority in National Assembly.

➡ **Chad As rebels went into retreat, interim authorities consolidated their rule amid repression of opposition protesters; border tensions with Bangui flared.** Army early May said it had defeated Libya-based Chad rebel group Front for Change and Concord in Chad (FACT) after violent clashes in Nokou area, Kanem province (centre); authorities 9 May announced victory and presented 156 FACT combatants to media, but armed group same day said they were unaware fighting had ended. Meanwhile, Transitional Military Council (CMT) 2 May named transitional govt headed by PM Pahimi Padacke, with 40 members including some opposition. Announcement sparked widespread discontent. Opposition and civil

society platform Wakit Tama 8 May protested against military govt throughout country, defying ban on protests; police fired tear gas and arrested at least 15 in capital N'Djamena and 13 in Moundou city. New march 19 March poorly attended in N'Djamena and southern provinces, reportedly due to major police and military presence at various assembly points; authorities 19 May arrested and later released dozens across country, including Parti Réformiste leader Yacine Abderahmane Sakine, allegedly tortured while in custody. Students 20-21 May continued protests, notably attacking delegation led by Higher Education Minister Lydie Beassemnda at N'Djamena University. Meanwhile, international community remained divided over condemnation of CMT; AU Peace and Security Council 14 May called for civilian-led transition and transition not to be extended beyond eighteen months; called on authorities to hold inclusive national dialogue, and to urgently review national transitional charter to achieve better civil-military balance; AU however appeared to accept that CMT will stay in place for duration of transition. EU Parliament 20 May passed resolution condemning "military seizure of power" and called for "unhindered and speedy return to constitutional order". In south east, intercommunal violence continued as farmer-herder clashes 17 May left three dead in Mouraye town, Salamat province. In South, N'djamena 30 May said Central African Republic (CAR) soldiers same day attacked Chadian military post at border, leaving six soldiers dead, accused Bangui of "war crime" and warned it would "not go unpunished"; CAR next day said "exchanges of fire" at border had left casualties on both sides, suggested joint investigation.

➡ **DR Congo Amid ongoing violence in east, authorities started implementing "state of siege" in North Kivu and Ituri provinces as military took over from civil authorities.** As part of "state of siege" in east, President Tshisekedi 4 May ordered military and police officers to take over from civilian authorities in North Kivu and Ituri provinces starting 6 May for initial period of 30 days; in controversial move, appointed Lt Gen Constant Ndima as North Kivu governor, despite UN accusation that he committed serious crimes in Ituri during 1999-2003 war, and Lt Gen Jon Luboya, former intelligence commander of Rwanda-backed Congolese Rally for Democracy, as governor of Ituri. Armed group violence continued in east. In North Kivu's Beni region, unidentified armed men 1 and 18 May killed two imams, who had allegedly spoken out against violence in name of religion. Presumed rebels affiliated with Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) 10 May killed peacekeeper during attack on MONUSCO's Kiliya base. Authorities 12 May announced creation of joint-operations centre with Uganda in Beni and 17 May struck agreement with Kampala to share intelligence on ADF rebels; move prompted several politicians to criticise Tshisekedi for what they called invitation to foreign armies without parliament agreement. In Ituri, armed forces early-May launched offensive against Patriotic and Integrationist Front of Congo (FPIC), notably causing 15,000 civilians to flee Nyakunde locality and killing nine FPIC militia. Meanwhile, in Mambasa territory, ADF 11 May killed at least 29 in Ngaka locality and 11-16 May killed 21 across Bangole groupement, Babila Babombi chiefdom. In Irumu territory, ADF 30-31 May killed over 50 in Boga and Tchabi villages. Tshisekedi continued efforts to consolidate power as his allies 6 May ousted governor of Tanganyika province, brother of former President Kabila, for mismanagement of province; 12 May announced intention to run for second term. In capital Kinshasa, celebrations for Islamic Eid al-Fitr holiday turned deadly: rival Muslim factions 13 May clashed, leaving police officer dead. Rwandan

President Kagame 17 May denied crimes committed by Rwandan troops in eastern DR Congo between 1993-2003 despite 2010 UN Mapping Report detailing crimes.

