

# Africa

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## Central Africa

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➔ **Cameroon Violence in Anglophone region continued, Ambazonian interim government elected new leader, and low-level jihadist attacks persisted in north east.**

Violent attacks continued in Anglophone areas. Notably, separatists 1 March killed nurse in regional capital Bamenda, North West region (NW); Ambazonia Defence Forces (ADF) 2 March launched mine explosion in Ekondo Titi town, Ndian division, South West region (SW), killing two officials and five others. In Menchum division (NW), pro-govt militias 9 March killed two in Esu locality and wounded two in Weh village; in response, villagers burned mosque and authorities subsequently deployed special forces to control riots in area. Separatists 29 March killed three Fulani herdsmen around Ndu locality (NW), prompting other herdsmen, alleged to be pro-govt militia members, to attack civilian homes, reportedly killing five. Soldiers 9 March raided Din village in Noni subdivision, Bui Division (NW), reportedly killing two. Residents accused soldiers of killing three in Bamenda on 20 March; soldiers also reportedly killed three in Bambui township near Bamenda 31 March. Médecins Sans Frontières 29 March confirmed leaving SW region, citing govt harassment. Teachers' strike which started mid-Feb prompted strong local reactions. Notably, students 7 March protested in Douala and Ebowola cities; President Biya 9 March acknowledged teachers' grievances and announced measures to speed up salary payment. Secondary school teachers 25 March called off strike as govt started resolving grievances. Meanwhile, Anglophone political movement saw leadership changes: Interim Government of Ambazonia separatist group 5 March elected Iya Marianta Njomia as new leader. Separatists also intensified efforts to coordinate objectives; delegates of six groups 11-13 March met in Germany to discuss refugees, internal displacement and human rights violations. Elsewhere, opposition political parties MRC and UDC, led by Maurice Kamto and Tomaino Ndam Njoya respectively, provided relief support to dozens of Bamouns chased from Memv'ele dam site, South region, in early March following tensions with Ntoumou ethnic group. In Far North region, Boko Haram 10,12 March attacked Rapid Intervention Battalion camp in Amchide and Limani towns, leaving no casualties. Jihadists 8 March killed Cameroonian soldier serving with Multinational Joint Task Force in Wulgo locality, Borno state, Nigeria.

➔ **Central African Republic National dialogue held despite opposition's boycott, pro-Russia protesters gathered during month following Ukraine war, and low-level violence persisted, notably in west and north.**

President Touadéra 15 March announced long-awaited national dialogue would take place 21-27 March, however said armed groups would not participate; in response, opposition 20 March declined invitation, citing armed group's exclusion and failure to include electoral transparency in agenda. Dialogue 27 March ended, producing 600 recommendations, notably proposing end of embargo on firearms, without clear implementation calendar. National electoral agency mid-month announced municipal elections planned for Sept 2022 would be delayed due to lack of funds. Central African Republic (CAR) and 16 other African countries 2 March abstained from UN General Assembly vote condemning Russian

invasion of Ukraine. CAR population showed support for Russia throughout month; notably, pro-Russia protesters 5 March gathered in capital Bangui and videos emerged during month of CAR soldiers announcing will to fight in Ukraine. Ukraine war also raised fears Russian paramilitary Wagner Group might reduce its presence in CAR; there was however no indication they had done so by end of month. Farmer-herder tensions 9 March led to clash in Koré village (Ouham-Pendé prefecture, west), leaving one dead and another wounded. Low-level violence between govt forces and rebels persisted during month: notably, govt forces 18 March clashed with Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC) in Bouca town (Ouham-Fafa prefecture, north) and 22 March with 3R rebel group in Nzakoundou village (Ouham-Pendé, west), leaving at least two soldiers dead and ten people wounded. Wagner forces early to mid-month reportedly attacked civilians, including 11 March killing dozens in Gondile village (Vakaga prefecture, east) and 12 March killing over 15 in Markounda village (Ouham prefecture, centre). Following 27 Feb arrest on CAR-Chad border, CPC rebel group leader and former Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Minister Maxime Mokom transferred 14 March to International Criminal Court on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during 2013-2014 civil war.

