

# Africa

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## Central Africa

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➔ **Burundi** **Amid ongoing accusations against national intelligence and ruling party youth wing of serious human rights abuses, authorities continued to reject UN scrutiny.** Members of leading opposition party National Freedom Congress (CNL) suffered persecution throughout month. In separate operations, security forces 1-2 Dec arrested CNL members Olivier Nkurunziza, Manassé Uwimana, Salomon Nduwayo, Manassé Nduwayo and Venant Nahabonimana, all in Ngozi province. CNL party leader Agathon Rwasa 4 Dec decried ongoing arbitrary arrests, notably in Ngozi, and impunity of perpetrators. Insecurity persisted in other provinces, amid ongoing allegations of serious abuses at hands of security forces and ruling party youth wing Imbonerakure, including unlawful killings and torture. Notably, suspected Imbonerakure 6 Dec killed Jean Marie Nsabimana in Bubanza province for unknown reasons; after farmers 10 Dec found two unidentified mutilated corpses in Buganda commune, Cibitoke province, local Imbonerakure chased away witnesses and hastily buried bodies; Augustin Matata, who had been arrested in Nov by intelligence officers, 15 Dec died of wounds in hospital in capital Bujumbura, while authorities 17 Dec arrested alleged culprit, intelligence officer Gérard Ndayisenga. Imbonerakure 16 Dec arrested CNL member Innocent Barutwanayo in Matongo commune, Kayanza province; Barutwanayo reportedly died following torture 19 Dec. Foreign Minister Albert Shingiro 9 Dec told diplomats that country would not allow as yet unnamed holder of recently created post of UN Human Rights rapporteur on Burundi into country. Fire 7 Dec broke out at overcrowded prison in capital Gitega killing 38, injuring 69.

➔ **🇨🇲 🇬🇪 Cameroon** **Violence continued to run high in Anglophone areas; upcoming Africa Cup of Nations football tournament in January could escalate tensions or offer opportunity for ceasefire.** Unrest persisted in Anglophone North West (NW) and South West (SW) regions prompting govt mid-month to reportedly order 100 to 150 new armoured vehicles from European manufacturer. Insurgent Ambazonia Defence Forces (ADF) 5 Dec attacked gendarme post in Alakuma junction and military post in Mbengwi road near Bamenda city (NW) leaving at least ten dead, including losses on both sides; soldiers next day allegedly dragged two wounded separatists from nearby hospital and executed them. ADF combatants 8 Dec attacked army convoy with IED, killing at least five soldiers in Mbengwi road. In apparent retaliation, soldiers later set fire to about 20 houses in town, allegedly burning alive six civilians and shooting dead five others. Separatist fighters 7 Dec kidnapped president of North West House of Chiefs in Bambalang village (NW) demanding release of relatives of separatist leader “General no Pity”. Presumed separatists 13 Dec also threw grenade at trade fair in Beau city (SW), raising concerns that they will seek to disrupt African Cup of Nations football tournament due to start 9 Jan, with games scheduled in Buea and Limbe cities (also SW). Patrice Motsepe, head of Africa Football Confederation, 21 Dec met with President Biya, said tournament would go ahead despite concerns. Anglophone militia 21 Dec attacked police checkpoint in Kumba city (SW), killing at least one policeman and wounding about five others. Meanwhile, in Bamenda, soldiers 22 Dec killed two children in their home; Bamenda residents 27 Dec found remains of four civilians the army had reportedly arrested on 10 Dec in Chomba village near

Bamenda. Clashes continued in Far North between Arab Choa herders and local farmers over grazing rights and access to water, leaving 44 people dead and 112 villages burnt, including parts of Kousseri town 5-9 Dec. Jihadists 9 Dec killed two civilians in Kouyape village and 16 Dec ten more in Assigachia village and Mora town, Mayo-Sava division. Meanwhile authorities 14 Dec returned over 900 repentant jihadist insurgents to Nigeria from Mora town.

➡ **Central African Republic Pro-govt militia launched attacks on Fulani in Ouaka prefecture, raising fears of communal violence; EU sanctioned Russian Wagner Group and suspended army training mission.** “Anti-balaka” pro-govt militia, backed by national army and Russian paramilitaries, 6-8 Dec attacked Boyo town and surrounding areas, Ouaka province, killing several dozen civilians. Attackers targeted Muslim Fulani in apparent revenge for activities of rebel group Union for Peace in Central African Republic (UPC). Same pro-govt militia 16 Dec reportedly killed five civilians at Zimako village near Ippy, also Ouaka prefecture. Killings followed UPC attack 2 Dec on Kouanga town, also Ouaka prefecture, which reportedly left three injured. UN Mission in CAR, MINUSCA, 19 Dec condemned the violence in Boyo town and highlighted deliberate targeting of Fulani civilians and risk of escalating community tensions. In west, rebels of 3R group 18-19 Dec attacked army post near Mann town, Ouham-Pendé prefecture, reportedly leaving six dead including one soldier and one rebel. Unidentified IED 31 Dec injured three MINUSCA in Bohong locality in north west. EU 13 Dec issued sanctions targeting paramilitary Wagner Group, including for serious human rights abuses and destabilising activities in CAR; 15 Dec announced suspension of EU military training program, citing fears that troops in program may fight alongside Russian contractors. Fighting between rebels and Russian paramilitaries spilled over into Chad for second time this year, follows similar clashes in May: paramilitaries 10-12 Dec clashed with Chadian army in their pursuit of rebels who had crossed border, one Chadian soldier reported missing. Despite incident, CAR-Chad Mixed Commission 20-21 Dec met in Chadian capital N’Djamena, with Chadian govt saying it is willing to consider reopening border closed since 2014. Sudden release end Nov of suspected war criminal Hassan Bouba following his arrest by Special Criminal Court caused diplomatic and domestic ripples: lawyers’ union early Dec went on strike for three days in protest, Bangui-based diplomats and international NGO also condemned suspect’s release. U.S. 19 Dec placed travel and financial sanctions on Ali Darassa, UPC leader, for human rights abuses and threatening CAR’s peace and stability.

