



Africa

Central Africa

➔ **Cameroon President Biya conducted minor military reshuffle; separatists enforced lockdown as school year started in Anglophone regions.**

President Biya made changes in armed forces. Amid series of coups in West Africa and neighbouring Gabon, Biya 30 Aug replaced some colonel rank officers holding technical positions, and 4 Sept signed decree creating specialised military school in distant Motcheboum town, East region, to train soldiers for peace missions.

Separatists launched several attacks amid lockdown in Anglophone regions. As new school year started, Anglophone separatists 4-18 Sept violently enforced lockdown in North West (NW) and South West (SW) regions; lockdown served as show of force and protest at unresolved conflict. Notably, armed separatists 2 Sept killed two head teachers in Belo town, Boyo division (NW); 5 Sept attacked military truck with explosive device in Lebialem division (SW), killing at least one civilian and wounding others; and 7 Sept stopped cars and shot at passengers to block access to Muea neighbourhood of SW regional capital Buea, leaving three civilians killed. Suspected separatist fighters 29 Sept also killed gendarme in Awing locality, Mezam division (NW).

Military stepped up monitoring operations in Far North after spate of jihadist attacks. After Mayo-Sava and Mayo-Tsanaga divisions in Aug experienced surge in violence, soldiers 9 Sept thwarted Boko Haram (BH) raids on Limani and Djakana villages (Mayo-Sava division), killing two militants. Army 21 Sept ambushed BH fighters in Galdala village (Mayo-Tsanaga), killing three. Islamic State West Africa Province militants 21 Sept reportedly killed one gendarme in Darak, Logone-et-Chari division.

In other important developments. Cameroon and Nigeria early Sept launched joint operation against Biafra separatist group Black Marine in Bakassi Peninsula (SW), reportedly dislodging militants from Abana town, Idabato subdivision, by 10 Sept.

➔ **Central African Republic Presidential Guard detained army officers, reflecting widening rifts within army amid series of coups in West and Central Africa; armed group violence continued unabated in hinterland.**

Coup in Gabon sparked tensions in Bangui. Amid rumours of imminent coup in Bangui in wake of military overthrow of President Bongo in Gabon, Presidential Guard 10 Sept arrested unknown number of army officers, including Capt. Kamezo-

Lai Gilbert and Chief Warrant Officer Kohoté Fabia, both close relatives of diaspora opposition activist Regis Sikangba. Armed forces in following days started identity checks by night on roads of capital Bangui.

President Touadéra proceeded to arrest former rebel leader turned ally. Authorities 4 Sept detained former rebel leader Abdoulaye Hissène, and UN-backed Special Criminal Court 7 Sept charged him with crimes against humanity and war crimes committed in 2017 as one of main leaders of Popular Front for the Renaissance of the Central African Republic. NGO Human Rights Watch next day welcomed move as step toward ending impunity. Many in govt circles however perceived Hissène's arrest as disloyal move from Touadéra, as Hissène had become govt's ally since 2019 peace agreement.

Armed groups continued to increase presence in hinterland following referendum. In Nana-Mambéré prefecture (west), govt forces and Russian Wagner Group paramilitaries 2 Sept killed eight 3R rebels in operation 70km from Baoro town; Wagner and 3R elements 10 Sept clashed in Baboua sub-prefecture, leaving one Wagner dead. Attacks by unidentified armed men continued in Bamingui-Bangoran prefecture (north), including ambushes on army checkpoints in Djamassinda and Miaméré villages on 7 and 11 Sept. Rwandan peacekeepers from 26 Aug onward intensified patrols in villages between Mbrès and Koukourou, Nana-Gribizi prefecture (centre), after locals reported increased armed group presence. Meanwhile, UN mission (MINUSCA) 27 Sept announced deployment of peacekeepers in Mboki city, Haut-Mbomou prefecture (east), after Azande Ani Kpi Gbe militia 31 Aug attacked regional peace committee delegation.

In other important developments. As part of unprecedented tour of African countries collaborating with Wagner, Russian Deputy Defence Minister, Col-Gen Yanous Bek Evrourov, 2 Sept met with Touadéra in Bangui. Pursuing diplomatic appeasement initiated since early 2023, French President Macron and Touadéra 13 Sept met in France's capital Paris.

➡ **Chad** **Deadly incident at military base run by French forces sparked calls for departure of French troops; influx of Sudanese refugees continued to strain eastern provinces.**

Constitutional referendum remained controversial. Opposition coalition led by Republican Platform leader, former minister Sidick Abdelkerim Haggar, 13 Sept called for boycott of constitutional referendum scheduled for 17 December. Another gathering of 15 major opposition parties 13 Sept denounced "violation of the principle of equality and uniqueness of place and time" as authorities 28 Aug-16 Sept conducted electoral census in country's central and northern provinces after having covered southern provinces between 24 July and 6 Aug.

Killing of Chadian soldier sparked calls for French troops' departure. French soldier 5 Sept shot and killed Chadian soldier in French military base in Faya city, Borkou province, allegedly in self-defence. Angry residents 5-6 Sept took to the streets in protest and tried to make their way into French base, prompting Chadian security forces to use live ammunition to disperse gathering. Chadian and French armies 6 Sept announced joint investigation into incident. Coalition of opposition parties and civil society organisations Wakit Tama 7 Sept denounced "murder" and called for withdrawal of French troops.

Eastern provinces continued to face humanitarian fallout of Sudan war. International Organisation for Migration 11 Sept said 400,000 people had crossed border into Chad since beginning of war in Sudan, including at least 62,300 Chadian returnees. UN humanitarian agency 12 Sept published revised Humanitarian Response Plan for Chad, with required funds increasing from \$674.9mn to \$920.6mn. World Bank same day announced new funding of \$340mn to help Chad cope with influx of Sudanese refugees and support host communities.