➔ **Chad Pre-dialogue with armed groups got off to difficult start, President Mahamat Déby sought to reinforce links with Rwanda, and judges went on nationwide strike.** Ahead of national inclusive dialogue planned in May, long-delayed pre-dialogue between Transitional Military Council (CMT) and armed groups 13 March kicked off in Qatari capital Doha. Rebel group Front pour l'Alternance et la Concorde au Tchad (FACT) representatives same day walked out, demanding Qatar mediate talks and accusing CMT of including large number of armed groups (52 in total) in negotiations to dilute groups' demands. Qatar immediately suspended negotiations, demanding armed groups select a number of representatives for talks. Committee charged with preparing pre-dialogue and headed by former President Goukkouni Weddeye 9 March dismissed, sparking further suspicion among armed groups in run-up to talks. After groups 22 March split up into three factions, pre-dialogue following day resumed with Qatar mediating. Civil society group Casac, close to CMT, 6 March held demonstration in support of transition and French presence. In Mao city (Kanem region, west), incident toward policeman, which then put judge at risk, prompted strike across judiciary: after gendarmerie and military 10 March beat up and injured policeman, prompting victim's family 14 March to assault judge in retaliation, judges across country 17-20 March went on strike, demanding increased security for judiciary; judges 22 March prolonged strike indefinitely. Military 27 March molested two other judges in Kelo city in south, sparking strong reactions from magistrate's unions. Fulani pastoralists and Massa farmers 13 March clashed in Moulkou prefecture (Mako-Kebbi Est region, south west), leaving three dead. Meanwhile, Déby 18 March met Rwandan President Kagame in Rwanda's capital Kigali, signed general cooperation agreement.

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## **Great Lakes**

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➔ **Burundi Suspected killings at hands of intelligence officers continued across country, insecurity persisted at border with DR Congo's (DRC) South Kivu, and rapprochement with Rwanda forged**

**ahead.** Low-level violence continued to be reported. Notably, unknown assailant 6 March killed woman with machete in Karuzi province, unknown attackers same day stabbed to death man in Makamba province. Locals of Cibitoke province 11 March found three chained bodies, two men and one woman; reliable local sources alleged intelligence officers may have killed all three victims and dumped their bodies in locality; discoveries of corpses increased in frequency in Cibitoke province, with locals indicating that more than eight corpses were found in last five months. Locals 1 March also discovered two bodies in capital Bujumbura and another one in Kirundo province 2 March. Authorities reportedly continued to send soldiers to DRC's South Kivu to fight Burundian rebels of Résistance pour un Etat de Droit (RED-Tabara); delegation of six governors from Burundian provinces bordering DRC 9 March met with South Kivu counterparts in Uvira territory, South Kivu province, to discuss common interests and ongoing insecurity in region, presence of Burundian soldiers on Congolese soil however not directly discussed. Meanwhile, Rwanda 7 March opened its border to Burundi; Burundian borders however remain closed as authorities insisted that Rwanda hand over those responsible for 2015 coup attempt first. President Ndayishimiye 15 March welcomed Rwandan delegation headed by defence minister, suggesting possible face-to-face meeting between Burundian and Rwandan presidents might take place soon.

↓ **DR Congo** **ADF rebels expanded further into Ituri province, leaving scores dead, while thousands fled to Uganda following clashes between army and M23 militia.** Violence in east spread despite ongoing state of siege and presence of Ugandan army. Notably, Cooperative for the Development of Congo (CODECO) 8 March killed 18 civilians seeking refuge in Kilo-Mission catholic parish, Djugu territory in Ituri province; also continued to detain members of Tshisekedi's Task Force who were kidnapped in Feb. Meanwhile, Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and local Mai-Mai militiamen 9 March clashed in Irumu territory, leaving five people killed; ADF 13-14 March killed at least 52 civilians in four villages in Irumu, and 15 March killed seven civilians in Otomabere village, also in Irumu. In North Kivu province, ADF killed at least 20 civilians in Kikura village, 3km from Ugandan army's base in Beni area; two ADF groups 12 March killed more than 30 people in Beni, 27 of them in Mambumembume village. A Ugandan military commander 6 March admitted that ADF had spread out into western Ituri, far from Ugandan border. Congolese army 28 March said M23 rebels attacked its positions in east, accusing Rwanda of supporting militia; Rwanda immediately denied accusations. About 6,000 civilians fled to neighbouring Uganda following clashes. Army claimed M23 downed UN helicopter 29 March, killing eight. Meanwhile, electoral preparations kicked off. Notably, President of Independent National Electoral Commission Denis Kadima 3 March published roadmap for upcoming presidential and legislative elections planned for Dec 2023; also scheduled municipal and local elections (which would make it first such elections in DR Congo's history) in late 2023. Parliament 15 March reconvened, prioritising debate on electoral laws and reforms, including potential two rounds in presidential elections and new law on nationality (which would exclude presidential candidates without Congolese parents such as Moïse Katumbi, one of lead contenders). President Tshisekedi 17 March declared commitment to holding elections on time. François Beya, Tshisekedi's former special adviser on security, continued to be held at National Intelligence Agency's premises;

local group “Free François Beya” 11 March submitted memorandum to National Commission for Human Rights calling for his trial or release.