↑ **Chad Preparations for national dialogue, now set for Feb 2022, made progress including opposition group declaring willingness to meet president and senior exiled figure returning to Chad.** In preparation for national dialogue, authorities encouraged rebels and opponents to return to Chad; several key figures agreed to engage in process, including Chadian former diplomat and businessman in exile Abakar Manany, who flew back to capital N’Djamena 11 Dec. Authorities likely to meet main rebel groups in Jan in Qatar’s capital Doha for pre-dialogue ahead of national dialogue due to be held mid-Feb in N’Djamena. Transitional President Mahamat Déby 30 Dec promulgated amnesty laws covering over 300 opponents and rebels. Some Chad-based opposition continued to criticise transitional authorities and oppose current dialogue process: notably, political and civil society coalition opposed to military rule Wakit Tama 10 Dec demanded new

transitional arrangements and next day held peaceful protest in N'Djamena; Chad's Conference of Bishops same day issued statement strongly criticising military junta for retaining full powers during transition. Wakit Tama leadership 24 Dec however announced that they would meet with transitional President Mahamat Déby at his request to discuss transition and dialogue. Mahamat Déby 31 Dec announced series of measures including recruitment of 5,000 young Chadians into public sector, said national dialogue will start on 15 Feb. Meanwhile, apparent tit-for-tat violence continued in capital. Unidentified gunmen night of 2-3 Dec attacked house of General Mahamat Hamouda, commander of military zone in southern Chad, reportedly leaving one dead. Gunmen 8 Dec shot dead army officer Noursadine Khamis Hassaballah, reportedly following property dispute involving relatives of former President Idriss Déby's wife Hinda Déby; associates of deceased next day attacked house of Ahmat Khazali Acyl, Hinda's brother and current director of Chad's National Social Security Fund; observers point to disputes within ruling elite. Authorities subsequently took series of measure to address insecurity, including prohibition of carrying firearms in N'Djamena, except for bodyguards of president and certain officials during working hours.

➔ **Democratic Republic of Congo Ugandan and Congolese army started joint operations against jihadist group in east, alleged ADF suicide bombing marked first suicide attack killing civilians in country.**

Ugandan army with Congolese counterparts throughout month attacked Ugandan jihadist Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in North Kivu (NK) and Ituri provinces. Congolese and Ugandan authorities 10 Dec claimed to have captured four camps, killed 34 ADF terrorists and freed hostages. DRC and Ugandan army 24 Dec announced further artillery and ground operations had led to capture of two main ADF camps in Beni territory; and Congolese military 26 Dec claimed to have killed seven ADF fighters, some of Chadian and Somali nationality. President Tshisekedi 13 Dec defended continued state of siege in east and operations with Uganda, stating Ugandan presence will be "strictly" time-limited. ADF continued deadly attacks throughout month. Notably, ADF 6 Dec fought national army around Masome village leaving seven dead, including two insurgents in Ituri; presumed ADF 8 Dec killed 16 people and kidnapped others in raid on Mangina commune near NK province's Beni town; ADF 19 Dec clashed with army in Irumu territory, also Ituri, with at least five killed, including insurgents and 20 Dec attacked villages in Ituri killing at least eight. Presumed ADF suicide bomber 25 Dec killed nine, including himself, in Beni city, NK province, making it first deadly suicide attack in country. Other armed groups in east continued violent attacks: Cooperative for the Development of Congo (CODECO) 8-9 Dec reportedly killed at least 12 civilians near Bunia. Army 28 Dec claimed to have killed 31 CODECO militants in Djugu territory, Ituri province. Ongoing insecurity and kidnappings in east led Chinese embassy 1 Dec to ask all Chinese nationals to leave affected areas. On political front, Tshisekedi 3 Dec removed Albert Yuma from head of national mining company, decision seen as bold move against key ally of former President Joseph Kabila. Court of Appeal 6 Dec ordered release from prison of former Tshisekedi ally Vital Kamerhe on medical grounds; analysts see move as possibly influenced by Tshisekedi preparing alliances for 2023 national elections. Police 20 Dec allegedly fired on demonstrators protesting against insecurity in east, reportedly killing three in North Kivu's provincial capital Goma; police claimed one officer dead.