In other important developments. Opposition figure Succès Masra, head of Les Transformateurs political party, late Sept said he would return to Chad no later than 20 October one-year anniversary of crackdown on protests.

➔ **Gabon Ruling junta appeared set to strike a balance between cementing power grip and promoting inclusive transition back to constitutional order.**

Under pressure from Central African regional bloc (ECCAS) to return power to civilians, coup leader, Gen Brice Oligui Nguema, 1 Sept said he will not rush to elections that “repeat past mistakes”. Junta next day adopted transitional charter providing for new constitution to be adopted by referendum, and prohibiting members of provisional govt from standing in next elections, but not explicitly excluding Oligui Nguema, who was sworn in 4 Sept as transitional president. Junta 6 Sept said deposed President Bongo has been released from house arrest and is free to leave country for medical treatment. ECCAS 7 Sept suspended Gabon’s membership. Oligui Nguema same day appointed Raymond Ndong Sima, one-time PM under Bongo and subsequent opposition leader, as PM. Ndong Sima 9 Sept unveiled cabinet composed of military officers, Bongo-era officials and civil society activists, and next day hinted at two-year transition period before elections. Nguema 11 Sept appointed mixture of army officers, civil society activists, Bongo regime and opposition politicians to lead transition parliament, notably prominent opposition figure Paulette Missambo as Senate head. Civil society activist and new Senate VP Marc Ona 16 Sept stated civil society’s proposed transition period is six months to one year. Authorities 19 Sept detained Bongo’s eldest son, Nouredin Bongo Valentin, and several members Bongo’s cabinet on charges of “high treason” and “corruption”. Nong Sima 22 Sept addressed UN General Assembly, defended military takeover as “lesser evil” that prevented bloodshed following Bongo’s disputed re-election, and 27 Sept outlined plans for “national dialogue” to be held in 2024 to pave the way for drawing up new constitution.

East and Southern Africa

➔ **Kenya Govt and opposition made progress toward resolving differences, Al-Shabaab continued deadly attacks, while cattle and banditry-related violence persisted.**

Bipartisan talks between govt and opposition inched forward. After signing framework agreement defining dialogue’s agenda in late Aug, National Dialogue Committee led by Kalonzo Musyoka, representing opposition Azimio la Umoja coalition, and Kimani Ichung’wah, National Assembly Majority Leader representing ruling Kenya Kwanza coalition, from 11 Sept onward received submissions from civil

society groups and political parties on agenda. Meanwhile, cost of living continued to cause discontent; notably, opposition leader Raila Odinga around 15 Sept criticized govt policies following new increase in fuel price.

Al-Shabaab attacks continued along Somali border. Explosive devices allegedly planted by Al-Shabaab 3 Sept killed two policemen and injured others in Arabia area of Mandera county, 10 Sept injured several soldiers in Boni Forest, Lamu county, and 16 Sept killed four civilian and injured others along Mandera-Elwak road in Mandera county. Security forces 13 Sept reported killing five al-Shabaab combatants in Garissa county. Meanwhile, Kenya and U.S. 25 Sept signed defence cooperation agreement to counter Al-Shabaab and collaborate on domestic and international security efforts.

Western county reported rise in cattle rustling and banditry incidents. Governor of Elgeyo-Marakwet county early Sept reported increase in armed attacks after several months of relative calm amid joint military-police operation in Elgeyo-Marakwet, Baringo, and West Pokot counties. Notably, unidentified armed men 3 Sept killed two people in border area between Elgeyo-Marakwet and West Pokot counties. Meanwhile, West Pokot Senator, Julius Murgor, 11 Sept announced Pokot community leaders will travel to Uganda to negotiate grazing access for Pokot herdsmen and release of 4,000 cattle seized early Sept by Ugandan authorities.

➡ **Madagascar Opposition accused President Rajoelina of “institutional coup” in run-up to November presidential election.**

Rajoelina 6 Sept announced he will run for re-election in presidential election scheduled for 9 Nov. Opposition parties 8 Sept filed three constitutional challenges to Rajoelina’s candidacy, relating to controversy over his citizenship status. High Constitutional Court (HCC) 9 Sept rejected appeals, confirmed Rajoelina and 12 others as presidential candidates. Rajoelina same day resigned to contest presidential election, as required by constitution. HCC in following days said presidential powers would now be exercised by govt collectively with PM Christian Ntsay as head, after Senate president, Herimanana Razafimahefa (intended interim head of state by law) declined to assume presidential powers citing “personal reasons”. In joint letter to electoral commission, 10 presidential candidates 12 Sept denounced move as “institutional coup” intended to give Rajoelina undue advantages in Nov election; all 10 candidates 22 Sept met with HCC magistrates to discuss matter. Meanwhile, in joint communique, eight countries and international organisations, including EU and U.S., 19 Sept vowed “greatest vigilance” during electoral preparations.

➡ **Mozambique Insurgent activity decreased in northern Cabo Delgado province following August killing of militant leader; political tensions persisted ahead of October municipal elections.**

Militant activity slowed after death of group leader. After security forces 22 Aug killed Ibn Omar, reported leader of Islamic State Mozambique Province (ISMP), insurgent activity relatively decreased; death yet to be confirmed from non-govt sources. Despite ISMP cells reportedly pursuing hearts and minds strategy in some coastal areas, group of militants 14 Sept attacked Naquitengue village, Mocímboa da Praia district, killing 11 civilians. Hundreds of civilians 20 Sept also fled Pangane village, Macomia district, after militants launched forced recruitment drive.