➔ **Uganda Crackdown on critics of President Museveni continued and rumours circulated about Army Commander Muhoozi Kainerugaba’s potential presidential ambitions.** Police 10 March arrested nine journalists for “offensive communication”; authorities later released seven of them and 16 March charged two journalists, including author and activist Norman Tumuhimbise, with cyberstalking Museveni. Court 23 March issued arrest warrant for exiled novelist Kakwenza Rukirabashaija, who had previously been charged with “offensive communication”. Commander of army’s land forces, Museveni’s son Lt Gen Muhoozi Kainerugaba, 8 March announced his retirement from army on Twitter sparking speculation he was preparing to succeed Museveni as president; Kainerugaba later that day denied resigning, while army 10 March confirmed he had not applied for retirement. Kainerugaba 14 March travelled to Rwandan capital Kigali for second round of talks with Rwandan President Kagame over restoration of bilateral ties following full reopening 7 March of Uganda-Rwanda border. Kainerugaba 17 March travelled to Egypt to meet Egyptian President al-Sisi for talks on strengthening military relations. Brig Gen Joseph Balikudembe 3 March gave update on disarmament operation in Karamoja sub-district launched in July 2021, said security forces had killed 251 suspected cattle rustlers, arrested over 1,600 people and recovered 160 guns; Balikudembe also alleged 500 illegally owned guns remain in hands of ethnic Karimojong herders. Military officials 23 March announced alleged Turkana cattle rustlers from Kenya had killed three govt employees and two military personnel 21 March in Moroto district in Karamoja region. Ugandan operations in DR Congo (DRC) continued, reportedly scattering armed group Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) into smaller groups as rebels continued to attack civilians on Congolese soil (see DR Congo). Ugandan forces reportedly deployed additional units along DRC border after M23 rebels 27 March reportedly attacked military positions in DRC; according to military, clashes prompted at least 10,000 Congolese to flee to Uganda as of 29 March. Lawmakers 10 March demanded govt take action against spike in commodity prices attributed to relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions and Russian invasion of Ukraine. Following death of Parliament Speaker Jacob Oulanyah 20 March, parliament 25 March elected Deputy Speaker Annet Anita Among as new speaker.

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## **Horn of Africa**

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➔ **Eritrea Authorities voted against UN resolutions condemning Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, making Eritrea sole country in Africa to do so.** Eritrea 2 March joined Russia, Belarus, North Korea and Syria in voting against UN General Assembly resolution condemning Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, said it was acting in opposition to “illegal” and “unilateral” imposition of sanctions on Russia; 24 March voted against other UN resolution demanding protection of civilians in Ukraine.

➔ **Ethiopia Federal govt declared humanitarian truce to allow aid into Tigray region; violence remained rampant in several other regions.** In northern Tigray region, Ethiopian air force 4 March conducted two drone attacks

near Bahre-Negash resort and airport in Shire city, North Western Zone; death toll unknown. Federal govt 24 March declared “indefinite humanitarian truce effective immediately”, saying it hoped to help facilitate free flow of humanitarian aid into Tigray; Tigray govt next day pledged to respect ceasefire if aid was speedily delivered. In neighbouring Afar region, Tigray forces and Afar regional special forces and militias throughout month continued to clash in Kilbati Rasu (Zone 2). Skirmishes also reported in Amhara region between Tigray forces on one hand, and Amhara regional special forces, Fano militias and Amhara ethnic militias on the other, in Kobo (North Wello Zone) and Sekota (Wag Hamra Zone) districts along Amhara-Tigray border. Also in Amhara region, Fano militiamen around 7-10 March clashed with Amhara regional special forces in East Gojam Zone; four regional police officers killed in Mota town. In Oromia region, fighting between security forces and Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) further expanded and intensified in West, North and East Shewa zones. Both sides reportedly targeted civilians: notably, OLA 8 March attacked and reportedly killed seven civilians in Illu Galan district in West Shewa Zone; violence continued next day in and around Ejaji town. Further complicating conflict in Oromia, suspected Fano militia 5-7 March shot dead unknown number of ethnic Karayyu pastoralists in Fentale district of East Shewa Zone. In same area, unidentified assailants 31 March killed 26 people in ambush on Oromia govt-backed militia vehicle. In Benishangul-Gumuz region, unidentified gunmen 2 March ambushed civilian convoy and its military escort in Metekel Zone; 20 soldiers, three civilians and 30 assailants killed; regional security forces and militia next day reportedly rounded up suspects and summarily killed 11, most of them ethnic Tigrayans. Gambela regional govt 12 March said clashes between South Sudanese military and rebels in border areas had in recent days killed at least one and displaced over 9,000 residents of Lare and Jikawo districts, Nuer Zone.