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## Horn of Africa

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➡ **Eritrea** **Opposition parties formed united front vowing to overthrow President Isaias and Somali opposition denounced Eritrean intelligence's presence in capital Mogadishu.** Eritrean nationalist organisations 18-20 Dec held three-day conference and formed Eritrean United National Front with declared goal of overthrowing Isaias' regime through "armed resistance". Somali pro-opposition news outlet Goobjoog News 1 Dec claimed Eritrean intelligence officers were in Mogadishu to help secure Somali President Farmajo's re-election. Eritrea alongside Somalia 17 Dec voted against UN Human Rights Council resolution to investigate alleged human rights abuses during Tigray conflict in northern Ethiopia; Eritrean troops have long fought alongside Ethiopian troops there, and speculations in recent weeks emerged around training of hundreds of Somali soldiers in Eritrea to fight in northern Ethiopia.

↑ ✂ **Ethiopia** **Federal govt halted its offensive against Tigray forces after latter announced retreat; moves could help usher in negotiations to end year-long war.** Tigray forces 20 Dec announced complete withdrawal from neighbouring Afar and Amhara regions back into Tigray and called for ceasefire. Federal govt 24 Dec said National Defence Forces would pause at current positions, refraining from advancing further into Tigray. UN Sec-Gen Guterres same day urged parties to "grasp this opportunity" to cease hostilities and ensure provision of "much-needed humanitarian assistance"; U.S. State Dept late month said recent developments offered opportunity for parties to come to negotiating table. Earlier in month, federal govt made major territorial gains, reclaiming all of Amhara: federal govt 1 Dec claimed control of number of towns in North Shewa Zone of Amhara, including Shewa Robit, Molale, Mezezo and Raza; 6 Dec said it had recaptured strategic Amhara towns of Dessie and Kombolcha, as well as Bati, Gerba, Kersa and Degan; 18 Dec claimed full control of Amhara's North Wollo Zone; and 23 Dec said its forces and Amhara regional forces had gained control of Tigray's Alamata town and were marching northward to Korem town. NGOs Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International 16 Dec jointly accused pro-govt forces of "mass detentions, killings and forced expulsions of ethnic Tigrayans". UN Human Rights Council next day voted to establish independent investigation into alleged abuses by all parties to northern Ethiopia conflict since Nov 2020. Meanwhile, in Oromia region, unidentified assailants 1 Dec killed 14 people including traditional elder in Karrayyu district of East Shewa Zone; govt blamed Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) while OLA and some residents accused govt. OLA early Dec claimed to have captured several towns in East and West Shewa Zones, and repelled govt offensives in East and West Wollega Zones. Federal govt early Dec conducted drone and air attacks in East Wollega. Oromia regional forces 27 Dec said they had neutralised 18 suspected OLA rebels in recent security operation in Mieso locality, West Hararghe Zone.

➡ **Kenya** **Intercommunal violence continued in north, Al-Shabaab stepped up attacks, and tensions ran high in lead-up to Aug elections.** Northern counties recorded persistent intercommunal violence, fuelled partly by drought that has forced herder communities to move in search for water and pasture. Suspected ethnic Gabra gunmen overnight 18-19 Dec stormed ethnic Borana villages in Marsabit, stealing over 1,000 livestock; fighting left 12 killed. Conflict between

Degodia and Borana communities over water and pasture 24 Dec reportedly left four dead in Basuke area along Marsabit-Wajir border. In neighbouring Isiolo county, suspected cattle raiders from Degodia clan 22 Dec killed two ethnic Borana herders in Mado Salesa area. Somali-based al-Qaeda-linked group Al-Shabaab stepped up attacks ahead of Christian holiday season. In Mandera county (north east), Al-Shabaab 4 Dec attacked police vehicle in Bambo area, killing two officers and injuring at least another ten; three militants killed 11 Dec in Damasa area when bomb they were setting up exploded; and Al-Shabaab militants 14 Dec injured two police reservists in ambush in Lanqura area. In neighbouring Wajir county, police reservists 13 Dec foiled suspected Al-Shabaab attack on mosque in Wajir town. Suspected Al-Shabaab militant 7 Dec also detonated explosive device, killing himself and two others in Kamloma village, Kisumu county in west, far from border with Somalia. Meanwhile, Orange Democratic Movement leader and President Kenyatta's preferred candidate Raila Odinga 10 Dec officially launched fifth bid for presidency ahead of Aug elections. Deputy President and presidential hopeful William Ruto 22 Dec branded Odinga as "state project", also accused govt in recent weeks of using state infrastructure to support Odinga's bid. Lawmakers 29 Dec brawled in parliament over proposed changes to law governing conduct of political parties and coalition formations.