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## **Horn of Africa**

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➔ **Eritrea Govt forces accused of blocking aid access to Ethiopia's Tigray region.** Amid ongoing Tigray conflict (see Ethiopia), Tigray's interim govt and humanitarian workers, among others, late April-early May accused Eritrean soldiers of blocking movement of humanitarian aid and workers in Tigray region; UN Sec-Gen's Office 12 May said "blockades by military forces" were impeding humanitarian access in rural areas; govt in following days denied allegation. Ethiopian Federal Attorney General 21 May admitted involvement of Eritrean troops in Axum massacre in Nov 2020, said Eritrean forces then killed 110 civilians. Aid workers 25 May claimed Eritrean and Ethiopian soldiers previous night forcibly detained around 500 internally displaced persons in four camps in Shire town, northern Tigray; Asmara immediately dismissed claim as Tigray People's Liberation Front propaganda. U.S. Horn of Africa Special Envoy Jeffrey Feltman 6 May met with President Isaias in capital Asmara, emphasised imperative for Eritrean troops to withdraw from Ethiopia and risk of Tigray conflict sparking regional escalation. U.S. State Dept 23 May imposed visa restrictions on Eritrean and Ethiopian former and current govt and security forces officials for "undermining resolution" of Tigray crisis and 27 May warned of further action if "those stoking the conflict fail to reverse course". Amid ongoing Sudan-Ethiopia tensions over disputed Al-Fashqa border zone, Isaias 4-5 May travelled to Sudan's capital Khartoum, met with General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, head of Sudan's ruling Sovereign Council, and Sudanese PM Abdallah Hamdok; visit comes after Khartoum earlier this year accused Eritrea of interfering in border dispute in support of Ethiopia.

➔ **Ethiopia Authorities faced further international pressure to end war in Tigray and new accusations of human rights violations in centre, and slightly postponed general elections to 21 June.** Amid continued fighting between Tigray's and federal govt's forces in Tigray regional state in north, U.S. State Dept 23 May imposed restrictions on economic and security assistance to Ethiopia over alleged human rights abuses, and visa limitations for current and former Ethiopian and Eritrean officials accused of undermining efforts to stem violence; Addis Ababa next day denounced "attempt by U.S. to meddle in its internal affairs" and thousands of pro-govt protesters 30 May rallied against sanctions in capital. UN humanitarian chief Mark Lowcock 25 May warned of "serious risk of famine" in Tigray, said humanitarian access had deteriorated since March with aid operations being "attacked, obstructed or delayed". Ethiopian and Eritrean soldiers overnight 24-25 May reportedly beat up and detained over 500 IDPs in four camps in Tigray's Shire town, 27 May reportedly released most of them following international pressure. Authorities 6 May designated former ruling party Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) insurgent group as terrorist organisations. In Oromia regional state in centre, govt-appointed Human Rights Commission 6 May voiced "serious concern" over arbitrary detentions across region, accused authorities of committing "grave violations of human rights". News magazine *Addis Standard* 12 May accused local

security forces of having recently extrajudicially executed suspected OLA member in Dembi Dollo town. Suspected OLA insurgents 22 May reportedly killed seven in West Guji Zone. Electoral commission 20 May postponed already delayed general elections, due 5 June, to 21 June, citing logistical issues. EU 3 May said it had cancelled deployment of its electoral observation mission, citing disagreements with govt over mission's independence. Meanwhile, Ethiopian militiamen mid-May reportedly clashed with Sudanese forces in Eastern Gallabat area of disputed Al-Fashqa border zone, where latter reportedly seized five settlements controlled by Ethiopia since 1995. Tensions ran high between Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt amid reports Addis Ababa had started second filling of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (see Nile Waters).