➔ **Kenya Al-Shabaab attacks continued near Somalia border, intercommunal violence persisted in several areas; preparations for Aug general elections moved forward despite tensions.** In coastal Lamu county, military around 9 and 20 March killed at least three suspected Al-Shabaab militants in Boni forest, and Al-Shabaab 11 March killed at least five people in attack on construction site in Majengo area. Explosive device 13 March also targeted construction workers in Banisa area, Mandera county (north east), injuring two. Intercommunal violence linked to cattle raiding, land and pasture access but also local political competition left several dead across country. Notably, in Isiolo county, clashes between members of Degodia community from Wajir county and members of Borana community from Isiolo county early March reportedly killed at least five in Degogicha area. In Rift Valley, suspected Pokot militia 5 March reportedly killed at least four people in attacks on several villages in Baringo county; cattle rustlers 20 March reportedly killed two and injured seven in attack in Koitilial village in Elgeyo-Marakwet county. As part of sustained effort to counter hate speech ahead of 9 Aug general elections, National Cohesion and Integration Commission 11 March summoned presidential hopeful Raila Odinga for using divisive language at campaign rally in Wajir county earlier in month. Political parties’ nomination of candidates for legislative and governorship elections sparked tensions. Notably, brawl 7 March broke out between ruling Jubilee Party members in Nakuru county, and clashes next day erupted between supporters of two candidates seeking Odinga’s Orange Democratic Movement ticket for governorship elections in Mombasa county. Supreme Court 31 March blocked constitutional changes proposed by President

Kenyatta, declaring process unconstitutional; initiative would have strengthened executive powers in move opponents said sought to cement Kenyatta's ability to shape country's political future ahead of elections.

↓ **Somalia Al-Shabaab launched deadliest attack to date on election venues leaving almost 50 killed, while Lower House elections inched forward.** Al-Shabaab 23 March launched twin suicide attacks near election venue in Hirshabelle state's Beledweyne city, killing at least 48 including current MP Amina Mohamed Abdi. Al-Shabaab same day raided Mogadishu's Halane airport compound, breaching airport perimeter for first time since 2014 and killing at least six, including five foreign nationals. Al-Shabaab militants 7 and 15 March also shot dead two electoral delegates in Lower Shabelle region (South West state) and capital Mogadishu respectively. Mortar shelling between Al-Shabaab militants and African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) soldiers on outskirts of Janaale town in Lower Shabelle 8 March left at least five civilians dead. Meanwhile, South West and Galmudug states concluded Lower House elections by 15 March deadline. Puntland state later in month also concluded elections after state President Said Abdullahi Deni 4 March agreed to reinstate Gen Mohamud Abdullahi as head of Puntland Security Force, allowing selection of all 16 seats in Bosaso city next day. Twenty-six seats remained unfulfilled in Jubaland and Hirshabelle states by month's end. Power struggle between Hirshabelle President Ali Guudlawe and VP Yusuf Dabageed complicated selection of seats in Beledweyne city. Amid wider dispute between Jubaland and federal govts over Gedo region, Garbaharey city's 16 seats remained problematic: in response to Jubaland administration seeking to shift voting location to Ceel Waaq city in Gedo, federally-appointed governor of Gedo Ahmed Bulle Gareed 16 March said all of Jubaland's 43 seats should be moved to Garbaharey, implying non-recognition of seats already filled in Kismayo city. Meanwhile, federal election body 15 March set 14 April for swearing-in of elected MPs, but South West and Galmudug states immediately said National Consultative Council (comprising federal and state leaders) should set date instead. U.S. 16 March expanded number of Somalis subject to visa restrictions for "undermining the democratic process". UN Security Council 31 March endorsed African Union (AU)'s new transitional mission in Somalia, replacing AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), authorised it to take action against al-Qaeda and Islamic State groups.

➔ **Somaliland Controversy around sequencing of political parties' selection and presidential election resurfaced, and President Bihi visited U.S. as part of foreign policy offensive.** Contradictory public remarks from President Bihi and opposition early March signalled persisting disagreement over timetable for registration of political parties and presidential elections. Bihi around 7 March said registration for new political parties will open in June, followed by presidential election in Nov. In following days, Waddani and UCID opposition parties accused Bihi of seeking to use political party registration process as a means of postponing presidential election and "move away from democracy". Meanwhile, Bihi 13 March embarked on first visit to U.S., met in following days with State Dept, National Security Council and Congress representatives. U.S. Bureau of African Affairs 14 March welcomed opportunity to discuss "strengthening U.S. engagement with Somaliland within the framework of our single Somalia policy". Harassment against journalists and curtailment of free speech persisted. Suspected intelligence officers 18 March reportedly fired at vehicle of two journalists in capital Hargeisa.