Build-up to October municipal elections continued amid concerns of violence. Main opposition party RENAMO leader, Ossufo Momade, late Aug accused ruling FRELIMO party of using police for partisan purposes. Police chief 18 Sept denied his force's involvement in attempts to assassinate political leaders after reported attacks on Nampula mayor in Aug and Quelimane mayor 11 Sept, both from RENAMO. President Nyusi 25 Sept called on candidates to avoid "incendiary and intimidating speeches" during campaign for 11 Oct municipal elections, which formally began 26 Sept. Opposition party Democratic Movement of Mozambique 28 Sept accused police of illegally detaining its members in Sofala and Cabo Delgado provinces.

Border with Tanzania re-opened. Namoto border crossing between Cabo Delgado and Tanzania's Mtwara province 11 Sept reopened after two-year closure due to insecurity; move should help boost cross-border trade (see Tanzania).

➡ **Tanzania Police briefly detained opposition leader Tundu Lissu for alleged unlawful assembly.**

Police 10 Sept arrested opposition leader and chairman of opposition party Chadema, Tundu Lissu, and three others for allegedly holding illegal gathering and obstructing police work in Arusha region; police later same day released Lissu on bail. Meanwhile, Namoto border crossing between Mozambique's Cabo Delgado province and Tanzania's Mtwara region 11 Sept reopened after two-year closure due to insecurity; move should help boost cross-border trade (see Mozambique).

➡ **Zimbabwe Fallout from contested August elections continued as opposition called for election re-run and tensions ran high with Southern Africa's regional body.**

Opposition called for rerun of controversial general elections. Main opposition party Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) 1 Sept called for re-run of general elections held 23 August and nationwide protests, reiterating process was marred by irregularities and uneven playing field. Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition of local civil society groups throughout month called for Southern African Development Community (SADC)-led dialogue to end crisis. Meanwhile, repression of opposition continued after vote. Unidentified assailants 2 Sept abducted and beat CCC elected official in capital Harare. Police 12 Sept briefly detained two CCC elected officials over alleged assassination attempt and malicious damage to property that occurred on election day, and 23 Sept arrested CCC mayor of Bindura town on fraud charges.

President Mnangagwa inaugurated amid persistent tensions with SADC. Mnangagwa sworn in for second presidential term 4 Sept in ceremony attended by South African President Ramaphosa, Mozambique President Nyusi and other leaders; Southern African Development Community (SADC) chair, Angolan President Lourenço, and Zambian President Hichilema, who heads SADC Organ Troika, however did not attend. In inaugural address, Mnangagwa accused foreigners of trying to "sponsor mayhem". Govt 11 Sept accused Zambia of "treacherous lobbying" over Lusaka's efforts to convene extraordinary SADC summit on Zimbabwe's elections. SADC Organ Troika 27 Sept held meeting to discuss elections and criticised govt's attempts to undermine SADC mission's credibility; govt minister next day portrayed Hichilema as West's "puppet".

Great Lakes

↓ **Burundi Suspected RED-Tabara rebels launched deadly attack along border with DR Congo for first time since 2021; President Ndayishimiye dismissed allegations of coup plot.**

DR Congo-based rebels launched attack in Burundi after years-long lull. Gunmen 2 Sept ambushed civilian vehicles in Buringa area of Bubanza province, near economic capital Bujumbura, reportedly killing two and injuring one. As security forces deployed to area and subsequently claimed to have repelled assailants, local sources suggested up to 60 govt and allied forces dead, particularly among ruling party youth militia Imbonerakure. In Twitter statement, DR Congo-based rebel group RED-Tabara – which Burundi has been fighting in DR Congo’s South Kivu province since August 2022 – 3 Sept claimed to have “attacked and destroyed a guidance station for aircraft approaching Bujumbura Airport”, in first such claim since Sept 2021.

Tensions ran high in Gitega amid clampdown on judiciary, allegations of coup plot. After authorities in Aug imprisoned at least ten judges on charges of “undermining the security of the state” and “corruption”, Ndayishimiye 1 Sept urged judges to abandon “corrupt” practices, accusing them of sabotaging country’s justice system. Ndayishimiye 25 Sept dismissed allegations of coup plot circulating on social media as rumours spread by “individuals intent on tarnishing Burundi’s international reputation”.

In other important developments. Ndayishimiye 5 Sept presided over Extraordinary Summit of East African Community in Kenya; heads of state extended mandate East African Force in eastern DRC by three months.

➔ **DR Congo Civic space restrictions and armed group violence in eastern and western provinces continued to bode ill for general election due in December.**

Political climate remained tense ahead of December general elections. Authorities 8 Sept arrested journalist Stanis Bujakera, later charged him with “forgery” and “spreading falsehoods”, prompting condemnation from Committee to Protect Journalists. Court of Cassation 13 Sept sentenced President Tshisekedi’s former ally, Jean-Marc Kabund, to seven years in prison for “insulting the Head of State and the institutions of the Republic” and “propagation of false rumours”. Opposition heavyweight Martin Fayulu 30 Sept confirmed presidential candidacy.

Fallout of Goma massacre loomed large. Authorities 5 Sept put on trial six soldiers, for “crimes against humanity” in relation to 30 August killing of over 50 people protesting foreign forces’ perceived inaction in North Kivu province’s capital Goma. Tshisekedi 18 Sept replaced North Kivu military governor with another army general, de facto extending unpopular state of siege. At UN general assembly, Tshisekedi 20 Sept advocated starting withdrawal of UN mission (MONUSCO) in December instead of next year.

M23 returned to prominence in North Kivu province. Marking shift from recent low-profile strategy, M23 18 Sept proclaimed takeover of Kiwanja town (Rutshuru

territory), nominally controlled by East African Community (EAC) troops, and 22 Sept organised large rally in strategic Kibumba town (Nyiragongo territory), from which they supposedly withdrew last Jan. M23 around 20 Sept also clashed with pro-govt armed groups between Kitshanga and Mweso villages in Masisi territory. Meanwhile, EAC 5 Sept extended mandate of regional force in eastern DR Congo by three months.