➡ **Kenya Court dealt major blow to President Kenyatta's attempt to amend constitution, while Al-Shabaab continued to stage attacks in north east.** High Court 13 May ruled controversial attempt by President Kenyatta and de facto ally, opposition leader Raila Odinga, to amend constitution was illegal, warned civil proceedings may be instituted against Kenyatta for breaching constitution; constitutional amendment backers, Kenyatta and electoral commission late May separately appealed ruling. Move widely seen as bolstering position of Deputy President William Ruto, whose allies have opposed constitutional changes and who could vie with Odinga for presidency in 2022 elections. In further blow to Kenyatta, ruling Jubilee Party 18 May lost three parliamentary by-elections to opposition in Kiambu and Kisii counties; in Kiambu's Juja town, police and Jubilee supporters same day clashed with opposition People's Empowerment Party supporters over alleged voter fraud. Meanwhile, Al-Shabaab-related violence continued in north east and east. Notably, in Lamu county, suspected Al-Shabaab explosive devices killed two people near Ishakani village 3 May and at least three soldiers in Baure area 18 May; in Wajir county, police 12 May killed two suspected Al-Shabaab militants in Tarbaj area; in Mandera county, suspected militants 21 May ambushed police patrol in Banisa area, killing three. Following Qatar-mediated talks, Somalia 6 May said it had restored diplomatic relations with Kenya, which had been severed since Dec 2020 over Nairobi's alleged interference in Somali affairs. However, Kenya 10 May suspended all commercial flights to and from Somalia for three months in response to Somalia's refusal to resume khat stimulant imports.

➡ **Nile Waters Rhetoric among parties grew harsher ahead of Addis Ababa's second filling of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD).** Ethiopian foreign ministry 4 May denounced "unwarranted, provocative and increasingly bellicose propaganda" by Sudan; statement followed Khartoum's late-April warning that Ethiopia's disavowal of past border treaties compromised country's sovereignty over Benishangul-Gumuz region where GERD is located. Amid growing concerns that GERD's second filling between June and Aug could escalate dispute, U.S. Horn of Africa Special Envoy Jeffrey Feltman 4-13 May travelled to region, called for immediate resumption of AU-led tripartite negotiations. In meeting with Feltman in Cairo, Egyptian President Sisi 5 May said Ethiopian dam was "existential" threat, warned Cairo would not accept anyone "harming its water interests". Ethiopian foreign ministry 20 May warned Addis Ababa would "not tolerate any move" aimed at disrupting GERD's second filling. Khartoum 25 May claimed Addis Ababa had begun second filling early May;

Ethiopian Water Minister Seleshi Bekele same day denied allegations as “deliberately misleading”. In possible warning to Addis Ababa and preparation for possible escalation of tensions, Sudan and Egypt 26-31 May held third joint military exercise since Nov 2020.

➔ **Somalia Election-related tensions subsided, Al-Shabaab attacks continued, and federal govt resumed relations with Kenya.** Parliament’s lower house 1 May unanimously voted to repeal controversial resolution it passed in April to extend President Farmajo’s term by two years amid election deadlock, after move prompted deadly clashes between pro-opposition and pro-Farmajo factions of security forces in capital Mogadishu. Farmajo same day entrusted PM Roble with election preparations. Roble and pro-opposition troops 5 May reached agreement for latter to return to their barracks within 48 hours, in exchange of which they would not be penalised. Federal govt and member states 22 May resumed national consultative council (NCC) talks on electoral framework, 27 May agreed to hold parliamentary elections within 60 days. AU Commission 7 May appointed former Ghanaian President John Mahama as High Representative to Somalia to mediate electoral crisis; Mahama 20 May however stepped down after Mogadishu expressed reservations over his perceived ties with Kenya. Meanwhile, Al-Shabaab continued to launch deadly attacks. Notably, suicide attack 9 May killed six police officers and one civilian at Waberi police station in Mogadishu, and suspected Al-Shabaab explosive device 21 May killed three people on outskirts of capital. In Hiraan region in centre, security forces reportedly killed at least seven suspected Al-Shabaab militants near Mahas district 9 May and another six in Buloburte district 22 May. In Middle Shabelle region (also centre), security forces 29 May reportedly killed 37 suspected Al-Shabaab militants in Galka-Harare area, and regained control of several villages. Local Macawisley militia 19 May clashed with Hirshabelle state police in state capital Jowhar; ten people killed. After Qatari mediation, Somalia 6 May said it had restored diplomatic relations with Kenya, which had been severed since Dec 2020. However, Mogadishu in following days rejected Kenya’s attempts to resume khat stimulant exports to Somalia, prompting Nairobi to suspend all non-medical and humanitarian flights to and from Somalia for three months.