↓ ●\* **Somalia President Farmajo suspended PM Roble, escalating months-long crisis over delays in ongoing elections and raising risk of renewed violence in capital Mogadishu.** Farmajo and Roble's offices 26 Dec traded accusations of holding up ongoing legislative elections: Farmajo's office said Roble was "posing a serious threat to the electoral process and overstepping his mandate"; Roble's office hit back saying president had spent "so much time, energy and finances in frustrating" elections. Farmajo overnight 26-27 Dec suspended Roble's powers citing allegations of corruption and misappropriation of public funds. Roble 27 Dec accused Farmajo of attempting to "militarily take over" PM's office and vowed to continue his duties. Assistant Information Minister Abdirahman Yusuf Omar Adala same day labelled president's decision "indirect coup". U.S. embassy same day urged both leaders "to take immediate steps to de-escalate tensions" and "avoid violence". Earlier in month, fighting 21-22 Dec erupted in Puntland state's port town of Bosasso between special unit Puntland Security Forces (PSF) and region's regular security forces, leaving at least 14 killed and 63 injured; Puntland's govt 22 Dec announced ceasefire; clashes followed Puntland President Said Abdullahi Deni's late Nov dismissal of PSF commander Mohamoud Osman Diyano in likely attempt to assert greater control ahead of Lower House elections in Bosasso. Lower House election process continued to be marred by high level of manipulation, notably by federal member state leaders, including denying candidates right to register, bypassing clan elders and substituting clan delegates, all in order to ensure pre-determined candidates emerge victorious. Political opposition late Nov-early Dec threatened not to recognise results without changes. Only 24 of 275 representatives elected by 24 Dec deadline for completing process. Meanwhile, Al-Shabaab continued to present significant security threat. Group advanced along Beledweyne-Dhusamareb route, briefly taking control of Mataban town 13 Dec and Ceel Dheere town 15 Dec. Mortar attack directed against AU mission AMISOM base in Beledweyne town (Hiran region) 1 Dec killed three children. In Middle Shabelle region, IED 11 Dec targeted MPs and killed elder in regional capital Jowhar, and

another roadside bomb targeting AMISOM same day reportedly killed four in Buurane and Mahadey areas.

➔ **Somaliland** **Fistfight broke out in parliament following govt's move to register more political parties.** After Information Minister Saleban Ali Koore 12 Dec tabled amendment to Political Parties Law allowing registration of new political parties, opposition Waddani and UCID MPs next day exchanged blows with ruling party MPs inside chamber; opposition argued executive may use measure to delay presidential vote scheduled for Nov 2022.

↓ **South Sudan** **Deadly fighting erupted between VP Machar's forces and breakaway faction, and between govt forces and NAS insurgency; stalled military integration process caused growing alarm.** Clashes between Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-In Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) forces of VP Riek Machar and breakaway Kitgwang faction 26 Dec reportedly left 50 killed in Magenis area, Upper Nile state. Kitgwang faction 28 Dec claimed control of Amoud and Okuri areas, said Machar's forces cleared from northern Upper Nile; SPLM/A-IO same day confirmed Kitgwang forces 27 Dec took over Amoud base. After Kiir late Nov promised return to Rome peace talks with armed groups outside of 2018 deal, including Thomas Cirillo's National Salvation Front (NAS) insurgency in Central and Western Equatoria states, fighting between NAS and govt forces 7 Dec reportedly left seven dead in Central Equatoria's Lainya county; incident represents most serious flare-up of insurgent violence in area in recent months. NAS next day warned of pending "scorched-earth offensive" by govt forces in Central Equatoria's Morobo county, said govt plans to clear area of its population to pave way for gold mining. Intercommunal violence persisted. In Eastern Equatoria state, Kenyan Turkana raiders 5 Dec attacked South Sudanese Toposa cattle keepers in Nadapal area in Kapoeta East county, leaving two killed and three injured; local officials reported five people killed 13 Dec during cattle-related attack in Komiri Payam, Budi county. In Lakes state, armed Nuer youth from Panyijar county (Unity State) 1 Dec reportedly attacked and killed three people in Amongpiny area, Rumbek Central county. In Unity state, cattle-related fighting between armed youths from Leer and Mayendit counties 2 Dec killed at least six. In Jonglei state, amid series of cattle raids and abductions attributed to ethnic Murle raiders, armed men 5 Dec reportedly abducted five children in Nyirol county. Both regional and UN monitors expressed growing alarm over stalled implementation of 2018 peace deal, particularly failure to unify ex-warring security forces into national army. Charles Tai Gituai, interim chair of peace monitoring body, 8 Dec warned stalled security process leading to "growing frustrations". UN Sec-Gen Special Representative Nicholas Haysom 15 Dec also stressed new "headwinds" could threaten peace accord.

↓ 🇸🇩\* **Sudan** **Formation of new transitional govt stalled amid power struggle between military and PM Hamdok; latter's resignation would leave military in full control of transition; intercommunal violence killed scores in Darfur.** In search of independence and genuine executive authority, reinstated PM Hamdok 1 Dec replaced most caretaker deputy ministers and around 12 Dec replaced all acting state governors appointed by military since Oct coup; discussions on new govt still ongoing by month's end as Hamdok battled to form technocratic govt as stipulated in Nov agreement with military. Media reports 21 and 27 Dec alleged Hamdok intending to resign "soon". Several mass protests against