↓ **South Sudan Fighting between main signatories of 2018 peace deal threatened gov't's unity, herder-farmer violence increased across various states, and deadly clashes peaked in disputed Abyei area.**

In Upper Nile state, fighting 19-20 March erupted in Maiwut county between President Kiir's South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF) and VP Riek Machar's Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-In Opposition (SPLM/A-IO); violence 24 March spread to Longechuk county. SPLM/A-IO 22 March pulled out from peace monitoring mechanism, citing recurrent SSPDF attacks against its bases in Upper Nile and Unity states. Troika countries (U.S., U.K. and Norway) supporting peace deal next day expressed concern and called on gov't to salvage 2018 peace agreement. SSPDF 24 March said SPLM/A-IO "officially at war" with SSPDF. Machar 26 March rejected Kiir's directive issued previous day on unification of command structure of regular forces. Machar 28 March said SSPDF forces previous night surrounded his house in capital Juba, said move "weakens trust and confidence building"; Kiir immediately downplayed military deployment to Machar's house, saying it was regular security routine. Violence continued in Eastern Equatoria state between herders from Jonglei state and local farming communities: Bor Dinka cattle keepers 2 March raided Abara village (Magwi county), killing at least five and displacing hundreds of residents, in apparent retaliatory attack for 27 Feb clashes in same county which left at least 20 Bor Dinka pastoralists killed. In neighbouring Central Equatoria state, suspected Dinka herders around 13 March killed 19 people in Lokiliri Payam, Juba county. In Jonglei state, clashes between suspected Murle cattle raiders and local cattle keepers 7 March left at least 13 people killed in Duk county. In Unity state, cross-border violence between South Sudanese cattle herders and Sudanese nomadic pastoralists 6 March killed seven people and injured 11 others in Payang-gai cattle camp, Rubkona county. In disputed Abyei Administrative Area along border with Sudan, suspected Misseriya militiamen from Sudan and suspected Dinka militiamen from Twic county (Warrap state) 5-6 March killed at least 47 people, including many Ngok Dinka. UN Security Council 15 March extended peacekeeping mission in South Sudan for one year until 15 March 2023.

➔ **Sudan Amid worsening economic crisis, authorities continued crackdown on anti-coup voices and opposition; intercommunal violence killed dozens in Darfur and deadly clashes peaked in disputed Abyei area.**

Security forces 10 March shot dead two people including 11-year-old boy during anti-coup protests in capital Khartoum and neighbouring Omdurman city. Thousands 17 March protested soaring prices and poor living conditions in Khartoum and across country, prompting clashes with police which left 187 reportedly injured; U.S. Treasury 21 March imposed sanctions on Central Reserve Police unit for using excessive force on protesters. Commission investigating June 2019 killing of over 100 protesters by security forces forced to suspend operations after security forces 7 March raided and seized its offices. Amid series of arrests since Feb of Empowerment Removal Committee (ERC) officials tasked with dismantling remnants of former President al-Bashir's regime, authorities 8 March arrested prominent politician and ERC member Babiker Faisal, reportedly on breach of trust charges. Amid deteriorating economic situation, Central Bank 7 March floated country's currency in effort to stabilise Sudanese pound's exchange rate; currency next day devalued by 19%. UN mission to Sudan (UNITAMS) and African Union 10 March announced joint initiative with regional trade bloc Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to help safeguard democratic transition. In

briefing to UN Security Council, UN Envoy Volker Perthes 28 March warned Sudan is heading for “economic and security collapse” unless political deadlock is addressed; UN agencies 23 March said number of Sudanese facing acute hunger likely to double to 18mn by Sept due to economic crisis, conflict and poor harvests. Violence in Darfur and along border with South Sudan killed dozens. Notably, in Jebel Moon mountains, West Darfur state, clashes between Arab nomads and farmers from Misseriya Jebel tribe 5-7 March killed at least 16; renewed tribal violence 10 March killed at least 19 people in same region. Local authorities 31 March said fresh fighting between Fallata and Rizeigat tribes 29-30 March killed 45 people in villages outside South Darfur state capital Nyala. Violence 5-6 March flared in disputed Abyei area between Sudan and South Sudan, leaving at least 47 people dead (see South Sudan).

↑ **Tanzania In step toward reconciliation, authorities engaged in dialogue with newly released opposition leader Freeman Mbowe.**

Authorities 4 March released chairman of main opposition party Chadema, Freeman Mbowe, and three others from prison after prosecutors dropped terrorism-related charges levelled against them following arrest in July 2021; Mbowe hours later met with President Suluhu Hassan, both pledged to build trust. Chadema Deputy Chairman Tundu Lissu 12 March announced intention to return to Tanzania from self-imposed exile in Belgium, saying he was “positive” Suluhu Hassan would give him security assurances. Significant differences however persisted between govt and Chadema, notably over Chadema’s demand for constitutional reform: Mbowe 18 March announced Chadema would boycott cross-party national dialogue initiative scheduled for 30-31 March as agenda failed to include talks on new constitution; president’s office around 22 March said issue of new constitution would be addressed after 2025 general elections. PM Kassim Majaliwa 24 March reaffirmed commitment to anti-terrorism efforts in Mozambique’s Cabo Delgado province during East Africa regional security conference in Jordan.