Other violence continued in eastern provinces. Mai-Mai militia group 7 Sept attacked Balingina village in Ituri province, killing 18 civilians. Also in Ituri, suspected CODECO militia, which gathers various ethnic Lendu armed groups, 31 Aug-8 Sept killed at least 15 civilians in Mahagi and Djugu territories. Congolese and Ugandan forces throughout month reported gains against Islamic State-affiliated Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in Ituri (see Uganda).

Mobondo militia continued to extend attacks in western provinces. Govt reported Mobondo rebels 11 Sept killed 19 people in village raid in Kongo Central province. Fighting between Mobondo militia and army 17 Sept left 15 soldiers and three Mobondo fighters dead in Kwango province.

➡ **Rwanda Relations with DR Congo remained tense amid hostile rhetoric, President Kagame announced candidacy for 2024 election, and Washington scaled back military cooperation.**

Kinshasa and Kigali continued to trade blame for M23-related instability. After Congolese President Tshisekedi at UN general assembly 20 Sept once again said M23 armed group was Kigali's auxiliary, President Kagame same day refuted allegation and blamed DR Congo-based Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda for instability in Great Lakes region. Kagame 27 Sept appointed Gen James Kabarebe, recently retired from army and regularly questioned for his involvement in M23-related conflict, as minister for regional integration.

In other important developments. Kagame 19 Sept announced he would run for fourth term in 2024 election. French media outlet RFI 21 Sept reported U.S. restricted military cooperation with Rwanda under Child Status Protection Act due to Kigali's support for M23 rebel group, which recruits child soldiers.

➡ **Uganda Govt claimed significant gains against Islamic State-affiliated ADF rebels; Kampala faced further backlash to anti-homosexuality law, and crackdown on opposition persisted.**

Military reported successes in battle against ADF. Authorities said police 3-5 Sept foiled bombing plots by Islamic State-affiliated Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), notably on church in capital Kampala. Ugandan and DR Congo govts 15 Sept publicised agreement on expansion of joint anti-ADF offensive further into Ituri province, eastern DR Congo, and joint operation same day reportedly freed 115 hostages from ADF captivity in Ituri's Irumu territory. President Museveni 23 Sept said Ugandan army airstrike on ADF base in DR Congo 16 Sept killed "a lot" of militants, including group's second-in-command Meddie Nkalubo.

International backlash to Anti-Homosexuality Act persisted. European Union 6 Sept announced it would not cut funding to Kampala over anti-gay law enacted in May; local NGO Convening for Equality coalition 8 Sept criticised decision.

Museveni 10 Sept denounced several U.S. companies' decision to stop importing textiles from Uganda because of discriminatory law, vowed not to back down. Deputy Treasury Secretary Patrick Ocaillap 26 Sept confirmed govt is negotiating with World Bank for vital funding resumption, said Kampala expects financial institution to rescind funding freeze before Uganda in Feb concludes budgeting for next fiscal year.

Police restricted opposition gatherings. After opposition National Unity Party (NUP) 2 Sept launched nationwide campaign tour, NUP leader Robert Kyagulanyi, known as Bobi Wine, 8 Sept called on Baganda ethnic group to oppose govt. Police in following days opened sectarianism criminal inquiry, and 13 Sept announced banning NUP's mobilisation activities, claiming they breached safety guidelines. NUP same day vowed to defy ban.

Horn of Africa

➡ **Eritrea UN report warned of ongoing Eritrean violations in Ethiopia's Tigray region, President Isaias met with Sudan's army chief, and several Eritrean diaspora events descended into violence.**

UN accused Eritrean forces of ongoing violations in Tigray. UN rights commission report published 18 Sept warned of "ongoing atrocities" in Ethiopia's Tigray region, confirming that Eritrean troops, alongside militia members from Ethiopia's Amhara region, "continue to commit grave violations", including "systematic rape and sexual violence of women and girls".

Asmara continued work to bolster regional standing. President Isaias 11 Sept met with Sudan's army chief Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan in capital Asmara; according to state media, Isaias reiterated Eritrea's pre-war plan for political stability and security in Sudan, dubbed "Transition to Safety", and underscored need to harmonise various external peace initiatives instigated after outbreak of hostilities (see Sudan). Meanwhile, African Development Bank President Akinwumi Adesina 1 Sept met with Isaias, praising govt and pledging more support for country's economic development.

Violence broke out at Eritrean cultural festivals in Israel and Germany. Supporters and opponents of Isaias' govt 2 Sept clashed during Eritrean cultural festival in Israel's capital Tel Aviv, leaving around 150 people injured; violence 16 Sept broke out between opposing sides during another cultural festival in German city of Stuttgart. Asmara 9 Sept accused "Eritrea's detractors" of fomenting unrest among diaspora communities.

➡ **Ethiopia Violence in Amhara exacted heavy toll on civilians, Tigray's interim administration faced opposition amid rising crime levels, and govt-insurgent fighting continued in Oromia.**

Civilians bore brunt of ongoing hostilities in Amhara region. Fighting primarily between federal forces and nationalist militia known as Fano continued, with latter's scattered presence and lack of cohesion rendering rebellion difficult to combat. Though most clashes occurred in rural areas, Fano militants 24 Sept managed to enter Gondar city, leading to deadly skirmishes with federal forces. Fano militants same day attacked Debre Markos city (East Gojjam), killing mayor. Conflict exacted

heavy toll on civilians. Notably, federal forces late Aug-early Sept reportedly killed at least 70 in northeast Majete town for alleged ties to Fano; drone strikes early Sept in East Gojam, West Gojam and North Shewa zones reportedly killed at least 50; and strike in West Gojjam's Dembecha and Quarit districts 17 Sept killed at least 48. Fano militants also crossed into Oromia region, 9 Sept attacking civilians in West Shewa and North Shewa zones; alleged Fano militants 15-16 Sept killed around 30 in East Wollega Zone.