military rule and Nov agreement between Hamdok and military leaders held throughout month in capital Khartoum and other cities met with govt crackdown. Notably, on third anniversary of popular uprising against then-President al-Bashir, hundreds of thousands 19 Dec protested in Khartoum and elsewhere to demand full civilian rule; security forces opened fire to disperse demonstrators, killing at least two and injuring over 300 while UN 21 Dec reported 13 allegations of rape and gang rape by security forces during protest. Renewed crackdown on protests 30 Dec left five killed including four in Omdurman city. U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee 9 Dec adopted Sudan Democracy Act enabling targeted sanctions against individuals undermining democratic transition. Growing instability recorded in West Darfur state. West Darfur Doctors Committee 8-9 Dec said tribal violence had in recent days killed 88 in Krink area, 25 in Jebel Moon area and eight in Sarba locality. UN Refugee Agency 7 Dec said violence in Jebel Moon alone had displaced over 10,000 since 17 Nov, with 2,000 fleeing across border into Chad; 29 Jebel Moon leaders 9 Dec signed non-aggression pact. Gunmen 28-30 Dec looted three World Food Programme (WFP) warehouses in North Darfur state capital El Fasher, killing two people and prompting authorities to impose curfew and WFP to suspend operations. In South Kordofan state, tribal clashes between Hawazma and Kenana herders 1-2 Dec killed at least two in Abu Jubeiha area. On Ethiopian border, troops 1 Dec said they had taken control of Ethiopian settlement in disputed al-Fashaga area after days of clashes.

➡ **Tanzania President Suluhu Hassan accused late President Magufuli-era officials of undermining her leadership, and dialogue initiative failed to appease tensions with opposition.** Amid claims of corruption resurgence under her leadership, Hassan 4 Dec accused “clique” in govt of seeking to taint her administration, said current ills inherited from Magufuli’s era. On country’s 60th independence anniversary, main opposition party Chadema 9 Dec made seven demands, including constitutional revision, amendment of electoral laws and release of Chadema chairman Freeman Mbowe. After two-month delay, conference on state of multiparty democracy held 15-17 Dec in capital Dodoma, with President Hassan, political party leaders including opposition Alliance for Change and Transparency’s Zitto Kabwe, and police representatives in attendance; opposition parties Chadema and NCCR-Mageuzi however boycotted event, notably asking for Mbowe’s release first; participants made 80 recommendations, including amending most controversial constitutional articles, reviewing Political Parties Act and Police Force Act. Hassan 16 Dec said she was ready to lift five-year ban on political rallies. Conflict in northern Mozambique continued to spill over border. Notably, Islamist militants 10 Dec reportedly attacked Kiwengulo village, Mtwara region, killing at least four civilians; subsequent clash with military left five militants killed (see Mozambique).

➡ **Uganda In aftermath of Islamic State-claimed bomb blasts, authorities launched operation against jihadist group in DR Congo, and continued search for alleged operatives in Uganda.** Ugandan army early Dec entered DRC to conduct joint operations with Congolese army against jihadist Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), who President Yoweri Museveni held responsible for recent bomb blasts on capital Kampala; subsequently said to have broken up ADF camps, and killed and arrested rebel fighters (see DRC entry). Military head of UN mission in DRC 2 Dec visited Kampala to discuss UN support to joint operation in

eastern DRC, as UN mission expressed concern over protection of civilians; police operations to find those responsible for bomb blasts also continued throughout month: police 6 Dec announced arrest of alleged key ADF courier Twaha Ssegujja and recovery of bomb-making equipment at store he owned in Kampala outskirts. Political tensions rose in lead-up to local council by-election in Kayunga district; police 14 Dec blocked opposition leader Bobi Wine in his home, preventing him from campaigning, claiming he had not followed proper procedure. Poll 16 Dec went ahead despite arrest of over 80 opposition members; electoral commission 18 Dec declared ruling party candidate winner. Disarmament operations continued in restive Karamoja region, army claimed to have recovered further weapons and arrested owners throughout month. U.S. 7 Dec announced sanctions against head of military intelligence Major General Abel Kandiho for alleged abuses against prisoners under his charge; military decried unilateral sanctions.

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## **Southern Africa**

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➔ **Mozambique Militants continued to launch attacks in northern Cabo Delgado province, especially in Macomia district, and violence spread into neighbouring Niassa province and Tanzania.** Southern African regional bloc SADC's mission in Mozambique (SAMIM), along with Rwandan and Mozambican troops, continued their offensive against Islamist militants in Cabo Delgado, with several violent incidents recorded in Dec mainly in Macomia district. Notably, shootout between suspected Islamist militants and local pro-govt militia 6 Dec left four militants dead in Nkoé area; suspected militants 15 Dec beheaded pastor in Nova Zambezia village; pro-govt militia 27 Dec ambushed militants in Chioioio village, killing five and capturing one. SAMIM claimed joint SAMIM and Mozambican forces 19-20 Dec killed 14 militants during operation in Chai area of Macomia; one South African and two Mozambican soldiers killed during operation. Under pressure in Cabo Delgado, militants dispersed westward into neighbouring Niassa province, with local authorities early Dec expressing concern militants could use province as "refuge". Attacks and clashes in Niassa's Mecula district reportedly prompted nearly 4,000 people to flee their villages in late Nov and in Dec. Notably, militants 8 Dec killed elderly woman and burnt down 80 homes in Nhati administrative post, Lichinga area, and same day shot and decapitated young man in Chimene area; around 22 Dec reportedly killed several people including special reserve inspector during attack on Naulala village. Islamic State (ISIS) claimed responsibility for several attacks in Niassa and Macomia in Dec in continuation of unprecedented raft of claims made since Nov. Police Chief Bernardino Rafael 12 Dec claimed defence and security forces had killed prominent combatant "Cassimo" in Mecula. Meanwhile, militants launched attacks into Tanzania, reportedly killing at least four civilians in Kiwengulo village in Tanzania's Mtwara region 10 Dec; subsequent clash with Tanzanian Defence Force resulted in death of five militants (see also Tanzania). Concerns over gender-based violence aggravated by conflict dynamics surfaced: NGO Human Rights Watch 7 Dec said militants had abducted and enslaved over 600 woman and girls since 2018; UN refugee agency 20 Dec stressed conflict had "compounded" multiple forms of abuses including physical violence, abduction, sexual trafficking, and early and forced marriage.