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## **Southern Africa**

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➔ **Mozambique Islamist militants continued to carry out attacks on several fronts in northern Cabo Delgado province, notably engaging in one of most significant clashes with security forces in recent months.**

Militants 15-17 March engaged in fierce fighting with security forces on Matemo island, Ibo district, reportedly leaving at least 17 dead on both sides; Islamic State (ISIS) social media channels later published images of several beheaded soldiers. Militants early March consolidated their presence around Litingina town in Nangade district, sparking fears that Nangade town itself may be vulnerable to attack. Notably, insurgents 3 March attacked Unidade village, killing unspecified number of people, and hours later moved to Litingina, with one source reporting three civilians killed and insurgents occupying town; next day reportedly beheaded three people in Chibau village, and 5 March raided Malamba village, killing up to seven people. In response, forces of Southern African Development Community, military and local militia 7 March launched ground assault with aerial support on insurgents’ base in Machava village, reportedly killing over 30. Militants 11 March however attacked Namuembe village, and 18 March beheaded two people in Litingina before clashing



with police. In neighbouring Mueda district, suspected Islamist militants 20 and 24 March killed three people including two women in two villages. Violence in Macomia district showed no sign of abating: insurgents launched repeated assaults on military garrison in Nova Zambezia village, killing at least one soldier overnight 6-7 March, and five people including female militia fighter and one soldier 8 March; ISIS claimed both attacks; further fighting reported 24 March on northern edge of Macomia town. Amid food shortages, insurgents week of 21-27 March seemingly released around 200 hostages across Macomia, Muidumbe and Mocímboa da Praia districts. Reports of abuses continued to erode trust in govt forces: police or military officers 4 March reportedly shot dead young man in Macomia district. As part of major cabinet reshuffle, President Nyusi 3 March sacked PM Carlos Agostinho do Rosário; move allegedly aims to stem political damage caused by ongoing trial of 19 senior officials in \$2bn corruption scandal ahead of ruling Frelimo party conference in Sept.

➔ **Zimbabwe** Following tense electoral campaign, main opposition party emerged as major winner in legislative and municipal by-elections.

Nelson Chamisa's newly established Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) won 19 National Assembly seats in 26 March by-elections to fill 28 vacant seats following recalls, deaths and dismissals over last two years; ruling ZANU-PF party won remainder, including two seats previously controlled by opposition, and retains two-thirds majority in parliament. CCC also claimed winning 61% of seats in local govt by-elections. Voter turnout low at 35%. Run-up to elections marred by tensions and violence. Police repeatedly blocked CCC rallies, notably in Marondera city 12 March. CCC next day said Zimbabwe Electoral Commission and police biased in favour of ZANU-PF party, noting ruling party rallies have gone unhindered. Police 17 March allegedly assaulted CCC supporter Muleya Mwananyanda in Harare Central District; NGO Amnesty International next day denounced "brutal and vicious assault", raised alarm about "partisan policing and torture". Masvingo High Court 19 March authorised CCC to hold major rally in Masvingo city next day, after CCC filed urgent chamber application seeking reprieve over police ban on rally; brawls erupted between party youths during rally.

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## Sahel

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↓ **Burkina Faso** Surge in jihadist violence recorded in north and east after period of relative calm since Jan coup; international partners reacted cautiously to military junta's three-year transitional plan.

In Sahel region (north), presumed Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) militants launched raids on gold mining sites, killing at least 14 civilians in Seno province's Seytenga department 10 March and another ten in Oudalan province's Gorom-Gorom department 12 March; suspected jihadists 14 March killed three civilians and four volunteers fighting alongside security forces in Arbinda town, and air force 20-22 March reportedly killed 53 jihadists near Djibo town, both Soum province. In Centre-North region, presumed jihadists 6 March killed eight people in Sanmatenga province; al-Qaeda-affiliated Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM) militants 13 March launched complex attacks in Namentenga province, reportedly killing 15 people including 13 gendarmes. In North region, local media 17 March

reported security forces had killed approximately 40 jihadists in Loroum province 15-16 March. High levels of violence persisted in East region: army airstrikes in Kompienga and Tapoa provinces 3 March killed unknown number of JNIM militants; JNIM 20 March killed 13 soldiers in Gourma province's Natiaboani area. In neighbouring Centre-East region, presumed JNIM militants 20 March launched complex ambush against military in Koulpelogo province, killing at least 11 soldiers. In Boucle du Mouhoun region (west), army 3 and 8 March conducted airstrikes on suspected jihadists after repelling sophisticated attack on Toeni military outpost (Sourou province) 28 Feb. Military junta leader Lt Col Damiba 1 March signed new transition charter allowing military to stay in power for three years; Damiba 2 March renewed oath of office as president under terms of new transitional charter. Damiba 5 March appointed new interim govt, with university lecturer Albert Ouedraogo sworn in as PM 7 March. In reaction to three-year transition plan, regional body Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) cancelled 3 March visit of regional leaders to capital Ouagadougou; 25 March threatened "economic and financial sanctions" should authorities fail to finalise "acceptable transition timetable" by 25 April.

↓ **Mali Violent clashes opposed jihadists and 2015 peace agreement signatory groups in north east, reportedly leaving hundreds dead; military suffered deadliest jihadist attack in months.** In north east near border with Niger, fighting resumed between Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) and 2015 peace agreement signatory groups – Movement for the Salvation of Azawad, and Tuareg Imghad and Allied Self-Defence Group – in Tamalat, Inchinane and Anderamboukane (Ménaka region) and Talataye (Gao region) areas; violence throughout month reportedly killed hundreds including civilians. In Mopti region (centre), suspected jihadist group 4 March launched deadliest attack on military in months, killing at least 27 soldiers at army base in Mondoro town near Burkina Faso's border; army said troops killed 70 militants in response. UN mission (MINUSMA) convoy 7 March detonated explosive device north of Mopti city; two peacekeepers killed. Alleged ISGS militants 21 March launched twin attacks on military in Tessit (Gao region) and Boni (Mopti region) towns; army reported 16 soldiers and 13 assailants killed. Meanwhile, authorities faced new allegations of extrajudicial killings. Residents of Ségou region (centre) 3 March discovered at least 35 bodies, including some with holes in their heads, near Diabaly town; UN mission 4 March launched investigation into killings; army next day denied allegations of involvement. NGO Human Rights Watch 15 March alleged govt forces had killed at least 71 civilians in central and south-western Mali since Dec, condemned "new wave of executions of civilians" and urged independent inquiries. UN expert on Mali 29 March also raised concerns at UN Human Rights Council about "serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law" attributed to Malian forces. In unprecedented clampdown on foreign media, govt 17 March suspended broadcasts by French news outlets RFI and France24, accusing them of relaying false allegations of army exactions. West Africa regional bloc ECOWAS's envoy for Mali, former Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan, 18-20 March travelled to capital Bamako to discuss return to constitutional order with transition authorities; Interim President Goïta reportedly proposed 24-month timetable; ECOWAS 25 March upheld sanctions on Mali and asked transition authorities to stage elections within 12-16 months.

↓ **Niger** **Jihadist groups stepped up attacks in Tillabery and Diffa regions, leaving over 50 dead; relocation of French Barkhane and European Takuba forces from Mali to Niger remained divisive.** In Tillabery region (south west), explosive devices likely planted by al-Qaeda-affiliated Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM) around 3-4 March killed five soldiers in Torodi department. Suspected jihadists 16 March attacked civilian transport vehicles in Tera department, killing 21 people including at least two police officers; 24 March ambushed army convoy in Kolmane area, also Tera department, killing six soldiers. Jihadists also ramped up attacks in Diffa region (south east). Govt forces 2 March clashed with suspected Boko Haram Bakura faction militants in Gueskerou commune (Diffa department), number of casualties unknown. Bakura combatants 7 March attacked six villages in Diffa department, killing at least 20 people and abducting unknown number of women. President Bazoum defended decision to open dialogue with jihadists: after announcing late Feb he had sent emissaries to “nine terrorist leaders” and released several militants from prison in effort to “search for peace”, Bazoum 10 March told Qatar-based news channel Al Jazeera that dialogue with JNIM militants could produce positive outcome, insisted military force is necessary part of any solution. Ruling coalition 5 March issued statement supporting Bazoum’s decision to accept redeployment of French Barkhane and European Takuba forces to Niger. In letter to French President Macron, opposition MP Omar Hamidou 7 March opposed relocation, said French and European forces had “lost all credibility” in Nov 2021 when three protesters were killed in clashes with Barkhane forces in Tillabery’s Tera department.

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## **West Africa**

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➔ **Côte d’Ivoire** **Land dispute turned violent in north, and national political dialogue involving authorities, political opposition and civil society concluded.** Fighting 3 March erupted between residents of Niéllé and Diawala towns in Savanes district (north), killing seven people and wounding 22 others; violence reportedly erupted due to ownership dispute over sand quarry believed to be rich in gold deposits. Authorities around 5 March closed site. Unidentified armed group 4 March ambushed Defence and Security Forces patrol on Bondoukou-Bouna axis in Bounkani region (Zanzan district in north east), leaving one gendarme dead. Meanwhile, PM Patrick Achi 4 March closed fifth and final phase of National Political Dialogue. Govt, 21 political parties and 26 civil society organisations recommended establishing financial compensation scheme for victims of 2020 electoral crisis and reforming Independent Electoral Commission; delegates also discussed but could not reach agreement on number of appeasement measures, notably halting legal proceedings launched against dozens of opposition leaders for alleged involvement in late-2020 electoral violence; authorising former PM Guillaume Soro and former Youth Minister Charles Blé Goudé to return home; and granting amnesty to Blé Goudé and former President Gbagbo.

➔ **Guinea** **Tensions over management and duration of post-coup transition persisted as civil society and political opposition threatened protests against ruling military junta.** Prominent civil society coalition National Front for the Defence of the Constitution 1 March asserted authenticity of

document circulated late-Feb on social media detailing President Doumbouya's alleged plan for four-year transition; also called for protests to "oppose with determination any idea of a long transition". Coalition of 58 political formations, including main opposition parties Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea (UFDG) and Union of Republican Forces (UFR), 9 March threatened protests over Doumbouya's "unilateral" management style and urged regional bloc Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to appoint special envoy to arbitrate political process; demanded transparency over composition of junta – whose members transitional charter bans from competing in forthcoming elections; and stressed "socio-political stakeholders in concert with the junta" (but not legislative body National Transitional Council as Doumbouya argues) should set transition's duration. UFDG leader Cellou Dalein Diallo 5 March said authorities' move in Feb to confiscate his and UFR leader Sidya Touré's residences in capital Conakry as part of corruption cases reflected "desire to harm and humiliate political leaders". Authorities 22 March launched National Conference bringing together some political parties, youth groups, women's organisations, traditional leaders and civil society organisations to discuss "new institutional framework"; opposition coalition including Diallo and Touré's parties however boycotted talks, citing lack of consultation on conference's agenda. During summit in Ghana, ECOWAS 25 March said it will impose "immediate economic and financial sanctions" on Guinea should authorities fail to propose "acceptable transition timetable" by 25 April.

↓ **Nigeria Surge in armed group violence left hundreds dead in North West and adjoining Niger state, disrupting air and train services to Kaduna city.** In Kebbi state, armed groups 6-8 March killed 63 vigilantes and eight soldiers in Sakaba area; 8 March ambushed Kebbi Deputy Governor Samaila Yombe's convoy in Wasagu-Danko area, killing 19 security forces. In Kaduna state, gunmen 15-20 March killed 42 people and kidnapped over 80 in Birnin Gwari, Kachia and Kaura areas; 24-29 March killed about 90 people, abducted others in Giwa area. Abuja-Kaduna train services and some airlines' flights to Kaduna indefinitely suspended following two incidents: armed groups 26 March killed one guard at Kaduna airport before being repelled, leaving 12 assailants killed; 28 March attacked Abuja-Kaduna train, killed at least eight people and abducted unconfirmed number. In Zamfara state, gunmen 20 March killed at least 24 people in Bukkuyum area. In Niger state, armed groups 9-28 March attacked villages in Munya and Paikoro areas, killing unknown number and abducting about 65 including Catholic priest; ambush 28 March killed six soldiers in Suleja area; at least 23 persons 30 March drowned while fleeing attack in Munya area. Military 24 Feb-10 March reportedly killed 90 gunmen across Katsina, Kebbi and Zamfara states; 16 March killed another 100 in Niger's Bangi town. Meanwhile in Borno state (North East), military 3-9 March killed scores of jihadists in encounters and airstrikes in Damboa area. Clashes between Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) and Boko Haram in Dikwa and Mobbar areas 5 and 8 March reportedly left about 40 insurgents killed. In South East, attacks widely blamed on separatist group Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)'s armed wing, Eastern Security Network (ESN), 15 March killed four in Ntezi town, Ebonyi state, and 19 March killed two police in Imo state's Owerri West area. Gunmen 19 March raided home of prominent Igbo figure George Obiozor in Imo's Oru East area. Troops 29 March overran IPOB/ESN camp in Ihiala area, Anambra state. Herder-farmer violence killed 26 in Donga area, Taraba state, 7 March; 12 in Benue state's Guma area 8-9 March; and six in Guri area, Jigawa state, 18 March.

➔ **Senegal Military launched operation against Casamance separatists in country's south.** Authorities 13 March launched military operation against separatist group Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance in southern Casamance region, with stated aim of dismantling group's bases and preserving integrity of national territory. Gambian authorities 22 March said over 6,000 people had fled their homes since operation started, most of whom were displaced inside Gambia after Senegalese bullets landed on Gambian villages bordering Casamance. Dakar 23 March announced military operation had destroyed eight rebel bases across Casamance so far; also reported several rebels and one soldier killed.