Tigray peace process faced new challenges. Tigray region's interim president Getachew Reda 6 Sept claimed federal govt had agreed to dismantle Amhara's "illegal administration" in disputed Western and Southern Tigray, though Amhara unrest, in part driven by fears govt will return disputed territories to Tigray, risks complicating issue. Getachew also warned of mounting crime and rising political tensions; opposition-led protesters next day gathered in regional capital Mekelle to denounce administration's failure to improve security; authorities violently dispersed protesters and arrested scores, including opposition leaders. Meanwhile, UN rights commission 18 Sept warned of "ongoing atrocities" in Tigray, perpetrated by "Eritrean troops and Amhara militia members" (see Eritrea).

Fighting in Oromia region persisted. Hostilities between Oromo Liberation Army and federal forces continued, notably in East Wollega, Horo Guduru Wollega and North Shewa zones. Oromia President Shimelis Abdissa 11 Sept said govt was committed to "silencing guns... through peaceful means", though no talks have occurred since first round of negotiations ended early May.

In another important development. Final filling of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam completed 10 Sept (see Nile Waters).

➡ **Nile Waters Ethiopia announced completion of fourth filling of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) ahead of fresh talks with Sudan and Egypt.**

Two weeks after Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan resumed talks on GERD, Ethiopian PM Abiy Ahmed 10 Sept declared Ethiopia had completed "fourth and final filling" of dam; Egypt's foreign ministry 11 Sept condemned "unilateral, illegal" move, while Sudan did not comment. Sides 23-24 Sept met in Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa for fresh negotiations; Ethiopia 24 Sept said parties exchanged "constructive ideas" on disputes and reiterated "its commitment to continue negotiating in good faith"; in sharp contrast, Egypt said talks did not make "any worthwhile progress" and accused Ethiopia of backtracking on previous agreements.

➡ **Somalia Offensive against Al-Shabaab in central regions saw both setbacks and progress, while regional tensions over elections persisted.**

Fallout from Aug collapse of frontline hindered anti-militant efforts in centre. After army retreat in southern Galgaduud region of Galmudug state resulted in Al-Shabaab takeover of area, govt redoubled efforts to secure additional support from local clans with a view to reversing losses before rainy season begins in October. Offensive however progressed in other parts of Galgaduud, as govt forces 11 Sept recovered Labidulle, Ceel Garas and Ceel Lahaley villages, south west of state capital Dhusamareb, and 15 Sept withstood major Al-Shabaab attack on positions in Ceel Lahaley. Govt forces 15-17 Sept also recovered Xinlabi, Qod Qod, Qeycad,

Bacadweyne, Shebellow and Camaara villages in southern Mudug region (also Galmudug), amid heavy fighting.

Al-Shabaab militants continued to pose major threat, particularly in south. In Lower Shabelle region (South West state), Al-Shabaab 10 Sept attacked army position in Awdheegle town, resulting in significant losses on both sides. Al-Shabaab 17 Sept also caused heavy casualties in attack on convoy of Ethiopian forces in Bakool region (also South West). Targeted attacks continued, including Al-Shabaab suicide bomber 15 Sept targeting Galmudug president Ahmed Kariye 'Qoor Qoor' in Las Gacamey village; Qoor Qoor escaped unharmed, but two soldiers killed. In Hirshabelle state's Hiraan region, bomb attacks 23 Sept killed over 20 in Beledweyne city, and 28 Sept killed at least six in Buloburde city.

Political disputes remained latent in several regions. Puntland President Said Deni made no effort to engage opposition, who continued to accuse him of seeking to use transition to universal suffrage to extend term or set rules in his favour. In South West and Jubaland states, groups of local politicians remained at odds with state leaders over timing of future elections; South West politicians 24 Sept met in Mogadishu, announced they would travel to state capital Baidoa in Oct to push for elections.

In other important developments. In letter to UN Security Council, govt 19 Sept requested three-month pause in drawdown of AU mission (ATMIS) personnel; AU 27 Sept announced withdrawal would continue but troop contributing countries backed request in letter to Security Council.

➡ **Somaliland New front line between Dhulbahante clan militias and govt forces stabilised, while election-related tensions dissipated after President Bihi accepted compromise with opposition.**

Front line shifted away from Sool region's capital Las Anod. Following Dhulbahante militiamen's major victory with Aug capture of Goojacade army base near Las Anod, new front line emerged between Oog and Guumays villages in western Sool. New division corresponds roughly to boundaries between Isaaq and Dhulbahante clans, with Isaaq being dominant grouping in Somaliland. Both sides in Sept sent reinforcements to area, raising fears of further clashes, but new front line remained quiet. Meanwhile, SSC-Khatumo State (self-declared govt of Dhulbahante separatists) 14 Sept hosted large delegation of MPs from Somalia as it strives to become Somali member state.

President Bihi accepted compromise on longstanding electoral dispute. Weakened by army's retreat from Sool, Bihi 30 Aug accepted recommendations from elders of Haber Jeelo, sub-clan of Isaaq, who had been mediating between govt and opposition on electoral dispute; agreement will see combined political party and presidential election on 13 November 2024. As Gacaan Libaah militia opposed deal, Bihi 6 Sept offered to pardon group in exchange for their demobilisation, and militia late Sept accepted to disband. Political association headed by prominent figure from Western Somaliland also criticised agreement as Isaaq-mediated deal that leaves out non-Isaaq communities such as Gadabursi, tapping into latent grievances in Awdal region.

➡ **South Sudan Opposition denounced controversial election bill amid ongoing disagreements about South Sudan's readiness for 2024 poll; insecurity escalated in several states.**

Opposition decried controversial election bill. Parliament 18 Sept hastily passed National Election Act amid pressure from President Kiir. VP Riek Machar's Sudan People's Liberation Army-In Opposition (SPLA-IO) boycotted vote and staged walkout over last-minute amendment giving president-elect right to appoint additional 5% of legislators, saying bill went against peace agreement and would lead to "undemocratic" poll; stance raises possibility of SPLA-IO boycotting 2024 vote as disagreement on prerequisites for credible election persisted. Other aspects of bill, such as increase in number of MPs from 250 to 332, dashed hopes for simplified and cheaper govt; Kiir 26 Sept signed bill into law. Kiir same day appointed Angelina Teny, former Defence Minister and Machar's wife, as new Interior Minister; Teny's sacking from Defence Minister position in March had caused controversy for violating peace agreement.

Insecurity, including abuses by govt forces, intensified. Unknown assailants 16 Sept killed four in ambush on Akobo-Bor road (Jonglei state). Unknown assailants 23 Sept attacked UN children fund (UNICEF) convoy that had been delivering aid in Central Equatoria State, killing two aid workers and destroying humanitarian supplies; UNICEF subsequently paused deliveries to area. Month saw President Kiir's South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF), disgruntled by low wages, step up abuses. Notably, SSPDF soldiers 7 Sept extrajudicially executed civilian in Bor town (Jonglei). SSPDF commander 17 Sept reportedly executed former commander of Pochalla area (Greater Pibor Administrative Area) who had allegedly begun mobilising Anyuak youth after army sacked him; ensuing fighting between SSPDF and Anyuak youth 17-18 Sept killed at least ten, with SSPDF using helicopter gunships against Pochalla town's population.

President Kiir engaged in flurry of diplomatic activity. President Kiir 4 Sept hosted Sudanese army leader Abdel Fattah al-Burhan in Juba, 17 Sept welcomed Sudanese delegation led by Darfur governor Minni Minawi. Kiir 14 Sept visited Ugandan President Museveni in Ugandan capital Kampala, 18 Sept met UN Sec-Gen António Guterres in New York, and 28 Sept met Russian President Vladimir Putin in Russian capital Moscow. President's frequent foreign trips indicated confidence in measures undertaken to coup-proof regime.

➡ **Sudan Fighting between army and paramilitary forces continued in Khartoum and Darfur, killing highest number of civilians in one month since fighting erupted; army leader conducted regional tour.**

RSF battled for control of Khartoum. Fighting in Khartoum and sister city Omdurman continued as paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) sought to fully conquer capital, 16-18 Sept launching well-coordinated attacks on remaining army bases. Army responded with intensified airstrikes, resulting in high civilian casualties; notably, shelling 5 Sept killed over 30 in Omdurman and alleged army drone 10 Sept killed around 50 in Khartoum. After Gen. Abdel Fatah al-Burhan's escape from capital late Aug, army announced plans to form emergency govt in Port Sudan; army walked back plans following wide opposition from various actors including civilians and instead late Sept announced reshuffle to various ministries.

RSF-army clashes raged in Darfur, rebel group expanded foothold further east. Having captured most of West Darfur, RSF concentrated its assault on army in North and South Darfur, with latter's state capital Nyala witnessing most intense fighting outside Khartoum. Army's indiscriminate airstrikes caused scores of civilian casualties in mostly Arab-populated areas, with shelling 13 Sept killing at least 40. In South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, rebel group Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North continued to expand its foothold, emerging as third major force in conflict. Meanwhile, army and tribal militia known as Forces of the Eastern Sudan Parties and Movements Alliance 18 Sept clashed in Port Sudan over control of security checkpoints.

Sahel

↓ Burkina Faso Jihadists escalated attacks on military after a months-long lull, leaving over 50 security forces dead, and transitional authorities announced foiling coup attempt.

Jihadist attacks inflicted heavy losses on govt forces and auxiliaries. After taking over two military bases in East region in late August, presumed al-Qaeda-affiliated Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM) combatants 4 Sept killed at least 17 soldiers and 36 civilian auxiliaries in attack on military position in Koumbri town, Yatenga province (North region). In response, govt launched series of airstrikes, with at least 30 JNIM fighters killed 11-14 Sept in Sahel, Centre-East and Centre-North regions. Civilians remained caught between jihadists on one side and state forces on the other. Suspected JNIM fighters 7 and 12 Sept killed eight civilians in Ouaboadi village and near Namagdou town, both Gnagna province (East region). Suspected Islamic State Sahel Province 12 Sept killed eight people in Wendou camp for displaced persons in Seno province (Sahel region).

Transitional authorities announced thwarting coup attempt. Military prosecutor 8 Sept announced arrest of three low-ranking officers, accusing them of plotting to "destabilize the conduct of the transition". Transitional president, Capt. Traoré, 13 Sept appointed new heads of security services including at National Intelligence Agency, indicating concern about vulnerability to counter-coup. Thousands 26 Sept demonstrated in support of military rulers in capital Ouagadougou as new rumours of mutiny circulated on social media. Transitional authorities next day announced thwarting coup attempt by group of military officers and others, saying plotters planned to seize power and plunge country into "chaos", and later arrested at least four military officers for alleged involvement.

Ouagadougou cultivated ties with military govts in Niamey and Bamako. As West African regional bloc ECOWAS continued to threaten use of force in Niger to restore constitutional order, Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger 16 Sept signed charter creating Alliance of Sahel States in bid to establish framework for collective defence and mutual assistance. Transitional legislature 19 Sept approved govt's proposal to deploy soldiers to Niger to defend against possible military intervention by ECOWAS. Meanwhile, Ouagadougou 14 Sept expelled French defence attaché, accusing him of "subversive activities", and same day closed military mission in Paris.

↓ **Mali Ruling junta postponed presidential election due in February, further pushing back timeline for return to constitutional order; violence escalated between 2015 peace deal signatories, while jihadists stepped up deadly attacks in north.**

Military junta extended transition period. Transition authorities 25 Sept announced delaying February 2024 presidential election without setting new date, citing “technical issues” related to adoption of new constitution in June referendum and review of electoral lists. Move sparked outrage from political and civil society groups. Notably, M5-RFP opposition coalition 27 Sept denounced “unilateral” decision, said it is “imperative” that junta “respects its commitments”.

Parties to 2015 peace agreement engaged in intense fighting in northern regions. As UN mission 1 Sept started second phase of withdrawal, alliance of predominantly Tuareg rebel groups, Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA), 11 Sept said it considered itself “at war” with Bamako, and in following days claimed several gains. CMA 12 Sept claimed seizing control of military camp and posts near Bourem town (Gao region) from army and Russian Wagner Group paramilitaries; 17 Sept said they temporarily seized two army bases near Léré town (Timbuktu region); and 28 Sept announced capturing Dioura military camp (Mopti region in centre) before withdrawing.

Jihadist violence escalated in northern regions, persisted in centre. Al-Qaeda-affiliated Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM) maintained blockade on Timbuktu city in protest at army deployment in region, creating food and aid shortages. Elsewhere in north, JNIM militants 7 Sept attacked river boat near Abakoira village, Timbuktu region, as well as Bamba military camp, Gao region, killing at least 64 people including 49 civilians and 15 soldiers. JNIM next day launched complex attack targeting Malian army and Wagner base near Gao airport, reportedly killing up to 37 Malian soldiers. Islamic State Sahel Province militants 13 Sept attacked Tannal village, Ménaka region, killing 20 people. Fighting also continued in central regions. Notably, JNIM 6 Sept killed a dozen Wagner elements in ambush near Pogo town, Ségou region.

In other important developments. Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger 16 Sept signed charter creating Alliance of Sahel States.

➔ **Niger Junta signed mutual defence pact with Mali and Burkina Faso, bolstering united putschist front in central Sahel; uptick in jihadist violence continued in south west as attention of top military brass remained focused on Niamey.**

Niamey drew closer to other military-led neighbours. As West African regional bloc ECOWAS continued to threaten force to restore constitutional order, Niamey 12 Sept denounced military cooperation agreement with Cotonou, accusing Benin of “planning an aggression” against Niger. Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso 16 Sept signed charter creating Alliance of Sahel States in bid to establish framework for collective defence and mutual assistance.

Junta continued rupture with former colonial power. Junta 1 Sept accused French President Macron of instrumentalizing ECOWAS for “neo-colonial project”, and tens of thousands 2 Sept rallied in capital Niamey and south-western Ouallam town to

demand departure of French forces. Paris 24 Sept announced end of military cooperation with Niger and departure of French soldiers by year's end. France's ambassador to Niger 27 Sept returned to Paris, one month after junta ordered him to leave. Meanwhile, U.S. military 14 Sept resumed flying drones and aircraft out of its bases in Niger following negotiations with junta.

Uptick in violence continued in south-western Tillabery region. Islamic State Sahel Province (IS Sahel) 1 Sept killed three people in Doukou Tegui village, Tillabery department. Govt forces 4 Sept reported thwarting al-Qaeda-affiliated Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM) ambush near Ouro Gueladjo, Say department, killing around ten suspected fighters. IS Sahel fighters 13 Sept killed community leader in Garin Wadey town, Abala department. Suspected jihadist militants 28 Sept killed at least a dozen soldiers in Kandadji town, Tillabery department.

In other important developments. Transitional govt 14 Sept announced opening of consultations at local level as prelude to national dialogue, thereby following in footsteps of Mali and Burkina Faso, where national dialogues held shortly after coups helped legitimise military rule; Niamey however did not set date for dialogue. Meanwhile, former PM and prominent opponent to deposed President Bazoum, Hama Amadou, 11 Sept returned to Niger after two-year exile in France.

West Africa

➡ **Benin Niger ended bilateral military cooperation with Benin, weakening country's counter-insurgency capabilities amid persistent jihadist violence in northern departments.**

Niamey denounced military accord with Porto-Novo. Amid threat of military intervention by West African regional bloc ECOWAS to restore constitutional order in Niger, ruling junta in Niamey 12 Sept cancelled military cooperation agreement with Benin, accusing country of hosting "mercenaries and military supplies" intended to support war "wanted by France"; end of security cooperation with Niger could significantly affect Benin's counter-insurgency capabilities as jihadist militants use cross-border Park W as launching pad for attacks in coastal country. Meanwhile, govt late Sept denied rumours that French military base was being built in Alibori department to house troops exiting Niger.

Northern departments remained under jihadist threat. In Alibori department's Karimama commune, suspected al-Qaeda-affiliated Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM) fighters 6 Sept killed three civilians in Karimama commune, and kidnapped local chief and his advisor from Kangara Peulh village. In Atakora department, suspected JNIM militants 15 Sept killed two soldiers and injured another two in Materi commune near Pendjari National Park.

➡ **Côte d'Ivoire Ruling party won sweeping victory in local elections, confirming overwhelming dominance over political scene two years before presidential election.**

Ruling party consolidated power in local elections. Regional and municipal elections 2 Sept proceeded peacefully, featuring candidacies from across political landscape. Electoral commission 5 Sept announced President Ouattara's party, Rally of Houphouëtists for Democracy and Peace (RHDP), won 123 out of 201 municipalities (61%) and 25 out of 31 regions (81%); despite their alliance, main opposition parties Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire and African People's Party-Côte d'Ivoire secured only 34 municipalities and four regions. RHDP's sweeping victory, even in traditional opposition strongholds, inched country closer to return to de facto one-party rule ahead of presidential election due in 2025. RHDP 16 Sept also won 56 of 64 seats in senatorial elections, reinforcing its grip on parliament's upper chamber.

In other important developments. Ouattara 28 Sept announced plan to reshuffle govt in October. Burkina Faso authorities 19 Sept arrested two Ivorian police officers who had crossed into Burkina chasing illicit gold miners; Ivorian govt 28 Sept said it was negotiating for their release.

➔ **Ghana Unidentified assailants conducted deadly attack in north east, while cost-of-living crisis triggered protests in capital Accra.**

Unidentified assailants launched roadside ambush in north east, killing nine. Gunmen 21 Sept attacked police convoy escorting traders from Bawku town (Upper East region) to Cinkassé town (Togo), killing nine people and injuring 15 others. Bawku MP Mahama Ayariga and reports by local media in following days suggested incident was related to chieftaincy conflict in Bawku district, which borders Burkina Faso.

Protests over economic crisis gripped capital Accra. Civil society organisation Democracy Hub 21 Sept organised protest against economic crisis and rising cost of living in Accra; police arrested 49 protesters for unlawful assembly. Independent govt agency National Commission for Civic Education 25 Sept reported police violence against protesters and journalists. Protests continued peacefully over next two days without further arrests.

➔ **Guinea Repression of opposition protest left several dead, while transitional authorities reportedly detained military officers amid unconfirmed rumours of coup attempt.**

Security forces cracked down on protesters on coup anniversary. On two-year anniversary of military coup, coalition of political parties and civil society organisations, Forces Vives de Guinée (FVG), 4-5 Sept held demonstrations in capital Conakry to voice discontent at military junta's perceived backsliding on transition commitments. Clashes broke out between demonstrators and security forces attempting to enforce ban on protests; FVG 6 Sept reported four protesters dead. Renewed clashes 8 Sept erupted during protesters' funerals in Conakry, leaving 12 civilians injured.

Authorities allegedly detained military personnel amid rumours of coup attempt. Civil society activist Sékou Koundouno 4 Sept claimed around 100 military officers were detained following exchange of fire between junta forces and National Guard. French media outlet *Jeune Afrique* 5 Sept also reported transitional authorities late

Aug-early Sept carried out series of arrests of military personnel following unconfirmed rumours of possible coup attempt on 26-27 Aug.

Junta leader Doumbouya struck defiant tone at UN. At UN General Assembly, interim President Col. Doumbouya 21 Sept admonished Western countries for “lecturing” African countries following recent coup wave, labelling Western democracy as “imposed” on Africa and “difficult to adapt to our realities”. FVG next day denounced Doumbouya’s remarks as signalling “an emerging dictatorship”.

➔ **Nigeria Court dismissed opposition’s challenge to Bola Tinubu’s presidential election win, while jihadist, criminal and separatist groups continued to fuel insecurity across country.**

Election tribunal upheld Tinubu’s presidential win. Presidential Elections Petitions Tribunal 6 Sept rejected opposition parties’ challenges to Bola Tinubu’s win in February presidential election. Main opposition presidential candidates in following days appealed against judgement at Supreme Court.

In North East zone, Bauchi state reported mounting insecurity. As part of military operations against jihadist groups in Borno state, air force 12 Sept announced bombing Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) combatants in Kala/Balge area. Meanwhile in neighbouring Bauchi state, authorities 13 Sept reported increasing attacks by armed groups fleeing military operations in neighbouring states, while security operatives 16 Sept rescued over 30 abductees in Alkaleri area.

Armed group violence continued in North West and North Central zones. In Kaduna state, gunmen 1 Sept killed at least seven people in mosque at Saya-Saya village, Ikara area. In Zamfara state, armed groups 9 Sept reportedly abducted over 50 people near Anka town, and 22 Sept abducted about 24 mainly female students in Sabon-Gida village. Abuja-based *Daily Trust* newspaper 19 Sept reported armed groups in recent days attacked seven villages at border between Kebbi and Sokoto states, killing unconfirmed number and forcing hundreds to flee. In Plateau state, armed group 10 Sept attacked Kulben village in Mangu area, killing ten people; residents blamed attack on “armed Fulani militia”.

Kidnappings-for-ransom continued in South East amid persistent Biafra agitation. Security personnel continued to battle faction of outlawed separatist group Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) enforcing lockdown across South East zone. Notably, suspected IPOB members 19 Sept killed eight security forces in ambush in Ehime Mbano area of Imo state. Air force 26 Sept bombed two locations identified as IPOB training camps and armouries in Nnewi North area, Anambra state, and Okigwe area, Imo state. Meanwhile in Enugu state, police 3 Sept clashed with gunmen allegedly attempting to abduct travellers in Enugu East area, with two assailants and one policeman dead; gunmen 17 Sept abducted Catholic priest and six others in Udi area, demanded ransom for their release.

➔ **Togo President Gnassingbé named new security minister in likely attempt to coup-proof govt following recent coups in West Africa and Gabon.**

Gnassingbé reshuffled govt ahead of legislative and regional elections. Gnassingbe 8 Sept reshuffled cabinet ahead of legislative and regional elections expected for

December, with changes affecting eight ministries. Most notably, long-time ambassador to France, Col. Calixte Batossie Madjoulba, was appointed as security and civil protection minister; change at powerful ministry may come as attempt to prevent military seizure of power after August coup in Gabon, where dynastic Bongo regime shared many similarities with Gnassingbé family's hegemony over Togo.

Scattered violence from jihadist groups continued in northern region. In Savanes region, explosive device likely planted by al-Qaeda-affiliated Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM) 11 Sept injured farmer in Djabdjoare village, Kpendjal prefecture.