➔ **Zimbabwe Political tensions ran high as country gears up for 2023 general elections; series of criminal incidents involved security forces**



**members.** Violent outbursts marred ruling party Zanu-PF provincial elections – which will determine delegate composition to 2022 elective congress, where President Mnangagwa’s 2023 presidential bid is expected to be endorsed – in Mashonaland West, Mashonaland Central, Manicaland and Midlands provinces. Notably, police 28 Dec fired warning shots following clashes between supporters of Home Affairs Minister Kazeme Kazembe and businessman Tafadzwa Musarara in Centenary town, Mashonaland Central; riot police 29 Dec also intervened in capital Harare to quell violent scuffles between rival Zanu-PF factions over allegations of vote rigging. Meanwhile, suspected Zanu-PF youths 15 Dec stormed meeting of civil society platform Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition in Bulawayo city, assaulting participants and reportedly wounding several others. Infighting persisted within opposition ranks. MDC-T party VP Thokozani Khupe mid-Dec filed urgent chamber application at Bulawayo High Court challenging alleged late-Nov decision by party leadership to recall her from parliament. Reports emerged of involvement of security service personnel in series of armed robberies and deadly shootouts; notably, armed assailants including former and serving members of security forces 6 Dec stormed house of former police Detective Joseph Nemaïsa in alleged robbery attempt in Harare; suspected soldier 25 Dec shot dead four people in shopping mall in Kadoma district, Mashonaland West. Mnangagwa 22 Dec threatened shoot-to-kill policy to deal with “upsurge in gun-related crimes”. Meanwhile, High Court in Harare 6 Dec dropped charges of inciting public violence brought against prominent investigative journalist and govt critic Hopewell Chin’ono.

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## Sahel

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➔ **Burkina Faso Military conducted joint counter-insurgency operations with neighbours but violence continued to run high in north, and President Kaboré reshuffled govt and military leadership.** Lull in jihadist attacks recorded in Sahel region as military retaliated against al-Qaeda-affiliated Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM) following Inata attack that left over 50 dead in Nov. Burkina Faso and Niger 25 Nov-9 Dec conducted joint offensive along shared border as part of second phase of Taanli operation launched last June, claimed to have killed around 100 jihadist militants; Burkinabé army said artillery strikes 2 and 4 Dec killed 14 militants in Sahel region’s Yagha province. Some 1,200 troops from Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana and Benin also deployed in border areas as part of Operation Odogou 4 launched 26 Nov to counter possible spillover of jihadist attacks into Gulf of Guinea. Violence ran high in North region’s Loroum province. Notably, alleged JNIM militants 9 Dec ambushed and killed 14 people including 13 volunteers fighting alongside security forces (VDPs) in Titao town, and suspected jihadists 23 Dec ambushed convoy of tradesmen traveling to Titao under VDP escort, reportedly killing 41 including prominent VDP figure Soumaïla Ganame alias Ladji Yoro. Presumed JNIM-affiliated combatants week of 4-10 Dec attacked four police and gendarmerie stations in Boucle du Mouhoun region (west), destroying three. Amid growing dissatisfaction within army ranks over govt’s management of security crisis, Kaboré 3 Dec appointed new heads for all three military regions and new special forces commander; move comes after appointment late-Nov of young officers to head all three regional commands in gendarmerie. Following protests in recent weeks against govt’s inability to stem widespread

jihadist violence, PM Christophe Dabiré and cabinet 8 Dec resigned. Kaboré 10 Dec named former UN official Lassina Zerbo as PM, and 13 Dec appointed new, smaller cabinet of 25 members. National Reconciliation Minister Zéphirin Diabré 28 Dec postponed national reconciliation forum, initially scheduled for 17-23 Jan, to unspecified date, citing opposition's withdrawal from reconciliation process after Inata attack.