➔ **Somaliland Amid opposition’s concerns over electoral process, parliamentary and local elections held without major incidents in late May.** Opposition Justice and Welfare Party (UCID) and Waddani party 3 May denounced recent arrest of several of their candidates, accused authorities of confiscating voter ID cards from citizens, and called on President Bihi to end “abuses” in electoral process. Authorities 9 May dropped electoral fraud and treason charges against five UCID and Waddani candidates, and Bihi next day said he had reached agreement with leaders of both parties, electoral commission and members of Supreme Court on length of campaign and dispute resolution mechanisms. Unidentified gunmen 23 May fired at opposition offices in Las Anod town, Sool region in east, reportedly injuring at least two. No major incidents reported on election day 31 May.

↓ **South Sudan Renewed escalation of intercommunal violence in east left 150 dead, and holdout rebel group suspended participation in peace talks amid clashes in south; meanwhile, govt made some progress in implementing 2018 peace deal.**

In Greater Pibor Administrative Area in east, renewed intercommunal clashes between ethnic Lou Nuer and Dinka on one side and ethnic Murle on the other 10-17 May killed over 150 in Gumuruk area. UN Mission in South Sudan 16 May expressed “deep concern” over “fresh escalation of violence”. UN Security Council 11 May extended mandate of UN peacekeeping force in disputed Abyei region (north) between South Sudan and Sudan, until Nov; intercommunal violence 16 May killed at least 11 people in Abyei’s Dungoup village. Meanwhile, holdout rebel group National Salvation Front (NAS) 6 May suspended its participation in new round of peace talks with govt scheduled for 8-12 May, accusing govt of involvement in April alleged assassination of Gen Abraham Wana Yoane, military chief of rebel group allied to NAS. In Central Equatoria state in south, suspected NAS combatants reportedly killed five civilians in Payawa village 12 May and four security forces in Gabada village next day. In Western Equatoria state (also south), President Kiir-aligned South Sudan People’s Defence Forces 14-15 May repelled attack by suspected NAS on their barracks in Maridi county; five reportedly killed. Kiir 10 May signed long-delayed decree reconstituting Transitional National Legislative Assembly to include former rebel opposition groups, paving way for completion of key steps of peace process including constitutional review and preparation for elections; move came after Troika states, Canada, France, Germany and EU 5 May jointly urged Kiir and presidency’s five VPs to take steps to bolster transition. Implementation of transitional security arrangements however continued to lag behind schedule and official body monitoring peace deal implementation, including unification of armed groups into single army, 20 May warned former rebel fighters were abandoning cantonment and training sites due to lack of food and medicine, jeopardising goal to graduate first batch of unified army by month’s end. UN Security Council 28 May extended arms embargo on South Sudan for one year.

➔ **Sudan Govt made strides toward clearing its debt arrears, security forces cracked down on peaceful protesters, and tensions with Ethiopia remained high.**

International Monetary Fund 10 May announced it had approved financing plan that would allow Sudan to clear its debt arrears with international financing body. At investment and financing conference in France, govt 17-18 May secured several assurances of debt cancellation and new loans including from France, Germany and Norway. PM Hamdok 19 May said Sudan had fulfilled all conditions for debt forgiveness, which would pave way for Khartoum to regain access to international financing. Security forces 11 May opened fire and killed two protesters gathered outside army headquarters in capital Khartoum to commemorate 2019 massacre of over a hundred anti-Transitional Military Council sit-inners. Hamdok immediately condemned killings and army 16 May handed over seven soldiers suspected of involvement to Public Prosecutor. Sovereign Council member Aisha Musa 22 May announced resignation, accused transitional authorities of leading Sudan to “more killing, injustice, poverty and suffering”. Amid delays in implementation of Oct 2020 peace deal with rebel coalition Sudanese Revolutionary Front, UN assistance mission in Sudan 20 May voiced “great concern” over slow pace of unification of armed forces. Govt and rebel group Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North faction led by Abdelaziz al-Hilu – who

demurred on signing Oct 2020 agreement – 26 May returned to talks in South Sudan's capital Juba with view to bringing rebel group into transitional govt. Meanwhile, army 19 May reportedly clashed with Ethiopian militia in Eastern Gallabat area of disputed Al-Fashqa border zone, seizing five settlements controlled by Ethiopia since 1995. In apparent warning to Addis Ababa and preparation for possible escalation amid stalled negotiations on Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on Blue Nile river, Sudan 26-31 May held third joint military exercise with Egypt since Nov 2020 (see Nile Waters). UN Security Council 11 May extended mandate of UN peacekeeping force in disputed Abyei area at border with South Sudan until Nov, requesting UN Sec-Gen Guterres establish viable exit strategy by Oct; ethnic Misseriya gunmen 16 May reportedly killed at least 11 people in Abyei's Dungoup village.

➔ **Tanzania** **President Suluhu Hassan continued to distance herself from predecessor Magufuli's policies and took steps to improve relations with neighbours.** In departure from COVID-19 scepticism during late President Mafuguli's era, Hassan 7 May urged Tanzanians to wear masks to prevent spread of virus. Committee of experts established in April to advise govt on measures to curb pandemic 17 May presented 19 recommendations, notably calling on govt to release data on COVID-19 cases and join World Health Organization's COVAX vaccine-sharing program. Hassan throughout month reshuffled key positions in effort to revamp public service, notably appointing new directors of public prosecutions and police. Hassan took steps to improve relationship with neighbours. Notably, Hassan 4-5 May visited Kenya, signed \$1bn gas pipeline deal with counterpart Uhuru Kenyatta and promised tax and business reforms to make it easier for Kenyan investors to operate in Tanzania.

➔ **Uganda** **President Museveni sworn in for sixth term amid massive military deployment in and around capital Kampala.** In run-up to Museveni's inauguration 12 May, security forces early May arrested at least 41 people for allegedly planning to disrupt ceremony and 10 May surrounded homes of opposition National Unity Platform (NUP) leader Bobi Wine and Forum for Democratic Change leader Kizza Besigye in Kampala. In inaugural address, Museveni accused western govts of interfering in domestic affairs of African nations to serve their own interests. In contentious parliament speaker election setting two of Museveni's National Resistance Movement MPs against each other, Jacob Oulanyah 24 May defeated incumbent Rebecca Kadaga. Meanwhile, DR Congo's govt 12 May announced joint operation with Ugandan army against armed group Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in eastern DR Congo, days after Congolese President Tshisekedi introduced martial law in North Kivu and Ituri provinces to stem rising violence; Ugandan military 17 May said both countries had agreed to share intelligence and coordinate anti-ADF operations (see DR Congo). International Criminal Court 6 May sentenced former commander of rebel group Lord's Resistance Army Dominic Ongwen to 25 years in prison for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in northern Uganda in early 2000s.



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## Sahel

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➔ **Burkina Faso** **Jihadist violence continued to run high; meanwhile, govt attempted to convince former President Compaoré to return to country to face justice.** Jihadist violence continued in Sahel region reflecting broader security deterioration in tri-border area between Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso: in Oudalan's Tin-Akoff department, presumed Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) militants 4 May attacked Menzourou village, killing eight including members of Kel Essouk Tuareg community; unidentified assailants 13-14 May attacked Wassakoré village, killing at least three, and attackers 18-19 May killed at least 15 civilians in Adjarara village. Also in Oudalan, several ISGS members 13 May reported killed in Déou department. In Seno province, unknown attackers 11 May killed eight civilians in Wiboria village. In Soum province, armed assailants 30 May attacked soldiers and volunteers fighting alongside security forces (VDPs) in Kelbo department, killing two VDPs. In East region, presumed Al-Qaeda-affiliated Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM) militants 3 May attacked Kodyel village, Komandjari province, killing at least 30 people, including two VDPs, and displacing over 4,400. In North region, govt early May conducted airstrikes targeting suspected jihadists around Koumbri and Sollé departments. Meanwhile, in Centre-North region, unidentified militants 18 May attacked VDPs in Firka locality, Pissila department, leaving four VDPs missing. During official visit to Côte d'Ivoire, Zéphirin Diabré, minister in charge of national reconciliation, 5 May met former Burkina Faso President Blaise Compaoré in first such high-level meeting since Compaoré's exile in 2014, to discuss his return to Ouagadougou for judgement on complicity in 1987 murder of former President Sankara, key step for govt in national reconciliation process. Ivorian Defence Minister Téné Birahima Ouattara 10 May met President Kaboré in Burkina Faso's capital Ouagadougou to discuss counter-terrorism efforts.

↓ **Mali** **Amid rising social discontent, military junta staged another coup; jihadist violence persisted in north and centre.** Following series of strikes paralysing country, PM Ouane 14 May offered resignation to President N'Daw, who immediately reappointed him to form more inclusive cabinet. After interim govt 24 May appointed new cabinet ministers, military junta immediately arrested N'Daw and Ouane. Colonel Assimi Goïta, transition's VP, next day announced that N'Daw and Ouane had violated transition's charter by appointing new cabinet without consulting him and would be stripped of their powers; N'Daw and Ouane next day resigned. Goïta 27 May declared himself country's transitional president and authorities released N'Daw and Ouane; Constitutional Court next day declared Goïta as interim president. Mali's main international partners, including regional bloc ECOWAS, AU, EU, France and U.S., condemned junta's action, while France and U.S. said they would consider sanctions; UN Security Council 26 May unanimously issued condemnation but stopped short of referring to "coup d'état" or including coercive measures; ECOWAS 30 May suspended Mali's membership but did not impose new sanctions as it did after last year's coup, instead called for civilian PM, respect of transition's deadline and formation of inclusive govt. Meanwhile, in north, suspected Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) militants 2 May amputated hands and feet of three alleged robbers in Ansongo district, Gao region, nearly first time jihadists used such punishment since

2012 to apply Sharia law; move apparently aimed at bolstering group's legitimacy as effective security alternative to state authorities. Few days later, al-Qaeda-linked Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM) 5 May released video of French journalist kidnapped 8 April near Gao city, urging French authorities to secure his release. In Kidal region (north), truck carrying gold miners 8 May struck IED near Tessalit district, killing two; truck 19 May struck IED on road to Ntillit village, Gao district, killing 16. In Mopti region (centre), presumed JNIM-affiliated Katiba Macina militants 4 May attacked Ndobougou and Kounti-Marka villages, Djenné district, killing three. Also in Mopti, Malian army vehicle 7 May struck IED, which JNIM reportedly planted, in Douentza district, killing three soldiers.

➡ **Niger Jihadist violence continued, particularly in western region of Tillabery, where deadly attacks on civilians triggered mass displacement.** In Tillabery region (west), heavily armed Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) militants 4 May attacked military outpost in Intoussan village, Banibangou department, killing at least 16 soldiers and four civilians; jihadists 13 May stormed Fatio village, Tera department, killing five civilians. UN Office for Humanitarian Affairs 17 May reported over 100 civilians killed since early May in Intoussan and Anzourou villages, and over 11,000 from Anzourou area fled following rising attacks against civilians. In Tahoua region (north east), presumed ISGS militants 1 May fired at farmers, killing two near Agando village, Tillia department; militants same day ambushed National Guard patrol, killing 16 soldiers in Agando. In Diffa city (southeast), Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) fighters 28 May killed four security forces, and four civilians, with at least six attackers dead. Meanwhile, intercommunal tensions persisted. Notably, Zarma groups 4 May killed several Fulani in Banibangou department, Tillabery region. Accusations of serious abuses by Nigerian security forces persisted. International NGO Human Rights Watch 5 May reported that security forces extrajudicially killed at least 185 people since Oct 2019, urged President Bazoum to prioritise seeking justice over abuses. During official visit to Niger, head of Chadian Transitional Military Council General Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno 10 May met Bazoum, who on 24 April was appointed as special mediator for Chadian crisis, to discuss future of both countries; also visited G5-affiliated Chadian battalion stationed in Tera city, Tillabery (see Chad). In Arlit (north), civil society groups 9 May issued letter to Bazoum raising concerns about 31 March closure of Akouta uranium mine, including lack of compensation for mine's 800 subcontractors, and health and environmental risks of burying 20mn cubic metres of radioactive waste.

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## **Southern Africa**

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➡ **Mozambique Islamist insurgents continued to launch deadly attacks in far north despite ongoing counter-insurgency efforts.** In far north Cabo Delgado province, insurgents targeted internally displaced persons fleeing violence by boat, reportedly killing at least seven and kidnapping at least 40 off the coast of Macomia district 3 May. In Nangade district, local militiamen 7 May clashed with insurgents in and around Ngalonga village, killing at least five, and 22 May killed five more insurgents in Chacamba village. In Palma district, insurgents 10 May killed three civilians and took others hostage in Olumbe village; armed forces 22-23 May reportedly thwarted insurgents' attempt to capture Olumbe. Govt

forces 21 May clashed with insurgents in and around strategic town of Diaca, Mocimboa da Praia district, allegedly driving them out of locality; 22-23 May reportedly took control of Muidumbe district capital Namacande, which had been under insurgents' control since late 2020. NGO Amnesty International 13 May said rescue operation conducted by South African private military company Dyck Advisory Group (DAG) during siege of Palma town in March was marred by racial discrimination, with white contractors evacuated ahead of black locals; DAG same day denied allegations. Southern Africa regional bloc SADC 27 May held extraordinary double troika summit to discuss deployment of regional force in Cabo Delgado but deferred decision to deploy force to next meeting scheduled for 20 June. Meanwhile, André Matsangaíssa Júnior, former senior member of Renamo Military Junta (JMR), armed dissident faction of opposition Renamo party, 3 May said JMR leader Mariano Nhongo would soon surrender; three JMR members mid-May defected in Manica province, claimed JMR forces in stronghold of Gorongosa, Sofala province, much reduced with only seven people left in their ranks. Nyusi 16 May said disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former armed opposition movement Renamo forces would not be concluded by Aug as expected due to lack of funds.

➡ **Zimbabwe Standoff emerged between High Court and President Mnangagwa, and intra-party violence erupted within both ruling party and opposition.** Following constitutional amendments passed by parliament in April, Mnangagwa 11 May extended term of Chief Justice Luke Malaba, who was scheduled to retire mid-May, by five years. High Court 15 May ruled extension invalid, saying incumbent judges cannot benefit from term extension under Zimbabwe's constitution. Govt 17 May appealed ruling before Supreme Court, and Malaba 23 May returned to work, saying appeal suspended High Court order; human rights lawyers 25 May filed High Court application seeking Malaba's arrest on charges of contempt of court. Meanwhile, rival factions of ruling party ZANU-PF 8 May clashed in Makonde district, Mashonaland West province; police subsequently arrested four, who were granted bail 13 May. Violence next day erupted during meeting of Douglas Mwonozora-led faction of main opposition party Movement for Democratic Change (MDC-T) in capital Harare; MDC-T 10 May said supporters of rival faction, Nelson Chamisa-led MDC-A, had stabbed and injured five MDC-T members, which MDC-A denied. Meanwhile, High Court 5 May granted bail to MDC-A MP Joana Mamombe and youth leader Cecilia Chimhiri; both women under detention since March on charges of violating COVID-19 restrictions.

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## **West Africa**

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➡ **Côte d'Ivoire Tensions emerged as civil society activists called for justice amid negotiations on conditions for former President Gbagbo's return.** Gbagbo's Ivoirian Popular Front (FPI) and top govt officials continued to discuss conditions for Gbagbo's possible return as early as June following his acquittal on charges of crimes against humanity at International Criminal Court; Security Minister Vagondo Diomandé 3 May confirmed setting-up of technical committees to work out details of possible agreement. Civil society activists 10 May took to streets in economic capital Abidjan to call for justice for victims of 2010-

2011 post-election violence and arrest of Gbagbo upon his return. Authorities mid-May banned FPI and civil society demonstrations due to take place simultaneously in Abidjan 15 May, said move aimed at avoiding violent clashes between Gbagbo's followers and civil society activists opposed to his return. FPI 31 May said Gbagbo would return to Côte d'Ivoire 17 June. Meanwhile, Liberia 6 May dispatched high-level delegation to Abidjan after Ivorian govt blamed "Liberian mercenaries" for attacking military barracks in Abobo district north of Abidjan late April; Liberian FM Dee-Maxwell Saah Kemayah, who headed delegation, said his country would not serve as rear base for any destabilisation attempt targeting Côte d'Ivoire. Following two jihadist incursions in Côte d'Ivoire's north over past year, Defence Minister Téné Birahima Ouattara 9-11 May travelled to neighbouring Burkina Faso and Mali, agreed with counterparts to step up security cooperation. PM Patrick Achi mid-May received medical treatment in France after he collapsed at his residence in Abidjan, sparking speculations about his health; Achi was appointed PM in March following death of two PMs in less than eight months.

➔ **Guinea COVID-19 restrictions sparked unrest.** COVID-19-related ban on collective night prayers during last days of Ramadan 3-6 May sparked violent protests in Siguiri, Kankan and Kérouané cities, Kankan region (east), with demonstrators burning tyres and storming administrative buildings; security forces overnight 5-6 May reportedly killed one demonstrator in Kérouané.

↓ **Nigeria Overall security situation deteriorated further notably due to violent escalation in South East.** In South East, suspected members of Eastern Security Network, armed wing of outlawed separatist group Indigenous People of Biafra 6-30 May killed at least 25 security personnel, mostly police officers, in Ebonyi, Anambra, Rivers, Akwa Ibom and Abia states; 30 May allegedly assassinated prominent northern politician, Ahmed Gulak, in Imo state. Herder-farmer violence displaced thousands in several states and left about 60 people killed in Bali area of Taraba state 13-16 May; at least 14 killed in Jos South area of Plateau state 23 May; and about 55 killed in Katsina-Ala and Ado areas of Benue state 27 and 30 May. Attacks and abductions continued in North West. In Kaduna state, gunmen 19 May attacked two villages, killing 11. In Katsina state, gunmen 8 May killed 11 in Safana area, 10 May abducted 45 in Jibia area and 18 May abducted 21 in Batsari area. In Niger state, armed groups 5 May killed eight and abducted over 100 in Shadadi town; 30 May abducted about 200 children in Rafi area; and next day killed at least 15 in Mariga area. In Sokoto state, armed groups 21-23 May killed 25 in Sabon Birni, Isah and Rabah areas. In Zamfara state, armed groups 22 May killed 19 farmers and two police officers across Gusau, Maradun and Zurmi areas; 24-25 May, killed 20 in Bungudu area. Meanwhile, several media organisations 20 May reported Abubakar Shekau, leader of Boko Haram faction (JAS), had blown himself up or was seriously wounded in attempt to kill himself to escape capture by rival group Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP) in Borno state (north east); move followed major ISWAP offensive on Shekau's Sambisa forest stronghold and seizure of territories formerly under his control. ISWAP also attacked military base in Borno's Ajiri town 2-3 May; fighting killed five soldiers, 15 members of Civilian Joint Task Force and at least six civilians. Military killed at least 59 insurgents throughout month, including at least 40 in Konduga area mid-month.