➔ **Mali Interim authorities launched national consultations despite widespread contestation; high-level violence persisted in central Mopti region.** Authorities 11 Dec started series of consultations on political, institutional and governance reforms at local and regional levels, and 27-30 Dec at national level; many opposition parties and civil society groups refused to join initiative, citing fears junta could use it to extend transition period; *Permanent Strategic Framework* gathering armed group signatories to 2015 Algiers Peace Agreement 10 Dec also said they would boycott process on account of lack of preliminary consultations. West Africa regional bloc ECOWAS 12 Dec threatened new sanctions in Jan should interim authorities fail to show concrete actions by month's end to organise elections in Feb. At end of consultations, participants 30 Dec proposed to extend transition for period of "six months to five years". Junta continued clampdown on critics; notably, authorities 6 Dec arrested opposition party leader Oumar Mariko for allegedly insulting interim PM Choguel Maïga. NGO Human Rights Watch 15 Dec claimed security agents in Sept-Oct 2021 tortured six individuals accused of plotting coup against interim govt. In Mopti region (centre), suspected al-Qaeda-linked Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM)-affiliated Katiba Macina 3 Dec ambushed public bus near Songho village, killing 32 civilians; clashes between Katiba Macina militants and ethnic Dogon militia Dana Ambassagou 7 Dec left ten militiamen dead near Baima village; explosive device next day killed seven UN peacekeepers in Bandiagara area. Civil disobedience movement urging govt to step up efforts against jihadists 7-8 Dec paralysed public services in Mopti's Bandiagara city. In Gao region (north), unidentified gunmen 3 Dec attacked UN mission (MINUSMA) convoy 100km north east of Bourem town, killing civilian; overnight 5-6 Dec killed seven members of High Council for Azawad Unity in Intahaka village. EU 13 Dec imposed sanctions on Russian private military company Wagner Group for allegedly committing serious human rights abuses in several countries, including torture and extrajudicial executions. Fourteen European countries and Canada 23 Dec jointly condemned alleged deployment of Wagner mercenaries to Mali, accused Russia of supporting it; Bamako next day denied claims.

➔ **Niger Security situation remained fragile in south west and authorities sought to stifle growing protest movement against foreign military presence.** In Tillabery region (south west), suspected jihadist militants 4 Dec stormed army position near Fantio locality in Tera department, killing at least 12 soldiers; defence forces next day said they had killed "dozens" of militants in fighting. Niger and Burkina Faso 25 Nov-9 Nov conducted joint offensive along shared border as part of second phase of Taanli joint operation launched last June, claimed to have killed around 100 jihadists notably in Torodi department. French air strike 20 Dec reportedly killed leading Islamic State in the Greater Sahara member Soumana Boura north of Tillabery city. Presumed jihadists overnight 22-23 Dec simultaneously attacked border post and bridge near Makalondi village (Torodi department), killing at least seven. Meanwhile, UN refugee agency 3 Dec said

violence in Nigeria's North West had forced 11,500 people to flee into Niger in Nov, with most taking shelter in rural commune of Bangui in Tahoua region (which neighbours Tillabery); influx of refugees could present local authorities with additional challenge. Tensions persisted after protest against French military presence late Nov turned deadly in Tillabery's Tera department; defence and interior ministers 4 and 11 Dec respectively refused to appear before parliament to answer questions on incident. Authorities 5 and 12 Dec banned two demonstrations against western military presence organised by civil society coalition Tournons la page (TLP); 10 Dec reportedly detained 15 TLP members, most of whom were allegedly taking part in rally in capital Niamey on Human Rights Day. In address to seventh edition of Peace and Security Forum in Senegal's capital Dakar, President Bazoum 6 Dec urged external partners to increase efforts to stop illicit arms flows originating from Libya, described them as "most important parameter" behind jihadist violence in Sahel, and argued Sahelian countries should be granted exceptional financial resources to resolve security crisis.

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## West Africa

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↓ **Benin Series of jihadist attacks targeted country for first time in years.** Al Qaeda-affiliated Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM) claimed 1 Dec raid on security post in Porga town (Atakora department at border with Burkina Faso) that left two soldiers killed and several others wounded; deadly incident, the first claimed by JNIM in Benin, came less than 48 hours after suspected jihadists attacked army patrol in Keremou area of Alibori department (also north near Burkina Faso), leaving no casualties. Army vehicle 10 Dec struck explosive device likely planted by JNIM militants in Porga, leaving four soldiers wounded.

➡ **Côte d'Ivoire Political dialogue resumed in bid to foster reconciliation ahead of 2023 local elections, and efforts to stem jihadist violence continued.** Govt 16 Dec resumed political dialogue with opposition after President Ouattara in Nov mandated PM Patrick Achi to revive talks following one-year hiatus. Representatives of govt and over 20 opposition parties or political associations discussed make-up of Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and review of electoral register, among other issues. Representative of former President Gbagbo requested seat at IEC for African People's Party-Côte d'Ivoire (PPA-CI) and pleaded for release of imprisoned military officials who sided with Gbagbo in 2010-2011 post-election conflict. Abidjan Prosecutor Richard Adou 27 Dec released report of Special Unit to Investigate Violence related to 2020 presidential election; conclusions reportedly hint at possible prosecution of several opposition leaders, including Henri Konan Bédié, who had boycotted vote and called for civil disobedience against President Ouattara's plans to seek third term; Bédié's party 29 Dec rejected report and blamed Ouattara's party for electoral violence. In briefing to Senate on scope of jihadist threat, Defence Minister Téné Birahima Ouattara 6 Dec sought to highlight crisis's foreign character, claiming combatants operating in country's north were "Fulani from neighbouring Burkina Faso". Govt in recent weeks however stepped up efforts to counter jihadist groups' attempt to recruit disgruntled locals; notably, Youth Minister Mamadou Touré late Nov announced \$3.5mn training and professional integration program to benefit thousands of

youths in northern regions; several media reports mid-Dec said project's budget increased to \$14mn.

➔ **Gambia Opposition contested President Barrow's re-election after presidential poll proceeded peacefully.** Presidential election 4 Dec proceeded peacefully, with high voter turnout of 87%. Three opposition candidates next day rejected partial results that gave incumbent President Barrow early lead; electoral authorities later same day however confirmed Barrow elected for second term with 53% of votes, with runner-up Ousainou Darboe at 27.7%. West Africa regional bloc ECOWAS's election observation mission 5 Dec appealed to all candidates "to accept the outcome of the election in good faith". Hundreds or thousands of Darboe supporters 6 Dec gathered in and around capital Banjul to contest Barrow's re-election; police fired tear gas as crowd started scuffling with Barrow supporters. AU election observation mission same day said poll "conducted in a peaceful and democratic environment" and in line with "national and international standards"; EU 7 Dec welcomed smooth conduct of election, while U.S. same day welcomed "free and fair presidential election", saying observers noted only "minor procedural irregularities". Darboe's United Democratic Party 14 Dec said it had petitioned Supreme Court to nullify results, accused Barrow and his party of vote-buying and other irregularities. Supreme Court 28 Dec dismissed challenge, said petition had not followed proper procedure. Meanwhile, truth and reconciliation commission 24 Dec recommended that special international court be set up to try former President Jammeh – who has lived in exile for five years – for alleged murder, torture and rapes during his 22-year rule.

➔ **Guinea Transitional govt continued to display firmness toward defunct regime and pursue appeasement policy toward opposition; ECOWAS reiterated request for elections in March.** As part of declared anti-corruption effort, ruling junta National Rally and Development Committee (CNRD) 2 Dec created Court for Repression of Economic and Financial Crimes. Justice Minister Fatoumata Yarie Soumah 4 Dec said body does not seek to "settle scores" with deposed President Condé's govt officials, but mismanagement that tainted Condé's rule makes them potential targets. Interim President Doumbouya 7 Dec dismissed Central Bank President Louncény Nabé, who had served under Condé for almost a decade. Security forces 11 Dec used tear gas and arrested dozens of Condé's followers protesting in capital Conakry to call for his release; same day prevented another pro-Condé protest in Kindia prefecture (north east). Meanwhile, former President Sékouba Konaté 18 Dec and former President Moussa Dadis Camara 22 Dec came back from ten-year exile, after CNRD late Nov authorised their return as part of appeasement policy. PM Mohamed Mohamed Béavogui 25 Dec presented interim govt's program to Doumbouya without specifying transition timetable, while civil society coalition 29 Dec proposed 24-month transition period. Govt 31 Dec authorised Condé to leave country for one month for medical reasons. West Africa regional bloc ECOWAS 12-13 Dec regretted lack of clear electoral roadmap and reiterated demand that Guinea hold elections by March. AU Commission Chair Moussa Faki Mahamat 5 Dec visited Guinea and promised to "accompany the transition" in soft statement contrasting with ECOWAS's firmness.

➡ **Nigeria Rampant insecurity persisted in North West; herder-farmer violence killed dozens; lull in violence recorded in North East and South East.** In North West, armed groups continued killings and kidnappings. In Kaduna state, armed groups 1-18 Dec killed at least 25 people and abducted over 127 in several attacks; 19 Dec launched multiple raids in Giwa area, leaving 38 dead; 22 Dec reportedly abducted over 70 in Chikun area. In Zamfara state, suspected bandits 25-26 Dec attacked communities near state capital Gusau, killing seven and abducting 33. In Niger state, armed group 8 Dec killed between nine and 16 worshippers at mosque in Mashegu area. In Sokoto state, armed men reportedly loyal to prominent bandit Bello Turji 7 Dec burnt down bus in Sabon Birni area, killing at least 30 civilians; gunmen 10-11 Dec killed three and abducted at least 11 including local imam in same area. Youths 14 Dec gathered in federal capital Abuja and most north-western states to protest insecurity. In north-eastern Borno state, security operations kept Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP) and Boko Haram attacks at lower level. Military early Dec claimed air and ground operations 5 Dec killed ISWAP commander Abou Sufyan and “scores” of his fighters in Marte area. ISWAP militants 2 Dec abducted 15 including NGO local staff in Damboa area; 10 Dec attacked Civilian Joint Task Force base in Kaga area, killing two. Explosions 23 Dec left five dead in state capital Maiduguri hours before President Buhari’s visit in Borno. Herder-farmer violence continued to run high in several states. Notably, clash between ethnic Tiv farmers and Fulani herders in Gassol area of Taraba state (east) 2 Dec killed about 11 people and prompted others to flee; armed Fulani herders 17-20 Dec attacked Tiv villagers in alleged reprisal attacks in Nasarawa state (centre), reportedly leaving 45 dead. South East recorded lesser violence than in previous months. Soldiers 6 Dec clashed with separatist group Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)’s armed wing Eastern Security Network, which was allegedly using force to implement lockdown in Oru East area of Imo state to demand release of IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu.