



**Atrocities Watch Africa Monitor  
No 3, April 2022**

Atrocities Watch Africa (AWA) is a non-partisan, civil society organisation that intends to provide continental leadership in matters pertaining to the prevention of mass atrocities within Africa, our strategies and approaches are grounded in the realization that atrocities can be prevented through various interventions, including, but not limited to, early warning mechanisms, diplomatic efforts, use of social media and new technologies, litigation, and advocacy campaigns.

This newsletter builds on our team's continuous monitoring of the region that allows us to identify deteriorating situations where atrocities may be committed as well as track ongoing situations of ongoing atrocities to detect increasing tendencies or opportunities for improvement.

This month we begin with a feature on Africans caught up in the Ukraine war.

Countries we were watching in March 2022:

- Burkina Faso
- Cameroon
- Central African Republic
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Ethiopia
- Libya
- Mali
- Mozambique
- Nigeria
- Somalia
- South Sudan
- Sudan

**Feature: Africans Caught Up in the Ukraine War**

Six weeks on from the start of Russian military advances in Ukraine, the crisis has sparked Europe's largest refugee crisis since World War II. More than 4 million Ukrainians had fled the country by 31 March, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.<sup>1</sup>

Europe's response to the refugee crisis has for the most part been admirable, highlighting how refugees can be supported if there is political will to do so. At the same time, however, this positive response has highlighted how much is left to be desired in international response to African refugee crises or even to the plight of Africans fleeing this one.

There were estimated to be about 16,000 Africans in Ukraine at the start of the conflict, and though their number is tiny in comparison with the millions of Ukrainians who have fled, they have faced discrimination and dehumanizing conditions.

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<sup>1</sup> UNHCR Data Portal: Ukraine, visited 31 March 2022, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

By mid-March 80 Nigerian students remained trapped in the southern Ukrainian city of Kherson which has been captured by Russian forces. They asked the Nigerian government to organize their evacuation. The Nigerian government said that it was trying to work with ambassadors in both Ukraine and Russia to assist.<sup>2</sup> Some have tried to leave but have been turned back by Russian forces.<sup>3</sup> In the Ukrainian town of Sumy, a diaspora coalition called Black Women for Black Lives was able to raise money and advocate for Black students in the city, who were eventually evaluated by the Red Cross.<sup>4</sup>

On 28 February 2022, the Chair of the African Union Macky Sall and the Chairperson of the AU Commission Moussa Faki Mahamat expressed concern about reports that African citizens were refused the right to cross the border safely. They reminded the international community that all persons have the right to cross the border and refusing them was not only racist, but in clear violation of international law.<sup>5</sup> There are reports that Black people were refused at border crossings or not being allowed to board trains in favor of Ukrainians.<sup>6</sup> African refugees from the conflict are being held in immigration detention facilities in the EU in a clearly discriminatory and unacceptable move.<sup>7</sup> An alliance of Black attorneys has called on the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on behalf of African refugees facing racial discrimination in trying to flee.<sup>8</sup>

If they manage to cross the international borders, they may again face discrimination. One student said that Air BnBs in Hungary are no longer willing to rent to African students. Another student said that he left a refugee camp in Hungary because a Ukrainian man that he was housed with complained that sleeping beside a black man was traumatizing.<sup>9</sup>

They also face challenges planning for their longer-term futures. Some have gone home, including an estimated 1,000 who have returned to Nigeria. But many have invested heavily in the education

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<sup>2</sup> Timothy Obiezu, "Nigeria: Trapped Nigerian Students Plead for Evacuation from Ukraine's Kherson," *Voice of America*, 16 March 2022, [https://allafrica.com/stories/202203170012.html?utm\\_campaign=daily-headlines&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_content=aans-view-link](https://allafrica.com/stories/202203170012.html?utm_campaign=daily-headlines&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_content=aans-view-link)

<sup>3</sup> "Nigerians Trapped in Ukraine's Kherson Take Huge Risks in Bid to Leave," *VOA*, 26 March 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/nigerians-trapped-in-ukraine-s-kherson-take-huge-risks-in-bid-to-leave/6502692.html>

<sup>4</sup> Catherine Thorbecke, "'We come for our own': How Black volunteers rallied online to help African students in Ukraine," 18 March 2022.

<sup>5</sup> African Union, "Statement of the African Union on the reported ill treatment of Africans trying to leave Ukraine," 28 February 2022, <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20220228/statement-ill-treatment-africans-trying-leave-ukraine>

<sup>6</sup> Rashawn Ray, "The Russian invasion of Ukraine shows racism has no boundaries," 3 March 2022, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/how-we-rise/2022/03/03/the-russian-invasion-of-ukraine-shows-racism-has-no-boundaries/>

<sup>7</sup> Melody Chironda, "African Refugees Fleeing Ukraine Held in Immigration Detention Facilities," *All Africa*, 31 March 2022, [https://allafrica.com/stories/202203310507.html?utm\\_campaign=daily-headlines&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_content=aans-view-link](https://allafrica.com/stories/202203310507.html?utm_campaign=daily-headlines&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_content=aans-view-link)

<sup>8</sup> Ben Crump, "International Human Rights Attorneys Ben Crump and Jasmine Rand Convene Civil Society Coalition to Appeal to the United Nations on Behalf of African Refugees Facing Racial Discrimination in Ukraine and Poland," 2 March 2022, <https://twitter.com/BenCrumpLaw/status/1499021097823571968/photo/1>

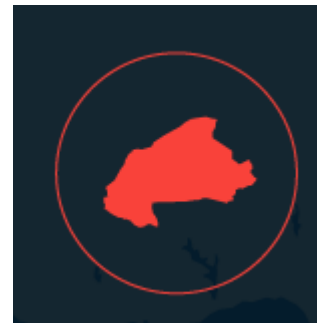
<sup>9</sup> Tobore Ovuorie, "Ukraine War: African students face Russian missiles and racism," 9 April 2022, <https://www.dw.com/en/ukraine-war-african-students-face-russian-missiles-and-racism/a-61356066>

that they were hoping to get in Ukraine and are desperate to continue. Some are looking to continue elsewhere in Europe, but are finding that the programs being extended to Ukrainian students are not extended to them, while some manage to get costlier Polish courses. Many who would like to study elsewhere are unable to access their transcripts and other records. Still others are managing to continue their studies through online courses.<sup>10</sup>

As prominent Nigerian human rights activist Chidi Odinkalu put it, “Following the lead of the African governments, the world is happy to tolerate the dehumanisation of the Africans caught up in the war in Ukraine.”<sup>11</sup> More must be done to ensure that access to asylum and assistance is not dependent on race.

## Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso continues to experience violence and political tensions in the wake of a military coup that deposed Roch Kabore in January 2022. In early March, Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba was named to lead a transitional government following signature of a charter foreseeing the holding of elections in three years’ time.<sup>12</sup> 71 members of the transitional assembly were sworn in on 22 March, 2021, two months after the military takeover, 21 members appointed by the transitional president and the remainder chosen by the security forces, civil groups, political parties and the country’s 13 regions.<sup>13</sup> The coup was, in part, brought about by public frustration with the former government’s inability to deal with the ongoing Islamist insurgency.



Levels of violence have remained relatively constant in the first three months of the year.<sup>14</sup> However, militants from the Jama’at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) attacked troops in the East and Centre-East regions, killing dozens of soldiers. JNIM set up checkpoints and destroyed facilities associated with the gendarmerie.<sup>15</sup> On 20 March, at least 12 soldiers were killed in eastern Burkina Faso by suspected jihadists, the sixth attack of its kind in the country in ten days. On 18 March around 15 youths were kidnapped by armed individuals nearby Nagre. Between 10-21 of March at least 23 civilians and 25 armed forces were killed.<sup>16</sup>

### Context:

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<sup>10</sup> Soraya Ali, “Ukraine war: What next for the African students who fled?” *BBC News*, 30 March 2022.

<sup>11</sup> Chidi Anselm Odinkalu, “Africans and the Russia-Ukraine War,” *The Premium Times*, 13 March 2022, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/opinion/517038-africans-and-the-russia-ukraine-war-by-chidi-anselm-odinkalu.html>

<sup>12</sup> DW, “Burkina Faso approves charter for 3-year transition,” 1 March 2022, <https://www.dw.com/en/burkina-faso-approves-charter-for-3-year-transition/a-60954556>

<sup>13</sup> Africa News, “Burkina Faso: Transition assembly sworn in,” 22 March 2022, <https://www.africanews.com/2022/03/23/burkina-faso-transition-assembly-sworn-in/>

<sup>14</sup> ACLED data.

<sup>15</sup> ACLED, “ACLED Regional Overview – Africa (19-25 March 2022),” 31 March 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/report/burkina-faso/acled-regional-overview-africa-19-25-march-2022>

<sup>16</sup> France 24, “At least twelve soldiers killed in Burkina Faso attack, say army sources,” 21 March 2022, <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20220321-at-least-twelve-soldiers-killed-in-burkina-faso-attack-say-army-sources>

Attacks by militants linked to al Qaeda and the Islamic State have killed thousands in Burkina Faso since 2015.<sup>17</sup> An estimated 1.8 million people have been displaced, concentrated in the north of the country.<sup>18</sup> The coup in January 2022, was sparked in part by government's inability to fully address this.

### *International response*

Burkina Faso has been suspended from the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union and the United States has suspended \$160 million in aid as a result of the coup.<sup>19</sup>

## **Cameroon**

Violence against civilians increased in from February to March 2022, although the overall number of incidents for the first quarter of 2022 remained substantially lower than the first quarter of 2021.<sup>20</sup> Cameroon's government argued that the military raids on separatist bases that claimed the lives of at least 20 fighters in February, have helped to bring calm to several towns in Anglophone Cameroon.<sup>21</sup> Despite this, violence in the anglophone region continues. On 2 March, a bomb killed seven people including a senior official and a mayor in the Ekondo Titi district.<sup>22</sup> On 16 March, separatists attacked the Nigerian village of Manga hosting people who fled the violence. 21 people are missing and local Nigerian authorities requested naval and air forces be deployed. The conflict first spilled into Nigeria at the end of 2021.<sup>23</sup> On 28 March, unidentified gunmen, believed to be Ambazonians (anglophone separatists), stormed Magha village in the southwest region and killed a teacher and kidnapped five others.<sup>24</sup> On 29 March, Ambazonia forces killed three Mbororos suspected of



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<sup>17</sup> David Gormezano, "Burkina Faso: A history of destabilisation by jihadist insurgencies," *France 24*, 25 January 2022, <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20220125-burkina-faso-a-history-of-destabilisation-by-jihadist-insurgencies>

<sup>18</sup> UN OCHA, "Burkina Faso: Situation des personnes déplacées internes (PDI)," 31 March 2022, [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/bfa\\_situation\\_des\\_pdis\\_mars\\_2022.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/bfa_situation_des_pdis_mars_2022.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> "Burkina Faso approves three-year transition before elections," *Al Jazeera*, 1 March 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/1/three-year-transition-before-elections-approved-in-burkina-faso>

<sup>20</sup> ACLED data.

<sup>21</sup> Voice of America, "Cameroon Says Frightened Separatists Relocate to Border with Nigeria, Harass Civilians," 18 March 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/cameroon-says-frightened-separatists-relocate-to-border-with-nigeria-harass-civilians-/6490791.html>

<sup>22</sup> Voice of America, "Cameroon Says Rebel Bomb Kills Officials," 3 March 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/cameroon-says-rebel-bomb-kills-officials/6468320.html>

<sup>23</sup> Cameroon Online, "The Nigerian border village on the edge of Cameroon's separatist," 16 March 2022, <https://www.cameroononline.org/the-nigerian-border-village-on-the-edge-of-cameroons-separatist-conflict-video/>

<sup>24</sup> Mimi Mefo Info, "Lebialem division: Suspected Amba Fighters kill teacher, abduct five others in Wabane," 29 March 2022, <https://mimimefoinfos.com/lebialem-divisionsuspected-amba-fighters-kill-teacher-abduct-five-others-in-wabane/>

working with government forces in Mbongong village.<sup>25</sup> On 30 March, an improvised explosive device killed a Cameroon's Rapid Intervention Battalion (BIR) soldier.<sup>26</sup>

The Ambazonia Boys have been meeting with the pro-Biafra group, the Biafra Nations League (BNL) separatist group, for possible joint operations from the Peninsula to Ndian division.<sup>27</sup> The interim government of the Federal Republic of Ambazonia removed its former president Samuel Ikome Sako for abuse of his power<sup>28</sup> and Marianta Njomia was elected on 5 March.<sup>29</sup>

During March clashes between the Esu and Mbororo ethnic groups flared up. Esu's leader was killed in early March. The government suspects that the attack was carried out by local Mbororo youth who accused him of failing to stop youth from joining the anglophone separatists, the Esu responded by burning homes and buildings of the Mbororo group. The Cameroonian government deployed troops to the area.<sup>30</sup>

### *Context.*

In 2016, a series of peaceful protests by lawyers and teachers who, in order to protect the Anglophone educational and legal systems, requested the creation of a two-state federation were rapidly suppressed by the government. In response, armed separatist groups then formed to fight for an independent nation called Ambazonia, proclaimed an independent republic in October 2017. Authorities in Yaoundé responded, killing and arresting those who they believed sympathised with the secessionists this drove the formation of Anglophone militias. By the end of 2017, the crisis had degenerated into armed conflict.

### *International response:*

On 8 March, the Hon. Mohammed Sidie Tunis warned fellow members of the ECOWAS Parliament of the need to address what he called an on-going genocide in Cameroon's anglophone regions, indicating "the rest of the world must applaud and join in this ECOWAS drive as the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, in Article 15 recognizes Ambazonian people's

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<sup>25</sup> Cameroon News Agency, 29 March 2022,

<https://www.facebook.com/CAMEROONNEWSAGENCY/posts/4870012356445110>

<sup>26</sup> Cameroon Web, "Noso: l'explosion d'un engin improvisé tue un soldat du BIR, 31 March 2022,

[https://mobile.camerounweb.com/CameroonHomePage/NewsArchive/Noso-l-explosion-d-un-engin-improvis-tue-un-soldat-du-BIR-651086?utm\\_term=Autofeed&utm\\_medium=Social&utm\\_source=Twitter#Echobox=1648741992](https://mobile.camerounweb.com/CameroonHomePage/NewsArchive/Noso-l-explosion-d-un-engin-improvis-tue-un-soldat-du-BIR-651086?utm_term=Autofeed&utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1648741992)

<sup>27</sup> Sahara Reporters, "BREAKING: Pro-Biafra Group, BNL Meets Cameroon Separatist Fighters, Ambazonian Boys In Bakassi Peninsula," 13 March 2022,

<http://saharareporters.com/2022/03/13/breaking-pro-biafra-group-bnl-meets-cameroon-separatist-fighters-ambazonian-boys-bakassi>

<sup>28</sup> Interim Government of the Federal Republic of Ambazonia, Letter of removal from office of Dr. Smauel Ikome Sako as President by the Restoration Council, 12 February 2022,

<https://www.ambazoniagov.org/index.php/press-room/166-letter-of-removal-from-office-of-dr-samuel-ikome-sako-by-the-restoration-council>

<sup>29</sup> Interim Government of the Federal Republic of Ambazonia, Inaugural speech of President Marianta Njomia, 5 March 2022, <https://www.ambazoniagov.org/index.php/press-room/167-inaugural-speech-of-president-marianta-njomia-5th-march-2022>

<sup>30</sup> Voice of America, "Troops Deployed to Contain Cameroon Communal Clashes," 10 March 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/troops-deployed-to-contain-cameroon-communal-clashes/6479085.html>

right to create a nation, name it, and even move to a new nation.” He called for ECOWAS and AU to intervene in the conflict and prevent it from spilling over to neighboring countries.<sup>31</sup>

On 9 March 2022, in a letter to the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, three members of Congress expressed concerns over U.S. support for Cameroonian special forces known as the BIR which have been accused of atrocities in the Anglophone region and that “support for security forces that commit human rights violations — apart from being incompatible with American values and illegal under U.S. law — is counterproductive to the very aims of counterterrorism.”<sup>32</sup>

Doctors Without Borders (MSF) indicated it will be suspending indefinitely its activities in the southwest part of the country, due to their deteriorating relationship with the government amidst false accusations of complicity with secessionists.<sup>33</sup>

## Central African Republic

Reconciliation talks took place during 21-27 March in what experts considered an attempt to pacify the international community.<sup>34</sup> No rebel groups were invited, only representatives of the ruling party and civil society figures attended. This, and the fact that some opposition demands were not addressed led to former president Bozizé’s party and other opposition political groups to boycott the talks.<sup>35</sup> The talks ended up producing 600 recommendations, including one for an end to the weapons embargo, but it is unclear when they will be implemented.<sup>36</sup>



Despite the unilateral ceasefire declared by the president in October 2021, conflict continues, characterised by severe violations of human rights by armed groups as well as government

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<sup>31</sup> The Nigerian Voice, “ECOWAS Highlights USP Genocide ALERT in AMBAZONIA,” 9 March 2022, <https://www.thenigerianvoice.com/news/306481/ecowas-highlightsusp-genocide-alert-in-ambazonia.html>

<sup>32</sup> The Nation, “U.S. lawmakers allege rights violations by Cameroon’s forces in Anglophone region,” 11 March 2022, <https://thenationonlineng.net/u-s-lawmakers-allege-rights-violations-by-camerouns-forces-in-anglophone-region/>

<sup>33</sup> Pan African Visions, “Cameroon: Doctors without Borders suspends Activities in South West,” 31 March 2022, <https://panafricanvisions.com/2022/03/cameroon-doctors-without-borders-suspends-activities-in-south-west/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CStarting%20from%20March%2029%2C%202022,South%20West%20Region%20of%20Cameroon.>

<sup>34</sup> VOA, “Central African Republic Peace Talks End Without Concrete Progress,” 27 March 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/central-african-republic-peace-talks-end-without-concrete-progress/6503818.html>

<sup>35</sup> Africa News, “Central African Republic: President Touadéra opens peace talks despite opposition boycott,” 22 March 2022, <https://www.africanews.com/2022/03/22/central-african-republic-president-touadera-opens-peace-talks-despite-opposition-boycott/>

<sup>36</sup> Al Jazeera, “CAR peace talks end without concrete progress,” 28 March 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/28/c-africa-peace-talks-end-without-concrete-progress>

security forces, supported by private contractors.<sup>37</sup> There has been a noticeable decline in violence over the last 12 months.<sup>38</sup>

Yao Agbetse, the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the country, indicated there have been numerous reports indicating abuses committed by Russian bilateral forces against the civilian population, including acts of torture, rape and sexual violence and cruel, humiliating, inhuman and degrading treatment.<sup>39</sup> The Russian Wagner group has started withdrawing some of their troops to assist in the war in Ukraine.<sup>40</sup>

Land mines and unexploded ordnance continue to impose great risk for civilians, between January and March 2022, seven people were killed and 29 injured in 19 accidents involving explosive devices.<sup>41</sup>

Sexual violence has increased alarmingly in the last few years, especially for IDPs. In 2021, there was a 235% increase compared to 2020 and 211% compared to 2019.<sup>42</sup>

### *Context.*

CAR has a long history of violence and rebellion. After coming to power in a coup, Bozizé's 2003-2013 rule was characterized by corruption and violent repression of rebellions in the majority Muslim communities in the north. A predominantly Muslim rebel alliance, Séléka, began ousted Bozizé in 2013. Christian and animist self-defense groups that formed the "anti-Balaka" movement to resist the Séléka and many began targeting Muslim communities.<sup>43</sup>

After several failed attempts to end the civil war, the Khartoum Agreement was signed in 2019, including 14 armed groups. The agreement had limited success, and fighting started up again in December 2020 when Faustin-Archange Touadéra won a second term as president and the main rebel factions formed an alliance opposed to the election called the Coalition of Patriots for Change, which was coordinated by former President Bozizé.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> UNOHCHR, "High Commissioner Expresses Concern over Increasing Incidents Involving Serious Human Rights Violations and Abuses in the Central African Republic, and Mission Finds Evidence of Human Rights Violations and Abuses Committed in Libya since 2016," 30 March 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/03/human-rights-council-high-commissioner-expresses-concern-over-increasing>

<sup>38</sup> ACLED Data

<sup>39</sup> UNOHCHR, "High Commissioner Expresses Concern over Increasing Incidents Involving Serious Human Rights Violations and Abuses in the Central African Republic, and Mission Finds Evidence of Human Rights Violations and Abuses Committed in Libya since 2016," 30 March 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/03/human-rights-council-high-commissioner-expresses-concern-over-increasing>

<sup>40</sup> Le Monde, "Russia's involvement in the Central African Republic disrupted by the war in Ukraine," 31 March 2022, [https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2022/03/31/russia-s-involvement-in-the-central-african-republic-disrupted-by-the-war-in-ukraine\\_5979446\\_4.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2022/03/31/russia-s-involvement-in-the-central-african-republic-disrupted-by-the-war-in-ukraine_5979446_4.html)

<sup>41</sup> UNOCHA, "Situation Report Central African Republic," 7 April 2022, <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/car/#cf-5JBAlwceyXkeLoEvJqi08v>

<sup>42</sup> UNOCHA, "Gender-based violence: a scourge with devastating consequences," 7 April 2022, <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/car/#cf-5JBAlwceyXkeLoEvJqi08v>

<sup>43</sup> United States Institute for Peace, "As Security Returns, Central Africans Await the State," 29 March 2022, <https://www.usip.org/blog/2022/03/security-returns-central-africans-await-state>

<sup>44</sup> Al Jazeera, "CAR ex-President François Bozizé takes charge of rebel alliance," 21 March 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/3/21/central-africa-ex-president-bozize-takes-charge-of-rebel-alliance>

Currently 30% of Central Africans are displaced while half the population is food insecure.<sup>45</sup> UNOCHA estimates 3.1 million people will need humanitarian assistance by the end of 2022, 63% of the total population.<sup>46</sup>

*International response:*

The International Criminal Court has a number of cases ongoing related to the 2013-2014 Séléka-anti Balaka violence. Maxime Jeoffroy Eli Mokom Gawaka, has been charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity, related to attacks on Muslim civilians in 2013 and 2014 as a form of collective punishment of groups they viewed as associated with the Séléka. He was handed over to the International Criminal Court (ICC) on 14 March 2022.<sup>47</sup> He joins Alfred Yekatom and Patrice-Edouard Ngaïssona, alleged anti-Balaka leaders, charged with crimes against humanity arrested in 2018 and being tried jointly since February 2021.<sup>48</sup>

The ICC also has an ongoing case against Mahamat Said, a former commander of the Séléka rebel coalition, for war crimes and crimes against humanity. He is currently in custody and his trial is expected to begin in September 2022.<sup>49</sup>

In addition, the UN has a multi-dimensional peacekeeping operation, MINUSCA, deployed in the country since 2014 to promote and protect human right, support justice and the rule of law and disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation processes.<sup>50</sup>

The UN Human Rights Council held a high-level interactive dialogue on the situation in CAR in March 2022. Participants expressed concern regarding the increase in human rights violations. Lizbeth Cullity, Deputy Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic expressed concern about “the long-standing culture of impunity and the increase and gravity of human rights violations throughout the Central African Republic.”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> UNOHCHR, “High Commissioner Expresses Concern over Increasing Incidents Involving Serious Human Rights Violations and Abuses in the Central African Republic, and Mission Finds Evidence of Human Rights Violations and Abuses Committed in Libya since 2016,” 30 March 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/03/human-rights-council-high-commissioner-expresses-concern-over-increasing>

<sup>46</sup> UNOCHA, “Situation Report Central African Republic,” 7 April 2022, <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/car/#cf-5JBAIwceyXkeLoEvJqi08v>

<sup>47</sup> “Central African Republic Militia Leader Surrendered to ICC,” DW, 14 March 2022, <https://allafrica.com/stories/202203150008.html>

<sup>48</sup> International Criminal Court Yekatom and Ngaïssona Case [https://www.icc-cpi.int/cases?f%5B0%5D=situation\\_name\\_colloquial\\_cases%3A676](https://www.icc-cpi.int/cases?f%5B0%5D=situation_name_colloquial_cases%3A676)

<sup>49</sup> International Criminal Court Said case <https://www.icc-cpi.int/carII/said>

<sup>50</sup> United National Peacekeeping, “MINUSCA Fact Sheet,” <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/minusca>

<sup>51</sup> UNOHCHR, “High Commissioner Expresses Concern over Increasing Incidents Involving Serious Human Rights Violations and Abuses in the Central African Republic, and Mission Finds Evidence of Human Rights Violations and Abuses Committed in Libya since 2016,” 30 March 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/03/human-rights-council-high-commissioner-expresses-concern-over-increasing>



## Democratic Republic of the Congo

ACLED recorded a total of 90 incidents of attacks against civilians by non-state actors in March.<sup>52</sup> Kivu Security Tracker recorded 716 violent deaths, attributing 119 to the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and 97 to the Cooperative for Development of the Congo (CODECO).<sup>53</sup> Nada Al- Nashif, UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights reported an overall 12% drop in documented human rights violations from the previous year, while at the same time noting that abuses by the ADF have increased.<sup>54</sup> MONUSCO has documented a 10% increase in violations to human rights and attacks since December 2021, mostly in the form of reprisals against civilians in North Kivu and Ituri.<sup>55</sup>



Ugandan and Congolese forces continue to combat ADF fighters. On 1 March, they killed 16 rebels and rescued 12 children who had been kidnapped by the group. According to a UPDF commander over 1,000 ADF terrorists have been killed since the launch of the joint operation in November 2021.<sup>56</sup> Despite this, it was reported that between 10 and 15 March, ADF killed at least 60 people in at least five villages,<sup>57</sup> including 15 in Apende, 18 in Ndimbo and 19 in Otomabere.<sup>58</sup> Plus, on 20 March, four were killed in Eringeti,<sup>59</sup> and at least 27 were killed in Kikura on 27 March.<sup>60</sup>

Targeted attacks against civilians, especially displaced people in Ituri, continued. On 9 March, 18 civilians in Banyali Kilo, Ituri, who after being displaced from their villages had sought refuge in a church.<sup>61</sup> On 19 March, 14 people, including seven children, were killed in a camp in Ituri.<sup>62</sup> On

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<sup>52</sup> ACLED <https://acleddata.com/#/dashboard>

<sup>53</sup> Kivu Security Tracker <https://kivusecurity.org/>

<sup>54</sup> OHCHR, Statement Update on the Democratic Republic of Congo, 29 March 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2022/03/update-democratic-republic-congo>

<sup>55</sup> UNSC, SC/14845, Comprehensive Political Strategy Needed to Tackle Structural Causes behind Conflict in Democratic Republic of Congo, Mission Head Tells Security Council, 29 March 2022, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/sc14845.doc.htm>

<sup>56</sup> All Africa, "Uganda: Operation Shuja - 16 ADF Fighters Killed as UPDF Targets Top Commanders," 1 March 2022, <https://allafrica.com/stories/202203020497.html>

<sup>57</sup> Reuters, "Rebel attacks in eastern Congo kill more than 60," 15 March 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/rebel-attacks-eastern-congo-kill-more-than-60-2022-03-15/>

<sup>58</sup> TRT World, "Dozens of civilians killed in DRC by suspected ADF rebels," 16 March 2022, <https://www.trtworld.com/africa/dozens-of-civilians-killed-in-drc-by-suspected-adf-rebels-55552>

<sup>59</sup> Al Jazeera, "DR Congo: Fourteen killed in machete attack in Ituri province," 20 March 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/20/armed-group-in-dr-congo-kills-fourteen-people-in-machete-attack>

<sup>60</sup> Al Jazeera, "At least 20 civilians killed in attack in eastern Congo: Report," 28 March 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/28/at-least-20-civilians-killed-in-attack-in-eastern-congo-report#:~:text=At%20least%20%20civilians%20have,organisation%2C%20told%20the%20news%20agency>

<sup>61</sup> Reuters, "Congo militiamen kill 18 civilians in church compound," 9 March 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/congo-militiamen-kill-18-civilians-church-compound-2022-03-09/>

<sup>62</sup> Al Jazeera, "DR Congo: Fourteen killed in machete attack in Ituri province," 20 March 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/20/armed-group-in-dr-congo-kills-fourteen-people-in-machete-attack>

24 March 12 people, 11 elderly civilians and one soldier were killed in Djugu.<sup>63</sup> CODECO was suspected of carrying out the attacks.

Clashes between the Congolese army and the M23 rebel group broke out during the last days of March, following attacks on two army positions near the Ugandan and Rwandan border. The Congolese army accused the Rwanda Defense Forces (RDF) of supporting the M23, which Rwandan authorities denied. M23 spokesman Willy Ngoma also claimed that the movement does not receive "any help, either from near or far, from any neighbouring country."<sup>64</sup> The violence led to 6,000 refugees crossing the border into Uganda on 25 March.<sup>65</sup> Eight UN peacekeepers died when their helicopter went down on 29 March, which the Congolese army claims was a result of the helicopter being shot down by M23.<sup>66</sup>

In early March, the Congolese human rights minister launched national consultations on the establishment of a truth and reconciliation commission.<sup>67</sup> Political tensions are on the rise, with elections scheduled to take place in 2023, and the 2011 and 2018 widely seen as fraudulent. Activists and NGO's warn preparations "have been marred by irregularities and violations of fundamental procedures, all amid suspicions of corruption."<sup>68</sup> Congolese President Tshisekedi reassured the elections would be held on time and that he hoped to win for a second term.<sup>69</sup>

### *Context*

Eastern Congo has been plagued by violence for more than two decades. More than 120 militias and armed groups are active in eastern DRC. A state of siege was declared in May 2021 and is still in place in northeastern DRC in response to the violence.

Since April 2017, ADF has reportedly been responsible for the deaths of at least 2300 people and the abduction of 900, according to KST. Bombings in neighbouring Uganda during October and November 2021 paved the way for a joint Congolese-Ugandan military operation against ADF. Many continue to believe Uganda has ulterior motives for intervention.<sup>70</sup>

CODECO is a coalition of militia founded in the 1970s, in recent years the group started engaging in armed attacks again with the objective of defending the Lendu population against the Hema.

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<sup>63</sup> The Defense Post, "12 Killed in Rebel Attack in DR Congo's Ituri Province," 24 March 2022, <https://www.thedefensepost.com/2022/03/24/rebel-attack-ituri-congo/>

<sup>64</sup> Africa News, "DRC army accuses Rwanda of supporting rebel group," 29 March 2022, <https://www.africanews.com/2022/03/29/drc-army-accuses-rwanda-of-supporting-rebel-group/>

<sup>65</sup> Zawya, "M23 rebels make advances in eastern Congo," 29 March 2022, <https://www.zawya.com/en/world/africa/m23-rebels-make-advances-in-eastern-congo-ot7m1nho>

<sup>66</sup> Egypt Independent, "8 UN peacekeepers killed in Congo helicopter crash amid rebel fighting," 30 March 2022, <https://egyptindependent.com/8-un-peacekeepers-killed-in-congo-helicopter-crash-amid-rebel-fighting/>

<sup>67</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Important Step Toward Justice in DR Congo?" 11 March 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/03/11/important-step-toward-justice-dr-congo-0>

<sup>68</sup> The Sentry, "Kinshasa Declaration Today: 62 Congolese Groups, Activists, Int'l NGOs Warn Elections in Jeopardy," 17 March 2022, <https://thesentry.org/2022/03/17/6898/kinshasa-declaration-today-62-congolese-groups-activists-intl-ngos-warn-elections-jeopardy/>

<sup>69</sup> Sky Scrapper City, "DRC: Felix Tshisekedi believes "not having had much time" and wants a second term," 18 March 2022, <https://www.skyscrapercity.com/threads/fatshi-presidency.2159250/page-146>

<sup>70</sup> France 24, "Ugandan mission in DR Congo opens old wounds, sparks new anxieties," 2 December 2021, <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20211202-ugandan-mission-in-dr-congo-opens-old-wounds-sparks-new-anxieties>

The Kivu Security Tracker reports that they are responsible for at least 529 violent deaths, over 200 abductions and at least 78 clashes since March 2021.<sup>71</sup>

The M23 or March 23 Movement are a fraction of National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP), whom many were integrated into the Congolese army. They are of Tutsi ethnicity and have close ties to the Tutsi in neighbouring Rwanda.<sup>72</sup>

### *International response*

On 29 March 2022, UN Security Council held a meeting on the security situation in the country where they discussed the need for a “comprehensive political strategy to address the conflict’s structural causes.”<sup>73</sup>

On the same day, the UN Human Rights Council held an interactive dialogue on the need for justice and reparation of the serious crimes committed in the country during the last decades. Experts indicated there is a “a need for truth - without this, rumours and incitation to revenge-based violence were hard to combat.”<sup>74</sup>

The US Department of the Treasury on 17 March 2022 sanctioned Alain Goetz, the African Gold Refinery in Uganda and a network of companies allegedly involved in the illicit movement and sale of gold from the Democratic Republic of Congo. The proceeds of these sales are suspected to fund armed groups that are undermining security in the DRC.<sup>75</sup>

Doctors Without Borders (MSF) was forced to withdraw from Nizi and Bambu, Ituri province, after attacks on MSF marked vehicles went without response.<sup>76</sup>

On 29 March, the DRC joined the East African Community (EAC) becoming its 7th Partner State, expanding the territory of the trade bloc, giving it access to the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>77</sup> Congolese lawmakers must ratify the EAC laws and regulations for them to come into effect.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Kivu Security Tracker.

<sup>72</sup> Al Jazeera, “Q&A: Who are DR Congo’s M23 rebels?” 5 November 2013, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2013/11/5/qa-who-are-dr-congos-m23-rebels>

<sup>73</sup> UNSC, SC/14845, Comprehensive Political Strategy Needed to Tackle Structural Causes behind Conflict in Democratic Republic of Congo, Mission Head Tells Security Council, 29 March 2022, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/sc14845.doc.htm>

<sup>74</sup> OHCHR, Human Rights Council: the Democratic Republic of the Congo Continues to be Compounded by Attacks by Armed Groups against Civilians, while in Cambodia, the Monopolisation of Power by the Ruling Elite and Constraints Imposed Undermine the Quest for Democracy, 29 March 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/03/human-rights-council-democratic-republic-congo-continues-be-compounded>

<sup>75</sup> US Department of the Treasury, “Treasury Sanctions Alain Goetz and a Network of Companies Involved in the Illicit Gold Trade,” 17 March 2022, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0664>

<sup>76</sup> The Brussels Times, “‘Violence and impunity’: MSF close some projects in Democratic Republic of Congo,” 22 March 2022, <https://www.brusselstimes.com/212052/violence-and-impunity-msf-close-some-projects-in-democratic-republic-of-congo>

<sup>77</sup> East African Community, The Democratic Republic of the Congo joins EAC as its 7th Member, 29 March 2022, <https://www.eac.int/press-releases/2402-the-democratic-republic-of-the-congo-joins-eac-as-its-7th-member>

<sup>78</sup> BBC; “DR Congo joins East Africa trade bloc: Who gains?” 29 March 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-60901159>

## Ethiopia

On 24 March, the Ethiopian government announced an indefinite humanitarian truce expressing the hope that this would “substantially improve the humanitarian situation on the ground and pave the way for the resolution of the conflict in the northern Ethiopia without further bloodshed.”<sup>79</sup> A day later, Tigrayan forces released a statement announcing their commitment to implementing the ceasefire, as long as the people start to receive humanitarian assistance immediately and telecommunications and banking services are restored.<sup>80</sup> However, by the end of the month it remained unclear whether government policies and the actions of militias in Afar would change sufficiently to allow aid relief through to Tigray.<sup>81</sup> Despite the truce, fighting persisted between Afar regional special forces and associated militias against Tigrayan forces in Erebti woreda, Gubi Kebele in Abala woreda, and Sokardora kebele in Konneba woreda, in Kilbati Rasu-Zone 2 in Afar region.<sup>82</sup>



The humanitarian situation remained dire, 5.2 million people need food aid in Tigray, but humanitarians were able reach only 784,000 people since May 2021.<sup>83</sup> On 16 March 2022, Dr. Tedros Adhanom, Director General of the World Health Organization had readied 95 metric tons of medical supplies for Tigray which were unable to reach their destination due to lack of government permissions. Adhanom estimated that less than 1% of what is needed has been delivered to the region.<sup>84</sup> The only accessible land route for humanitarian convoys into Tigray runs through Afar and has not been open since 14 December 2021. Western Tigray remains inaccessible and information on the region remains limited. Some supplies are being moved by air to Mekelle, but the quantities are insufficient. Lack of fuel remains a key constraint for distributions within Tigray.<sup>85</sup> UNOCHA assessments in Adigrat and Erob in the Eastern Zone of Tigray reported an extremely dire humanitarian situation. Some people have been forced to resort to negative coping mechanisms, such as children begging and engaging survival sex.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Ethiopian Government Communication Service, Declaration of a Humanitarian Truce by the Government of Ethiopia, 27 March 2022, <https://ethiopianembassy.be/declaration-of-a-humanitarian-truce-by-the-government-of-ethiopia/>

<sup>80</sup> Statement by the Government of Tigray on the Cessation of Hostilities, 24 March 2022, <https://twitter.com/TigrayEAO/status/1507108987107430407>

<sup>81</sup> New York Times, “Ethiopia Declares ‘Humanitarian Truce’ in War-Ravaged Tigray Region,” 24 March 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/24/world/africa/ethiopia-tigray-conflict-truce.html?referringSource=articleShare>

<sup>82</sup> Ethiopia Peace Observatory, EPO Weekly: 19-25 March 2022, 29 March 2022, <https://epo.acleddata.com/2022/03/29/epo-weekly-19-25-march-2022/>

<sup>83</sup> Amnesty International, “Ethiopia: Federal government humanitarian truce in Tigray is a positive step forward and must lead to humanitarian access,” 25 March 2022, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/03/ethiopia-federal-government-humanitarian-truce-in-tigray-is-a-positive-step-forward-and-must-lead-to-humanitarian-access/>

<sup>84</sup> “95 Metric Tons of Medical Supplies Ready for Tigray but No Permission Given Yet: WHO,” *Addis Standard*, 16 March 2022, [https://allafrica.com/stories/202203170080.html?utm\\_campaign=daily-headlines&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_content=aans-view-link](https://allafrica.com/stories/202203170080.html?utm_campaign=daily-headlines&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_content=aans-view-link)

<sup>85</sup> ACAPS, “Northern Ethiopia crisis: Update on humanitarian needs,” 16 March 2022.

<sup>86</sup> UNOCHA, Situation Report Northern Ethiopia – Humanitarian Update, 31 March 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/ethiopia-northern-ethiopia-humanitarian-update-situation-report-31-mar-2022>

A recent investigation found that Ethiopian soldiers would have been responsible for killing 3 aid workers with Doctors Without Borders in the Tigray region in June 2021.<sup>87</sup> Research conducted by Human Rights Watch suggests that a government airstrike that hit a school hosting displaced Tigrayans in the northwestern part of the region in January 2022, killing at least 57 civilians, could amount to war crimes, “Using guided bombs without evidence of any military target indicates that this was an apparent war crime.”<sup>88</sup>

The overall situation remains tense and unpredictable,<sup>89</sup> although violence has lessened since January 2022, there was an increase in incidents in March as compared to February 2022 with a rise in battles and acts of violence against civilians.<sup>90</sup> In the Oromia region, clashes between the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF)-Shane and the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) and Oromia regional special forces continued throughout the month. Between 1 October 2021 and 18 March 2022, ACLED recorded 30 armed clashes between OLF-Shane and government security forces in the West Shewa zone, whereas prior to that only two clashes between the two had been recorded since 2018.<sup>91</sup> Amhara militias, including Fano, continued to attack civilians in Benshangul/Gumuz region.<sup>92</sup> 11.6 million people in Amhara are in need of food aid and the region is currently host to 263,000 internally displaced persons.<sup>93</sup>

### *Context.*

On 4 November 2020, following months of political tensions, the federal government of Ethiopia launched a military offensive in the Tigray region against forces loyal to the governing TPLF. The conflict has drawn in troops from nearby Eritrea and Ethiopia’s Amhara region and there have been frequent claims of rapes, massacre, enslavement, and widespread humanitarian abuses. Following the expansion of the conflict to Amhara and other Ethiopian regions, there has been an alarming rise in ethnic-based hate speech particularly against Tigrayans. On 18 October 2021, in response to the TDF advances, the ENDF launched an airstrike campaign on Tigray’s capital, Mekelle. Airstrikes continue to hit the Tigray region into 2022.

### *International response*

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<sup>87</sup> New York Times, “Finish Them Off: Aid Workers, Found on Battlefield, Executed by Soldiers,” 17 March 2022,

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/17/world/africa/ethiopia-tigray-aid-workers-killed.html>

<sup>88</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Ethiopia: Airstrike on Camp for Displaced Likely War Crime,” 24 March 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/03/24/ethiopia-airstrike-camp-displaced-likely-war-crime>

<sup>89</sup> OCHA, Situation Report Northern Ethiopia – Humanitarian Update, 31 March 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/ethiopia-northern-ethiopia-humanitarian-update-situation-report-31-mar-2022>

<sup>90</sup> ACLED, <https://acleddata.com/dashboard/#/dashboard>

<sup>91</sup> Ethiopia Peace Observatory, EPO Weekly: 12-18 March 2022, 23 March 2022, <https://epo.acleddata.com/2022/03/23/epo-weekly-12-18-march-2022/>

<sup>92</sup> Ethiopia Peace Observatory, EPO Weekly: 19-25 March 2022, 29 March 2022, <https://epo.acleddata.com/2022/03/29/epo-weekly-19-25-march-2022/>

<sup>93</sup> Addis Standard, “News: More than 11 million people in Amhara state in need of food assistance, region hosting 263,000 IDPs,” 19 March 2022, <https://addisstandard.com/news-more-than-11-million-people-in-amhara-state-in-need-of-food-assistance-region-hosting-263000-idps/>

The declaration of a humanitarian truce was generally welcomed by the international community including declarations from the UN Secretary General,<sup>94</sup> the African Union,<sup>95</sup> IGAD,<sup>96</sup> the United States,<sup>97</sup> UK and Turkey.<sup>98</sup>

On 31 March 2022, the government of Ethiopia tried to pass a resolution in the UN General Assembly's budget committee to block funding to the International Commission of Human Rights Experts which was authorized by the UN Human Rights Council in December 2021 to investigate ongoing human rights abuses in Ethiopia. The measure failed, but a vote of 66 to 27 with 39 abstentions.<sup>99</sup>

US President Biden was pressed by a chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to determine whether parties to the conflict in Ethiopia are guilty of war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide.<sup>100</sup>

## Libya

Tensions continued in March between Dbeibah, who was named Prime Minister of the Government of National Unity a year ago, and Bashagha, who was appointed by the House of Representatives (HOR), based in the East, to replace the former at the beginning of March when they claimed that his mandate had expired when the elections fell apart. Bashagha has instructed all government institutions to disregard all Dbeibah's instructions.<sup>101</sup> On 10 March news that Bashagha would enter the capital to carry out his duties, led to large military movements by armed convoys supporting him as well as brigades loyal to Dbeibah to stop him.<sup>102</sup> Bashagha ended



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<sup>94</sup> UN News, "Ethiopia: Guterres welcomes Tigray humanitarian ceasefire agreement," 25 March 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1114742>

<sup>95</sup> African Union, AUC Chairperson Welcomes the Declaration of An Indefinite Humanitarian Truce by The Ethiopian Government in Tigray Region, 25 March 2022, <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20220325/auc-chairperson-welcomes-declaration-indefinite-humanitarian-truce-tigray>

<sup>96</sup> IGAD, IGAD Statement On The Ethiopia Humanitarian Truce., 25 March 2022, <https://www.igad.int/executive-secretary/3000-igad-statement-on-the-ethiopia-humanitarian-truce>

<sup>97</sup> US Department of State, "Declaration of a Humanitarian Truce by the Government of Ethiopia," 24 March 2022, <https://www.state.gov/declaration-of-a-humanitarian-truce-by-c-government-of-ethiopia/>

<sup>98</sup> Walta Media, "US, UK, Turkey Governments Welcome Ethiopia's Declaration of Humanitarian Truce," 25 March 2022, <https://waltainfo.com/us-uk-turkey-governments-welcome-ethiopias-declaration-of-humanitarian-truce/>

<sup>99</sup> "Govt Fails to Block UN Funding for Human Rights Investigation," *Voice of America*, 1 April 2022, [https://allafrica.com/stories/202204010079.html?utm\\_campaign=daily-headlines&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_content=aans-view-link](https://allafrica.com/stories/202204010079.html?utm_campaign=daily-headlines&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_content=aans-view-link)

<sup>100</sup> US Foreign Relations Committee, "Menendez Presses Biden Administration on Genocide Determination for Conflict in Ethiopia," 17 March 2022, <https://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/chair/release/menendez-presses-biden-administration-on-genocide-determination-for-conflict-in-ethiopia->

<sup>101</sup> The Libya Observer, "Bashagha urges government institutions not to abide by unity government's orders," 22 March 2022, <https://www.libyaobserver.ly/news/bashagha-urges-government-institutions-not-abide-unity-government%E2%80%99s-orders>

<sup>102</sup> Middle East Monitor, "Calm in Libya following military mobilisation of Dbeibeh and Bashagha supporters," 12 March 2022, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20220312-calm-in-libya-following-military-mobilisation-of-dbeibeh-and-bashagha-supporters/>

the month asserting that he would soon take control of Tripoli, and that he had already taken steps towards assuming power.<sup>103</sup>

The assessments in the international community on the likelihood of this standoff leading to armed conflict differ. So far Bashagha has vowed not to use force.<sup>104</sup>

Attacks against freedom of speech are also of concern. A recent investigation indicates at least seven young men were arrested between November 2021 and March 2022 by the Libyan Internal Security Services (ISS), affiliated with the Presidential Council of the GNU. These activists, human rights defenders and individuals had recently discussed human rights concerns online and are believed to be detained in facilities controlled by radical armed groups. On 6 March 2022, a blogger and former member of the ISS was killed by members of the Misrata Joint Operations forces after speaking out online about being detained and later released by these forces.<sup>105</sup>

### *Context*

In March 2021, the transitional Government of National Unity (GNU) began preparing the nation for presidential elections in December 2021, these did not take place and have been postponed with no clear date in sight.

In early March 2022, parliament appointed a new premier, Fathi Bashaga, to replace Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah. Parliament argues that it has the authority to name Bashaga because Dbeibah's mandate officially ended December 24, 2021. However, Dbeibah says that he will only hand over power to a government emanating from a newly elected parliament.<sup>106</sup> Dbeibah announced plans for presidential elections in June, an exact date has not been set.<sup>107</sup>

### *International response*

On 16 March 2022, UN Under-Secretary General Rosemary DiCarlo briefed the UN Security Council on continuing political tensions in Libya. She reported an increase in human rights violations and hate speech, noting "Libya is now facing a new phase of political polarization, which risks dividing its institutions once again and reversing the gains achieved over the past two years."<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> The Libya Observer, "Bashagha says his government will only start work from Tripoli," 27 March 2022, <https://www.libyaobserver.ly/news/bashagha-says-his-government-will-only-start-work-tripoli>

<sup>104</sup> International Crisis Group, "Steering Libya Past Another Perilous Crossroads," 18 March 2022, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/north-africa/libya/b85-steering-libya-past-another-perilous-crossroads>

<sup>105</sup><sup>105</sup> Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, "Libya: Terrorization of civil society on moral and religious grounds highlights impunity of radical armed groups," 18 March 2022, <https://cihrs.org/libya-terrorization-of-civil-society-on-moral-and-religious-grounds-highlights-impunity-of-radical-armed-groups/?lang=en>

<sup>106</sup> The Arab Weekly, "Dbeibah said to reject Turkish mediation bid in Libya," 8 March 2022, <https://ahvalnews.com/turkey-libya/dbeibah-said-reject-turkish-mediation-bid-libya>

<sup>107</sup> Daily Sabah, "PM Dbeibah pushes summer election in Libya amid bid to oust him," 22 February 2022, <https://www.dailysabah.com/world/africa/pm-dbeibah-pushes-summer-election-in-libya-amid-bid-to-oust-him>

<sup>108</sup> "Tensions Rise in Libya As Risk of 'Parallel Governments' Grows, Security Council Hears," *UN News Service*, 16 March 2022, [https://allafrica.com/stories/202203170031.html?utm\\_campaign=daily-headlines&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_content=aans-view-link](https://allafrica.com/stories/202203170031.html?utm_campaign=daily-headlines&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_content=aans-view-link)

UN Secretary-General's Special Adviser, Stephanie Williams, indicated the United Nations announced a joint committee with members of the House of Representatives (HoR) as well as the High State Council (HSC) to build consensus on a basis for elections. On 15 March the HSC nominated its representatives to the joint committee. The UN has yet to receive the list of the HOR's representatives.<sup>109</sup> Williams also remarked that until elections took place neither the Tripoli nor Tobruk authorities had a real mandate, as mentioned previously, she also offered her good offices to mediate between Dbeibah and Bashagha to overcome the political impasse.<sup>110</sup> On 22 March, Williams met with the delegation of the HCS nominated to join the UN-facilitated joint committee.<sup>111</sup>

On 4 March, the governments of France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America released a joint statement calling on all actors to "refrain from all actions that could undermine the stability Libya," and that all five governments would hold accountable those who threatened the stability through violence or incitement.<sup>112</sup>

An early report from the UN's fact-finding mission to Libya was released at the end of March. The mission focused on widespread and systematic violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. They found that violations affecting the transition to democracy including acts of intimidation, threats of violence to members of the legal community and abductions have occurred, especially in the build-up to the December 2021 election date.<sup>113</sup>

The report focused on secret detention facilities currently in operation and concluded there are reasonable grounds to believe that serious violations are being committed there. Arbitrary arrest and detention of civilians have occurred with regularity since 2016, in many cases such crimes have amounted to enforced disappearances. Migrants also continue to be targeted, including for acts of murder, torture, rape, persecution, and enslavement by State authorities, militias, armed groups, and traffickers. Sexual and gender-based violence is common in migration detention centres as well as outside of that context, which leads in many cases to women not taking part in public life.<sup>114</sup>

## Mali

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<sup>109</sup> UNSMIL Statement on the UN – Facilitated Joint HOR/HCS Committee Meeting, 21 March 2022, <https://unsmil.unmissions.org/unsmil-statement-un-facilitated-joint-horhcs-committee-meeting>

<sup>110</sup> The Libya Update, "Political stalemate in Libya must be resolved internally, says UN advisor," 13 March 2022, <https://libyaupdate.com/political-stalemate-in-libya-must-be-resolved-internally-says-un-advisor/>

<sup>111</sup> Stephanie Turco Williams tweet, 25, March 2022, <https://twitter.com/SASGonLibya/status/1507392733186510848>

<sup>112</sup> Libya Alahrar, "Five western powers threaten sanctions on Libya political transition spoilers," 6 March 2022, <https://libyaalahrar.net/five-western-powers-threaten-sanctions-on-libya-political-transition-spoilers/>

<sup>113</sup>A/HRC/49/4 UN Human Rights Council, "Report of the Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya," 23 March 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/03/fact-finding-mission-libya-human-rights-violations-are-impeding-transition>

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.



Civilian casualties increased throughout 2021, especially in the northern and central part of the country, due to increasing attacks by armed groups and intercommunal violence.<sup>115</sup> The Human Rights Council's Independent Expert on Mali, Alioune Tine, warned of rising violence.<sup>116</sup> Since the start of 2022, an increasing number of arrests, executions and looting by the Malian army, as well as ongoing attacks against civilians by non-state armed groups have been reported.<sup>117</sup>



Violence between jihadist groups and government security forces continues. Human Rights Watch reported that 107 civilians have been killed since December 2021 due to these clashes, at least 71 deaths were linked to government forces and 36 to jihadist groups. Among the deadliest attacks, Islamist fighters opened fire on a bus killing 32 civilians in December 2021. They also killed up to 27 soldiers during an attack on Mondoro on 4 March 2022.<sup>118</sup>

Grave allegations of violations of international human rights law and humanitarian law by the Malian Defense and Security Forces have been reported.<sup>119</sup> On 2 March, 37 bodies were found near Diabaly commune, the victims had allegedly been arrested by the Malian army.<sup>120</sup> They were accused of executing 35 suspected militants in Danguère Wotoro in March as well as 14 ethnic Dogon in what appeared to be retaliation for the deaths of two soldiers. Between 27 – 31 March over 300 civilians were killed during a government-sanctioned operation carried out against suspected militants.<sup>121</sup> Violence between Islamist groups and government forces has displaced over 320,000 people.<sup>122</sup>

On the other hand, violence between the local fraction of the Islamic State, the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), and Tuareg separatists known as the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) broke out in the northern part of the country on 8 March. At least 335 civilians, mostly from the Daousahak ethnic group, have been killed and 8,000 have been displaced.<sup>123</sup> In recent weeks, the security situation in the Tri-border area between Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, has deteriorated considerably due to attacks by jihadist groups. At least 500

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<sup>115</sup> UN News, "Mali Humanitarian Response Plan seeks \$686 million," 17 February 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/02/1111962>

<sup>116</sup> OHCHR, Press Release Human Rights Council: Concerns about Continued Reports of Localised Violence Involving Community-Based Militias in South Sudan, and in Mali the Deterioration of the Overall Security Situation Has Passed the Critical Threshold, 29 March 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/03/hrc-continued-localised-violence>

<sup>117</sup> European Commission, "ECHO Daily Flash of 09 March 2022," 9 March 2022, <https://ercportal.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ECHO-Products/Echo-Flash#/daily-flash-archive/4444>

<sup>118</sup> Al Jazeera, "Mali rebel attack leaves dozens of soldiers dead," 5 March 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/5/mali-rebel-attack-leaves-dozens-of-soldiers-dead>

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> European Commission, "ECHO Daily Flash of 09 March 2022," 9 March 2022, <https://ercportal.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ECHO-Products/Echo-Flash#/daily-flash-archive/4444>

<sup>121</sup> All Africa, "Mali - UN Expert Calls for Independent Probe Into Moura Massacre," 6 April 2022, <https://allafrica.com/stories/202204070046.html>

<sup>122</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Mali: New Wave of Executions of Civilians," 16 March 2022, [https://allafrica.com/stories/202203160214.html?utm\\_campaign=daily-headlines&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_content=aans-view-link](https://allafrica.com/stories/202203160214.html?utm_campaign=daily-headlines&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_content=aans-view-link)

<sup>123</sup> Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, Atrocity Alert No. 294: "Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Ukraine and Mali," 30 March 2022, <https://www.globalr2p.org/publications/atrocity-alert-no-294/>

have been killed in March in the regions of Gao and Menaka. UN peacekeepers have been deployed to the region.<sup>124</sup>

2021 was characterised by a deterioration in the humanitarian situation mostly due to growing insecurity in the central region of the country which is now expanding south. Currently the need for humanitarian assistance in the country is at its highest since 2012, with about 7.5 million people in need of assistance.<sup>125</sup> The growing insecurity in the country has had a particular impact on girls and women with an explosion of gender-based violence, including forced marriages and rape.<sup>126</sup>

Peacekeeping operations in Mali are considered the most dangerous UN peacekeeping operation in the world, 2 blue helmets were killed at the beginning of March and over 250 have died since 2013.<sup>127</sup>

### *Context*

In March 2012 a military coup overthrew the democratically elected government led by Amadou Toumani Toure, triggered by the government's poor handling of the Tuareg rebellion.<sup>128</sup> After the coup, Tuareg separatists and Islamist groups took control of the northern part of the country. Although they had been dislodged, the region is still plagued by intercommunal and extremist violence and Islamist armed groups are taking control of villages and imposing sharia law.<sup>129</sup>

Mali has suffered two military takeovers in the last two years, the last one took place on 24 May 2021, when members of the armed forces, led by Assimi Goïta, arrested the transitional president Bah Ndaw and prime minister Moctar Ouane in what was called a “coup within a coup”.<sup>130</sup> The move came after the announcement of a cabinet reshuffle, where leaders of the coup were removed.

### *International Response*

The country has been suspended from the African Union since June 2021.<sup>131</sup> Tensions are increasing as the junta of Mali resists pressure from the international community to establish a viable timeline for the restoration of civilian rule. The Economic Community of West African States

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<sup>124</sup> Reuters, “U.N. peacekeepers deployed to northeastern Mali amid spate of killings,” 31 March 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mali-security-idAFKCN2LS2G2>

<sup>125</sup> UN News, “Mali Humanitarian Response Plan seeks \$686 million,” 17 February 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/02/1111962>

<sup>126</sup> OHCHR, Press Release Human Rights Council: Concerns about Continued Reports of Localised Violence Involving Community-Based Militias in South Sudan, and in Mali the Deterioration of the Overall Security Situation Has Passed the Critical Threshold, 29 March 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/03/hrc-continued-localised-violence>

<sup>127</sup> UN News, “Two UN peacekeepers killed in Mali, four wounded,” 7 March 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1113442>

<sup>128</sup> All Africa, “Mali's Crisis Hits 10-Year Mark,” 30 March 2022, [https://allafrica.com/stories/202203310452.html?utm\\_campaign=daily-headlines&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_content=aans-view-link](https://allafrica.com/stories/202203310452.html?utm_campaign=daily-headlines&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_content=aans-view-link)

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> The Conversation, “Inside Mali's coup within a coup,” 26 May 2021, <https://theconversation.com/inside-malis-coup-within-a-coup-161621>

<sup>131</sup> African Union, “African Union suspends Mali from participation in all activities of the African Union and decides to constitute an evaluation mission to engage with all concerned stakeholders,” 16 June 2022, <https://au.int/en/articles/african-union-suspends-mali-participation-all-activities>

(ECOWAS) re-imposed sanctions on the country as well as on the Republics of Burkina Faso and Guinea. The transitional government in Mali had requested 2 years to call for elections but the block only gave them 16 months and warned the current sanctions imposed will remain until steps are seen towards normalcy.<sup>132</sup>

The European Union has imposed sanctions on 5 members of transitional interim President Assimi Goita's inner circle after the military cancelled plans to hold elections on 27 February 2022.<sup>133</sup>

In February 2022 France, its European partners and Canada said they would begin a coordinated withdrawal of their military resources in the fight against Islamist insurgents in the country, this is due to “multiple obstructions by the Malian transitional authorities” which made it impossible for France to continue its mission there.<sup>134</sup> The military government has however, reportedly welcomed militias from the Russian Wagner Group.<sup>135</sup> Recent information suggests the Russian group fighting alongside Malian soldiers have committed abuses in the country, a United Nations investigation is ongoing<sup>136</sup>

The UN peacekeeping operation MINUMSA has been operational since 2013. Two of their peacekeepers suffered an attack during the first week of March, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres condemned the attack and requested the government identify the perpetrators and bring them to justice.<sup>137</sup>

## Mozambique

Cabo Delgado remains the province most affected by Islamist insurgents. During the first week of March, al-Shabaab (AS) fighters killed at least 15 civilians in the villages of Mbuidi, Malamba, and Nangōmba.<sup>138</sup> On 7 March in Nangade district, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Mozambican Defence and Security Forces (FDS) and local militia conducted a military operation killing more than 30 insurgents considered responsible for a wave of attacks during the last weeks of February, when Litingina



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<sup>132</sup> Eurasia Review, “ECOWAS Re-Imposes Sanctions On Burkina Faso, Guinea And Mali,” 28 March 2022, <https://www.eurasiareview.com/28032022-ecowas-re-imposes-sanctions-on-burkina-faso-guinea-and-mali/>

<sup>133</sup> DW, “Mali: EU Sanctions Prime Minister, Other Junta Members,” 4 February 2022, <https://allafrica.com/stories/202202050006.html>

<sup>134</sup> DW, “France announces military withdrawal from Mali,” 17 February 2022, <https://www.dw.com/en/france-announces-military-withdrawal-from-mali/a-60808218>

<sup>135</sup> France 24, “US army confirms Russian mercenaries in Mali,” 21 January 2022, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20220121-us-army-confirms-russian-mercenaries-in-mali>

<sup>136</sup> Bloomberg, “UN Probes Allegations of Russian Mercenary Rights Abuses in Mali,” 11 March 2022, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-03-11/un-probes-allegations-of-russian-mercenary-rights-abuses-in-mali>

<sup>137</sup> United Nations Secretary General, Statement attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General - on Mali, 8 March 2022, <https://www.un.org/sg/en/node/262268>

<sup>138</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Violence Increases in Northern Mozambique,” 17 March 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/03/17/violence-increases-northern-mozambique>

was raided and six people were killed.<sup>139</sup> It is estimated that 24,000 people have been displaced from Nangade between January and mid-March 2022 due to violence.<sup>140</sup> Between 15 and 17 March approximately 20 insurgents disguised in military uniforms attacked Matemo island, looting food and burning homes. Security forces responded, leaving at least 17 dead across both sides, several government soldiers were decapitated. Days later, on social media the Islamic State published footage on the killings of soldiers.<sup>141</sup>

Islamist extremist groups continue to control parts of Cabo Delgado and operate the bordering provinces of Niassa and Nampula.<sup>142</sup> Attacks have also been registered in Tanzania, where an attack on 20 March killed at least one person,<sup>143</sup> Recent information suggests the group has recruited fighters from neighbouring Tanzania and South Africa.<sup>144</sup>

Al-Shabaab has made notorious advances in weaponry and skills since beginning activities in Mozambique. A recent investigation concluded that most of the insurgents' weaponry comes from Mozambican military sources, possibly being sold by some soldiers in the Mozambican armed forces in 2018 and 2019, before AS became a major threat.<sup>145</sup>

The tropical cyclone Gombe hit the country during the first fortnight of March, exacerbating the already existent humanitarian crisis in the northern region. It affected at least 736,000 people, caused over 60 deaths, and injured over 100 people, mostly impacting the Nampula and Zambezia provinces. As the weeks went by the number of displaced people has decreased, with the number in accommodation centres having gone down by 50%.<sup>146</sup>

As of January 2022, it is estimated that 1.9 million people are experiencing acute food insecurity, mostly due to the ongoing conflict. 71% are in Cabo Delgado, Niassa, Nampula and Zambezia.<sup>147</sup> The increase in food shortages led to the release of around 200 hostages who had been captured by insurgents. It was reported that on 23 March that 120 civilians arrived at a Mozambican-Rwandan military base after escaping insurgents. On 28 March, sources in Macomia town claimed that up to 80 women, children, and elderly people arrived in the town under similar circumstances. They appeared to be malnourished.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Cabo Ligado, Cabo Ligado Weekly: 7-13 March, 15 March 2022, <https://www.caboligado.com/reports/cabo-ligado-weekly-7-13-march-2022>

<sup>140</sup> UN News, "Mozambique: Thousands continue to flee violence in Cabo Delgado," 22 March 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1114412>

<sup>141</sup> Cabo Ligado, Cabo Ligado Weekly: 14-20 March, 22 March 2022, <https://www.caboligado.com/reports/cabo-ligado-weekly-14-20-march-2022>

<sup>142</sup> DE, "Terror threat morphs in Mozambique," 24 February 2022, <https://www.dw.com/en/terror-threat-morphs-in-mozambique/a-60890741>

<sup>143</sup> Cabo Ligado, Cabo Ligado Weekly: 14-20 March, 22 March 2022, <https://www.caboligado.com/reports/cabo-ligado-weekly-14-20-march-2022>

<sup>144</sup> DE, "Terror threat morphs in Mozambique," 24 February 2022, <https://www.dw.com/en/terror-threat-morphs-in-mozambique/a-60890741>

<sup>145</sup> Daily Maverik, "Investigation into arms flows to al-Shabaab insurgents points to Mozambican military," 15 March 2022, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-03-15-investigation-into-arms-flows-to-al-shabaab-insurgents-points-to-mozambican-military/>

<sup>146</sup> OCHA, Mozambique: Tropical Cyclone Gombe Flash Update No.7, 29 March 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/report/mozambique/mozambique-tropical-cyclone-gombe-flash-update-no7-29-march-2022>

<sup>147</sup> FAO, Northern Mozambique | Response overview – January 2022, February 2022, <https://www.fao.org/emergencies/resources/documents/resources-detail/en/c/1471125/>

<sup>148</sup> Cabo Ligado, Cabo Ligado Weekly: 21-27 March, 29 March 2022, <https://www.caboligado.com/reports/cabo-ligado-weekly-21-27-march-2022>

Displacement in Cabo Delgado continues, over 14,000 people were newly displaced in February, 48% of them children. Most displacements are related to reported security incidents.<sup>149</sup> UNHCR estimates 24,000 people were displaced within Nangade district of Cabo Delgado between January and mid-March due to attacks from non-state armed groups.<sup>150</sup>

#### *Context:*

In October 2017, attacks by a group known locally as “Al-Shabaab,” linked to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, but not to the Somali Al-Shabaab began in Cabo Delgado. The group has perpetrated indiscriminate attacks against civilians, including beheadings, sexual and gender-based violence, sexual slavery, abductions, recruitment of child soldiers and destroying civilian infrastructure. Reportedly more than 3,100 people have been killed<sup>151</sup> and over 890,662 have been displaced,<sup>152</sup> including 735,00 in Cabo Delgado.<sup>153</sup>

## **Nigeria**

In the midst of economic, political and security challenges, plus the surge in coups in west African nations, political parties must elect their candidates by 3 June 2022 for elections to be held in February and March 2023 for President and Vice-President, legislature, a number of state governors and others.<sup>154</sup>

Violence by non-state actors continues. ACLED data recorded over 150 acts of violence and almost 90 battles during the month of March including over 1,400 fatalities which represents over a 40% increase compared to the previous year monthly average.<sup>155</sup> Among them, 62 members of a volunteer vigilante group in northwestern Kebbi were ambushed and killed by gunmen on 6 March.<sup>156</sup> On 8 March, bandits targeted the Kebbi State deputy governor, Samaila Yombe and killed 19 of his security agents in Kanya in Dangu



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<sup>149</sup> UNICEF, MOZAMBIQUE Humanitarian Situation Report No. 2, 24 March 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/report/mozambique/unicef-mozambique-humanitarian-situation-report-no-2-february-2022>

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Ramos Miguel, Andre Baptista, “Officials Say Insurgency in Northern Mozambique is Spreading,” *Voice of America*, 17 December 2021, <https://www.voanews.com/a/officials-say-insurgency-in-northern-mozambique-is-spreading/6359526.html>

<sup>152</sup> UNHCR data portal, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/moz>

<sup>153</sup> UNHCR, “Northern Mozambique Situation,” January 2022.

<sup>154</sup> “High stakes as Nigeria prepares for elections 2023,” Institute for Security Studies, 11 March 2022, <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/high-stakes-as-nigeria-prepares-for-elections-2023>

<sup>155</sup> ACLED Data, <https://acleddata.com/dashboard/#/dashboard>

<sup>156</sup> Reuters, “Gunmen kill at least 62 vigilantes in Nigeria's Kebbi state,” 8 March 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/gunmen-kill-least-62-vigilantes-nigerias-kebbi-state-2022-03-08/>

Wasagu.<sup>157</sup> 24 security officials were killed between 13-18 March. Ten were killed alongside three civilians in an attack by bandits in Ngaski town in Kebbi State.<sup>158</sup> On 21 March, dozens of bandits on motorcycles invaded Ganar-Kiyawa village in Bukkuyum district, killing at least 16, local media put the death toll as high as 37.<sup>159</sup> On that same day, in Kaduna state 34 people were killed.<sup>160</sup> On 25 March, an airport in Kaduna State was invaded by 200 gunmen and an official was killed.<sup>161</sup> On 28 March, gunmen attacked a train traveling from Abuja to Kaduna city and opened fire against civilians, eight passengers were killed, 168 are still unaccounted for, many are believed to be kidnapped.<sup>162</sup> On 29 March, bandits attacked the Gidan train station and about six persons were reportedly killed and others kidnapped.<sup>163</sup> Attacks have been ongoing in Niger state, during the last days of March bandits abducted a local priest and at least 44 other villagers believed to be returnees from internally displaced camps.<sup>164</sup>

On the other hand, the armed forces continued to fight bandits, they were responsible for at least 11 acts of violence against civilians and engaged in almost 60 battles according to ACLED, including: 100 Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) terrorists were killed and 174 surrendered between 24 February and 10 March.<sup>165</sup> On 28 March, they killed the 12 bandits that took part in the attack against Kaduna airport.<sup>166</sup> On 16 March, over 100 were killed in an operation at Bangi village.<sup>167</sup> At least 7,000 Boko Haram and ISWAP members surrendered at the end of March,<sup>168</sup> bringing the total number up to 30,000 in the north-eastern part of the country according to Mr. Boss Mustapha, Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF).<sup>169</sup> Borno state regional government announced the successful reintegration of the first

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<sup>157</sup> Premium Times, "Kebbi deputy governor escapes death as bandits 'kill 19 security agents'," 9 March 2022, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/516330-kebbi-deputy-governor-escapes-death-as-bandits-kill-19-security-agents.html>

<sup>158</sup> Nasir Ayitogo, "24 Police, Other Security Personnel Killed in Nigeria Last Week," 20 March 2022, [https://allafrica.com/stories/202203200185.html?utm\\_campaign=daily-headlines&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_content=aans-view-link](https://allafrica.com/stories/202203200185.html?utm_campaign=daily-headlines&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_content=aans-view-link)

<sup>159</sup> France 24, "Gunmen kill more than a dozen villagers in northwest Nigeria," 22 March 2022, <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20220322-gunmen-kill-more-than-a-dozen-villagers-in-northwest-nigeria>

<sup>160</sup> VOA, "Gunmen Kill 34 in Northwest Nigeria, Official Says," 22 March 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/gunmen-kill-34-in-northwest-nigeria-official-says-/6496677.html>

<sup>161</sup> VOA, "Nigerian Citizens Worried After Armed Men Attacked Airport, Killed One Official in Kaduna," 27 March 2022, [https://allafrica.com/stories/202203280002.html?utm\\_campaign=daily-headlines&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_content=aans-view-link](https://allafrica.com/stories/202203280002.html?utm_campaign=daily-headlines&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_content=aans-view-link)

<sup>162</sup> Premium Times, "One week after Kaduna train attack, 168 passengers still unaccounted for – NRC," 4 April 2022, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/521738-one-week-after-kaduna-train-attack-168-passengers-still-unaccounted-for-nrc.html>

<sup>163</sup> Channels Television, "Terrorists Hit Kaduna Train Station In Fresh Attack," 29 March 2022, <https://www.channelstv.com/2022/03/29/just-in-terrorists-attack-train-station-in-kaduna/>

<sup>164</sup> The Guardian Nigeria, "Gunmen kill three, abduct Catholic priest, 44 others in Niger," 29 March 2022, <https://guardian.ng/news/gunmen-kill-three-abduct-catholic-priest-44-others-in-niger/>

<sup>165</sup> Nation, "Nigerian military kills 100 bandits in Kaduna and Zamfara," 3 April 2022, <https://nation.africa/africa/news/nigerian-army-kills-100-bandits-in-kaduna-zamfara-3770224>

<sup>166</sup> Channels Television, "Troops Kill 12 Bandits Involved In Attack On Kaduna Airport," 28 March 2022, <https://www.channelstv.com/2022/03/28/troops-kill-12-bandits-involved-in-attack-on-kaduna-airport/>

<sup>167</sup> Vanguard, "Joint task force kills 100 bandits in Niger," 18 March 2022, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/03/joint-task-force-kills-100-bandits-in-niger/>

<sup>168</sup> Al Jazeera, "Nigeria: 7,000 Boko Haram, other fighters surrender in a week," 24 March 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/24/nigeria-7000-boko-haram-other-terrorists-surrender-in-a-week>

<sup>169</sup> The Guardian, "Troops kill 121 Boko Haram fighters, bandits in Borno, Katsina," 11 March 2022, <https://guardian.ng/news/troops-kill-121-boko-haram-fighters-bandits-in-borno-katsina/>

group of 500 former fighters<sup>170</sup> as part of the Safe Corridor operation launched in 2016 which aims for the rehabilitation of ex-insurgents to ensure sustainable peace and security in the state.<sup>171</sup>

ISWAP continues to grow, a recent investigation has uncovered links between ISWAP and ISIS affiliates like the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) and the Islamic State in Central Africa Province (ISCAP).<sup>172</sup> Clashes between ISWAP and Boko Haram over control of the Lake Chad Basin area are ongoing. ISWAP killed at least 30 Boko Haram fighters in Dikwa on 5 March,<sup>173</sup> on 8 March, nine were killed.<sup>174</sup> On 31 March, at least 50 ISWAP fighters were killed.<sup>175</sup> Recent information shows about 50 ISWAP camps on the Lake Chad islands training youth from Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria. Boko Haram's use of underage children in combat and the enslavement of women and girls were among the reasons for the groups split.<sup>176</sup>

### *Context:*

Nigeria faces multiple security challenges, including ongoing violence related to the Islamic State in the north, increasing intercommunal violence in the North-Central Zone, and separatist movements in the Niger Delta and South-East Zone.

Armed groups known locally as bandits carry out widespread killings, kidnappings, and looting across several states in the northwest region. Responding to the violent attacks, the government launched renewed campaigns in the north-west to curb armed banditry in September 2021.<sup>177</sup> In January 2022, under the Terrorism Prevention Act, the government of Nigeria designated bandit groups as "terrorists."<sup>178</sup>

Boko Haram has been active in the country since the early 2000's. Based in northeastern Nigeria it has expanded to neighbouring countries such as Chad, Niger, and northern Cameroon. In 2016, the group split, resulting in the emergence of a hostile faction known as the Islamic State's West Africa Province (ISWAP).

IPOB members say the region has been economically and politically marginalised since the end of the civil war in 1970. In recent years, the group has begun to amass foot soldiers culminating in the launch of its paramilitary arm, the ESN in December 2020.

### *International Response:*

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<sup>170</sup> DW, "Nigeria: Ex-Boko Haram fighters face tough path to reintegration," 18 March 2022, <https://www.dw.com/en/nigeria-ex-boko-haram-fighters-face-tough-path-to-reintegration/a-61169893>

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> The Sahara Reporters, "Supremacy Battle: ISWAP Fighters Kill 30 Boko Haram Members In Borno," 8 March 2022, <https://saharareporters.com/2022/03/08/supremacy-battle-iswap-fighters-kill-30-boko-haram-members-orno>

<sup>174</sup> The Cable Nigeria, "'Nine killed' as Boko Haram clashes with ISWAP in Borno," 9 March 2022, <https://www.thecable.ng/nine-killed-as-boko-haram-clashes-with-iswap-in-orno>

<sup>175</sup> Sahara Reporters, "Boko Haram Terrorists Ambush ISWAP Fighters, Kill 50 In Borno," 31 March 2022, <https://saharareporters.com/2022/03/31/boko-haram-terrorists-ambush-iswap-fighters-kill-50-orno>

<sup>176</sup> Institute for Security Studies, "Children on the battlefield: ISWAP's latest recruits," 10 March 2022, <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/children-on-the-battlefield-iswaps-latest-recruits>

<sup>177</sup> The Defense Post, "Nigeria's Military Crackdown Puts Squeeze on Bandit Gangs," 21 September 2021, <https://www.thedefensepost.com/2021/09/21/nigeria-military-crackdown-bandits/>

<sup>178</sup> The Guardian, "FG declares bandits as terrorists," 5 January 2022, <https://guardian.ng/news/fg-declares-bandits-as-terrorists/>



UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres,<sup>179</sup> as well as the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat,<sup>180</sup> condemned the recent airport and railway attacks that took place on the last week of March and called on the Nigerian authorities to take all necessary measures to ensure that the missing passengers are found, and the perpetrators are brought to justice.

## Somalia

The latest in a series of scheduled election dates passed on 31 March without elections. Attacks by Islamist extremists intensified through March, ACLED recorded over 40 acts of remote violence including explosions and at least 116 battles. Violence resulted in almost 500 fatalities which represents an almost 80% increase compared to March 2021.<sup>181</sup> Al-Shabaab militants warned politicians would be targeted.<sup>182</sup> On 23 March 2021, they attacked the international airport in the capital Mogadishu, two terrorists were killed, and three security officers were injured, the militia group indicated their target was the Halane military compound inside the airport that houses the UN and African Union peacekeeping missions.<sup>183</sup> Two bomb blasts in Beledweyne killed 48 people and wounded over 100, among those killed was Amina Mohamed Abdi, a member of parliament and critic of the government.<sup>184</sup> On that same day an attack on a restaurant in Beledweyne, ended the life of former lawmaker Hassan Dhuhul.<sup>185</sup> On 24 March, another attack on the airport killed six, one Somali and five foreigners involved in AMISOM. The attackers were reportedly killed by security forces.<sup>186</sup> On 27 March, they attacked an Af Urur military base in Puntland, killing at least three soldiers,<sup>187</sup> security forces killed 12 militants.<sup>188</sup> Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for all attacks.



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<sup>179</sup> Xinhua, "UN chief condemns attacks on airport, passenger train in Nigeria," 30 March 2022, <https://english.news.cn/20220330/2457cee157a2412eb16112b4d2fc0db6/c.html>

<sup>180</sup> African Union, Statement of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on a Railway Attack in Nigeria, 30 March 2022, <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20220330/statement-chairperson-railway-attack-nigeria>

<sup>181</sup> ACLED Data

<sup>182</sup> DW, "Attacks intensify as Somalia prepares for presidential election," 29 March 2022, <https://www.dw.com/en/attacks-intensify-as-somalia-prepares-for-presidential-election/a-61293528>

<sup>183</sup> Andalou Agency, "Somali forces kill 2 al-Shabaab terrorists at Mogadishu airport," 23 March 2022, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/somali-forces-kill-2-al-shabaab-terrorists-at-mogadishu-airport/2543474>

<sup>184</sup><sup>184</sup> DW, "Somalia twin attack: Politician killed in bomb blasts, 23 March 2022, <https://www.dw.com/en/somalia-twin-attack-politician-killed-in-bomb-blasts/a-61239115>

<sup>185</sup> AP news, "Somali female lawmaker among scores killed by suicide bomber," 24 March 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/africa-bombings-somalia-suicide-bombings-mogadishu-adc7b1ec67df7785e4ff3440b7aaa6b0>

<sup>186</sup> "At Least 7 Dead in Somalia After Al-Shabab Attacks," *Voice of America*, 23 March 2022, [https://allafrica.com/stories/202203240003.html?utm\\_campaign=daily-headlines&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_content=aans-view-link](https://allafrica.com/stories/202203240003.html?utm_campaign=daily-headlines&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_content=aans-view-link)

<sup>187</sup> Middle East Monitor, "Al-Shabaab terrorists target Somali military base, 3 soldiers killed," 27 March 2022, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20220327-al-shabaab-terrorists-target-somali-military-base-3-soldiers-killed/>

<sup>188</sup> China.org.cn, "Somalia says foils fresh terror attack, kills 12 Shabab militants," 28 Marzo 2022, [http://www.china.org.cn/world/2022-03/28/content\\_78133562.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/world/2022-03/28/content_78133562.htm)



The country, as well as the Horn of Africa region, is facing a severe drought. The UN Assistance Mission in Somalia estimates 7.7 million Somalis require humanitarian assistance, of these, 4.3 million are impacted by climatic conditions and more than 270,000 are displaced. 1.4 million children under the age of 5 are likely to suffer from acute malnutrition.<sup>189</sup> Women and girls have been most impacted by the drought, a recent report suggests girls are being forced to drop out of school as fees are unattainable due to loss of income, which exposes them to early marriage. 98% of women-run businesses have lost revenue and income due to the high cost of goods, and 51% have been forced to close.<sup>190</sup>

Experts believe Al-Shabaab may be in one of its strongest positions in the last years, with about 10,000 fighters in Somalia and parts of Kenya.<sup>191</sup> Their financial and warfare capacity is growing, the group collected about US\$180 million in revenue and spent US\$24 million on weapons in 2021.<sup>192</sup> In recent months, the group has also modified its tactics from using vehicles and armed raids, in recent months, there was an increase in attacks via suicide bombers on selected targets with precision to inflict the greatest possible damage.<sup>193</sup>

### *Context:*

After suffering through a near constant state of crisis since the fall of former dictator Siad Barre in 1991 and widespread violence under Al-Shabaab militants, the country managed to put in place a Federal Government through limited, indirect elections in 2012. In 2016, legislation passed allowing political parties for the first time since 1969. There was a peaceful transition of power in 2017 to the current president, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, better known as Farmaajo, who was again elected indirectly. At the same time, the country made progress in reforming the security forces, judiciary and other key state institutions. This progress is now being undermined by the electoral crisis.

### *International Response:*

The UN Security Council voted unanimously on 31 March to endorse the African Union Peace and Security Council's new transitional mission in Somalia (ATMIS). The mission replaces the African Union Mission in Somalia, known as AMISOM, which has been in the country for 15 years. ATMIS is mandated to reduce "the threat posed by al-Shabaab; support the capacity-building of the integrated Somali security and police forces; conduct a phased handover of security responsibilities to Somalia; and support peace and reconciliation efforts in that country."<sup>194</sup> ATMIS is to be distinguished from AMISOM in that it will focus on implementing the Somalia Transition Plan developed in 2018 to transfer security responsibilities to the country's security forces. The

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<sup>189</sup> UN News, "Somalia: Elections must be finalized amid worsening drought, Security Council hears," 15 February 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/02/1112022>

<sup>190</sup> CARE, "Somalia: Early Marriages, FGM and Closure of Businesses Threaten Girls and Women as Drought Worsens," 25 March 2022, <https://www.care.org/news-and-stories/press-releases/somalia-early-marriages-fgm-and-closure-of-businesses-threaten-girls-and-women-as-drought-worsens/>

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> Institute for Security Studies, "Is the AU mission in Somalia changing in name only?" 29 March 2022, <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/is-the-au-mission-in-somalia-changing-in-name-only>

<sup>193</sup> VOA, "Al-Shabab Surge in Somalia's Suicide Attacks 'Change of Tactics,' Experts Say," 27 March 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/al-shabab-surge-in-somalia-s-suicide-attacks-change-of-tactics-experts-say/6503450.html>

<sup>194</sup> UNSC SC/14847, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2628 (2022), Security Council Endorses Decision to Reconfigure Existing Entity into African Union Transition Mission in Somalia, 31 March 2022, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/sc14847.doc.htm>

plan was recently revised and will be carried out over the next three years over a four-phased timeline.<sup>195</sup>

The United States expanded the number of Somali individuals subject to visa restrictions to those “believed to be responsible for, or complicit in, undermining the democratic process in Somalia” on 16 March.<sup>196</sup>

China donated military vehicles and equipment to the Somali government in March “intended to be used by the Somali military in the fight against Al-Shabaab” referencing to a “deep relationship” among both countries.<sup>197</sup>

## South Sudan

Fighting between the two main signatories of the 2018 Revitalised Agreement erupted this month, putting at risk an already fragile transition. With only a year until the country’s first elections, South Sudan is under pressure to comply with the key provisions of the agreement which requires full participation of both the Sudanese People’s Liberation Movement in Government (SPLM-IG) under President Salva Kiir Mayardit and the Sudanese People’s Liberation Movement in Opposition (SPLM-IO) led by Vice President Dr. Riek Machar Teny.



Clashes between South Sudan’s military and forces loyal to Machar have been reported in various areas since about 20 March. Days later, the head of the SPLM-IO, Gen. Gatluak Bieh Tutdel, was killed by South Sudan People’s Defense Forces (SSPDF) in Maiwut County of Upper Nile state.<sup>198</sup> After days of ongoing battles between both parties, on 24 March the SSPDF spokesman indicated “SPLA-IO has officially declared War on SSPDF.”<sup>199</sup> The repeated attacks on Upper Nile state military bases as well as the “inconsistencies” in meetings and implementing resolutions led South Sudan’s armed opposition to pull out of peace monitoring mechanism, Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (R-JMEC). In a statement, SPLM-IO military chief Gen. Gabriel Duop Lam, indicated the attacks by the SPLM-IG amount to “the continuation of war with destructive results to the civil population in the areas affected by this destructive policy.”<sup>200</sup> SPLM-IO’s declaration led for fighting to soar, yet president

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<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Middle East Monitor, “US expands number of Somalis subject to visa restrictions,” 17 March 2022, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20220317-us-expands-number-of-somalis-subject-to-visa-restrictions/>

<sup>197</sup> All Africa, “Somalia: China Donates Military Equipment to Somalia to Aid War Against Terrorists,” 19 March 2022, <https://allafrica.com/stories/202203190144.html>

<sup>198</sup><sup>198</sup> Sudans Post, “Top SPLA-IO general killed in Maiwut,” 23 March 2022, <https://www.sudanspost.com/top-spla-io-general-killed-in-maiwut/>

<sup>199</sup> Sudans Post, “SSPDF says SPLA-IO has declared war as fresh fighting erupts in Maiwut,” 24 March 2022, <https://www.sudanspost.com/sspdf-says-spla-io-has-declared-war-as-fresh-fighting-erupts-in-maiwut/>

<sup>200</sup> Sudans Post, “PLM-IO withdraws from R-JMEC, says use of proxies by Kiir means return to war,” 23 March 2022, <https://www.sudanspost.com/splm-io-withdraws-from-r-jmec-says-use-of-proxies-by-kiir-means-return-to-war/>

Kiir denied any declaration of war and ensured the implementation of the agreement was on track.<sup>201</sup>

A lack of consensus on the creation of a unified national army, as per the 2018 agreement, led Kiir to order the creation of the army, which Machar rejected, for considering it to pre-empt ongoing mediation.<sup>202</sup> After, security forces were deployed in some areas of Juba throughout the weekend, including near the residence of Machar, where they stayed until Monday morning.<sup>203</sup> Machar released a statement condemning the actions, under which he was put under house arrest, indicating “It was a provocative and condemnable act reminiscent of incidents of December 15, 2013; J1 July 8, 2016; and the last week unnecessary parading of the newly acquired heavy weapons and APCs<sup>204</sup> for the National Police, which are still in the streets of Juba. These create terror and panic.”<sup>205</sup> Machar reached out to the countries of the IGAD, especially from Sudan’s Al-Burhan, to come to his aid against President Kiir.<sup>206</sup>

On 30 March, the ruling SPLM-IG indicated it would address the issues that led to the withdrawal of SPLM/A-IO from the security mechanisms.<sup>207</sup> With less than a year to go until the end of the transitional period, the failure to comply with the agreement as well as imperfect elections could aggravate existing tensions and the ongoing violence.

A recent report concerning the purported attempted coups of 2013 and 2016 was published by Steven Kay QC and his team at 9BR.<sup>208</sup> The report places responsibility on Machar and his allies for the attempted coups and releases phone communications as evidence. SPLM-IO criticised the report and claimed it was biased and overlooked atrocities committed by the SPLM-IG.<sup>209</sup>

#### *Context:*

South Sudan gained its independence from Sudan in 2011. Two years later, a political crisis erupted and turned into a civil war that took on an ethnic tone. The conflict quickly spread throughout the country, civilians were targeted on the basis of their ethnicity and/or perceived political affiliation, almost 400,000 people lost their lives during that time. All parties to the conflict committed rape and sexual violence, destroyed property and looted villages, and recruited

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<sup>201</sup> Eye Radio, “Kiir says peace on track despite challenges in the implementation,” 28 March 2022, <https://www.eyeradio.org/kiir-says-peace-on-track-despite-challenges-in-the-implementation/>

<sup>202</sup> Radio International France, “South Sudan peace agreement under pressure amid disagreements over military,” 28 March 2022, <https://www.rfi.fr/en/africa/20220328-south-sudan-peace-agreement-under-pressure-amid-disagreements-over-militaryvice-president-riek-machar-president-salva-kiir>

<sup>203</sup> Eye Radio, “Kiir says peace on track despite challenges in the implementation,” 28 March 2022, <https://www.eyeradio.org/kiir-says-peace-on-track-despite-challenges-in-the-implementation/>

<sup>204</sup> Armored personnel carriers

<sup>205</sup> Facebook SPLM-IO Sudan Chapter, 28 March 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/102885514803187/photos/statement-from-fvp-dr-riek-machar-on-sunday-night-march-27-2022-without-prior-in/509722527452815/>

<sup>206</sup> Africa News, “South Sudan: Machar calls on Sudan’s General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan for help,” 28 March 2022, <https://www.africanews.com/2022/03/28/south-sudan-machar-calls-on-sudan-s-general-abdel-fattah-al-burhan-for-help/>

<sup>207</sup> The City Review, “Kiir reaches out to Machar to end stalemate, bad blood,” 30 March 2022, <https://cityreviewss.com/kiir-reaches-out-to-machar-to-end-stalemate-bad-blood/>

<sup>208</sup> Read full report here: <http://southsudanreports.com/>

<sup>209</sup> The City Review, “SPLM/A-IO slams report linking Machar to coups,” 31 March 2022, <https://cityreviewss.com/splm-a-io-slams-report-linking-machar-to-coups/>

children into their ranks. A mediation conducted by Uganda and Sudan in 2018 led the two main belligerents, Kiir and Machar reach a peace deal to end the war.

Violence has fuelled famine and food insecurity in the country and caused large-scale displacement of civilians inside and outside its borders. In February 2020, two years after signing President Salva Kiir Mayardit and former Vice President Riek Machar agreed on implementing the 2018 Revitalized Agreement, yet they have been slow to execute many of its provisions.

*International response:*

In March 2022, the UN Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan presented its sixth report to the UN Human Rights Council. The report noted that South Sudan is at a critical moment of transition with the implementation of the peace agreement lagging behind schedule. 8.9 million people in South Sudan are estimated to be in need. Predatory political elites have stolen aid intended to help vulnerable people, the Commission claimed. Activists working to promote transitional justice have been forced to flee the country.<sup>210</sup> In addition, the Commission presented a 48-page paper on the widespread and systematic sexual violence going on throughout South Sudan. Sexual violence has, the Commission argues, “been instrumentalized as a reward and an entitlement for youth and men participating in the conflict” intended to “inflict maximum disruption and the destruction of the fabric of communities.”<sup>211</sup>

The UN Security Council held a meeting on the 2023 elections in the country where they explored ways to address outstanding issues established during the Revitalized Agreement<sup>212</sup> and on 15 March voted to extend the mandate of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) for one year.<sup>213</sup>

The head of UNMISS urged all signatories to respect the agreement and expressed concern of the increasing violence in the Upper Nile.<sup>214</sup>

The United States extended the national emergency on South Sudan until April 2023, considering it poses extraordinary threat to the security and foreign policy of the country.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Peter Kenny, “South Sudan Pillages Aid Meant for People, Says UN Commission,” 18 March 2022, [https://allafrica.com/stories/202203180925.html?utm\\_campaign=daily-headlines&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_content=aans-view-link](https://allafrica.com/stories/202203180925.html?utm_campaign=daily-headlines&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_content=aans-view-link)

<sup>211</sup> Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, “Conflict-related Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls in South Sudan,” 21 March 2022, <https://allafrica.com/view/resource/main/main/id/00130673.html>

<sup>212</sup> UNSC, SC/14821, South Sudan Not Ready for Free, Fair Elections Given Failure to Implement Peace Agreement, Human Rights Activist Tells Security Council, 7 March 2022, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/sc14821.doc.htm>

<sup>213</sup> UNSC, SC/14830, Security Council Extends Mandate of United Nations Mission in South Sudan, Adopting Resolution 2625 (2022) by 13 Votes in Favour, 2 Abstentions, 15 March 2022, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/sc14830.doc.htm>

<sup>214</sup> UNMISS, Top UN Envoy in South Sudan stresses need for Parties to respect the Revitalized Peace Agreement, 24 March 2022, <https://unmiss.unmissions.org/top-un-envoy-south-sudan-stresses-need-parties-respect-revitalized-peace-agreement>

<sup>215</sup> Sudans post, “US Biden renews national emergency on South Sudan,” 30 March 2022, <https://www.sudanspost.com/us-biden-renews-national-emergency-on-south-sudan/>

The Troika expressed concern over the clashes among the South Sudan People's Defense Forces and SPLM-IO and called on the government to "exercise leadership and oversight of the nation's security forces to maintain discipline and compliance with the peace agreement."<sup>216</sup>

## Sudan

During March, conflict in Jebel Moon, West Darfur, cost the lives of at least 48 people and more than 12,000 were displaced.<sup>217</sup> Clashes broke out on 10 March and at least 35 people were killed during the second week of the month. Insecurity has increased in the region since the signing of the Juba Peace Agreement, and further still since the military coup d'état of 25 October.<sup>218</sup> Around the same time, three human rights activists were killed when their vehicle came under fire.<sup>219</sup> An organised protest took place in El Geneina, the capital of West Darfur, condemning the violence.<sup>220</sup> Adam Rijal, spokesperson for the General Coordination for Displaced Persons in Darfur, argues that the recent violence is not ethnic in nature but rather revolves around access to gold and other mineral resources as well as land suitable for husbandry.<sup>221</sup> Others point to ethnic mobilisation and lack of rule of law as factors leading to the violence.<sup>222</sup> The humanitarian situation in the area is worrying, about 68,500 people live in Jebel Moon locality, and more than 46,600 of them are in need of assistance.<sup>223</sup>



Violence has also erupted in South Darfur. Clashes between the Fellata and Rizeigat in Gereida and Tulus started on 26 March when a Rapid Support Forces (RSF) soldier from one of the tribes was killed by unknown perpetrators, leading to tribal mobilisation and attacks on villages during the following days. On 29 March, over 20 combatants from both tribes were reportedly killed during the clashes and it is estimated that over 100 people have been killed since then. Staff of

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<sup>216</sup> All Africa, "South Sudan: 'Troika' Says South Sudan's Clashes Could Spread Violence," 25 March 2022, <https://allafrica.com/stories/202203280156.html>

<sup>217</sup> UNITAMS, "SRSG Mr. Volker Perthes Remarks to the Security Council," 28 March 2022, <https://unitams.unmissions.org/en/unitams-srsg-mr-volker-perthes-remarks-security-council>

<sup>218</sup> "Protest in El Geneina demands stop to West Darfur violence," *Radio Dabanga*, 14 March 2022, <https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/protest-in-el-geneina-demands-stop-to-west-darfur-violence>

<sup>219</sup> "Three Human Rights Activists Shot Dead in West Darfur," *Radio Dabanga*, 17 March 2022, [https://allafrica.com/stories/202203180279.html?utm\\_campaign=daily-headlines&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_content=aans-view-link](https://allafrica.com/stories/202203180279.html?utm_campaign=daily-headlines&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_content=aans-view-link)

<sup>220</sup> "Protest in El Geneina demands stop to West Darfur violence," *Radio Dabanga*, 14 March 2022, <https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/protest-in-el-geneina-demands-stop-to-west-darfur-violence>

<sup>221</sup> Nabeel Biajo, "Sudan: Security Situation Uncertain After Deadly Violence in West Darfur," 15 March 2022, [https://allafrica.com/stories/202203150844.html?utm\\_campaign=daily-headlines&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_content=aans-view-link](https://allafrica.com/stories/202203150844.html?utm_campaign=daily-headlines&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_content=aans-view-link)

<sup>222</sup> Framework Mechanism for Conflict Transformation, "Violations in Jebel Moon have been re-ignited, posing a possible danger alert 2022," March 2022.

<sup>223</sup> Norwegian Refugee Council, "Sudan: Outcry over increasing violence in Darfur as villages are burnt to the ground," 18 March 2022, <https://www.nrc.no/news/2022/march/sudan-increasing-violence-in-darfur/>

Nyala teaching hospital confirmed that 56 people wounded in the conflict were treated on 31 March.<sup>224</sup>

The national committee set up to investigate the violations of the 3 June 2019 massacre<sup>225</sup> was forced to stop its activities after security forces seized the committee's main office at the beginning of March.<sup>226</sup>

At the national level, protests against the military government are ongoing and the government continues to respond with repressive tactics. Two protesters were killed by security forces during the Marches of the Millions, including an 11-year-old boy, on 10 March.<sup>227</sup> The Sudanese Doctors Association reported that 104 people were injured with tear gas, stun grenades and live ammunition in protests on 14 March 2022.<sup>228</sup> On 21 March 2022, a 13-year-old succumbed to a gunshot wound to the head on 17 March.<sup>229</sup> On 23 March, protesters stalled traffic in the capital by construction barricades and burning tires.<sup>230</sup> On 31 March, a 23 year old was shot in the chest and killed bringing the total number of deaths recorded in mass protests since the November coup to 93,<sup>231</sup> including 15 children.<sup>232</sup> A trend of sexual violence against women at protests has been recorded since the coup took place five months ago,<sup>233</sup> so far, 16 women have been reportedly raped during protests in Khartoum alone.<sup>234</sup> On 14 March, the gang rape of a 19-year-old woman by five police officers was recorded, a number of protesters rallied the following day to object the assault.<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> OCHA, Sudan: Inter-communal conflict - Gereida & Tulus, South Darfur Flash Update No. 01, 6 April 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/sudan-inter-communal-conflict-gereida-tulus-south-darfur-flash-update-no-01-6-april>; Framework mechanism document, on file with author.

<sup>225</sup> On June 3, 2019, a sit-in in front of the army command, was broken up with excessive violence. More than 186 protesters were reportedly killed, more than 700 others sustained injuries, and at least 100 people went missing.

<sup>226</sup> Dabanga Sudan, "June 3 Massacre investigation committee forced to stop work after office seizure," 8 March 2022, <https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/june-3-massacre-investigation-committee-forced-to-stop-work-after-office-seizure>

<sup>227</sup> Dabanga, "UNITAMS and AU: Sudan may 'plunge into the abyss' if no solution is found soon," 11 March 2022, <https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/unitams-and-au-sudan-may-plunge-into-the-abyss-if-no-solution-is-found-soon>

<sup>228</sup> "Sudan Doctors - 104 Injured in March of the Millions," *Radio Dabanga*, 15 March 2022, [https://allafrica.com/stories/202203160068.html?utm\\_campaign=daily-headlines&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_content=aans-view-link](https://allafrica.com/stories/202203160068.html?utm_campaign=daily-headlines&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_content=aans-view-link)

<sup>229</sup> "Sudan Doctors - 13-Year-Old Protester Dead After Shot to Head," *Radio Dabanga*, 21 March 2022.

<sup>230</sup> "'Day of the Barricades' - Sudan Capital Paralysed," *Radio Dabanga*, 23 March 2022, [https://allafrica.com/stories/202203240178.html?utm\\_campaign=daily-headlines&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_content=aans-view-link](https://allafrica.com/stories/202203240178.html?utm_campaign=daily-headlines&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_content=aans-view-link)

<sup>231</sup> Al Jazeera, "Protester killed as Sudanese rally against coup, economic crisis," 31 March 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/31/protester-killed-as-sudanese-rally-against-coup-economic-crisis>

<sup>232</sup> Alarabiya News, "Sudan riot police fire tear gas at protesters in Khartoum," 24 March 2022, <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2022/03/24/Sudan-riot-police-fire-tear-gas-at-protesters-in-Khartoum>

<sup>233</sup> BBC, "Sudan: BBC investigation shows abuse of female demonstrators," 21 March 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-africa-60514266>

<sup>234</sup> UNITAMS, SRSG MR. VOLKER PERTHES REMARKS TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL, 28 March 2022, <https://unitams.unmissions.org/en/unitams-srsg-mr-volker-perthes-remarks-security-council>

<sup>235</sup> "Sudan: Report of Gang-Rape After Demo Prompts Anger Across Sudan," *Radio Dabanga*, 16 March 2022, [https://allafrica.com/stories/202203170082.html?utm\\_campaign=daily-headlines&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_content=aans-view-link](https://allafrica.com/stories/202203170082.html?utm_campaign=daily-headlines&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_content=aans-view-link)

The country's economy is quickly worsening. During March, the value of the Sudanese Pound has fallen by over 35% against the US Dollar and prices for basic necessities have increased steeply. This situation is exacerbated by obstacles to international support since October's military takeover.<sup>236</sup> On 17 March, protesters blaming the military takeover for the increase in prices and poor living conditions took to the streets.<sup>237</sup>

It is expected more than 18 million people will be facing acute hunger by September 2022, due to the combined effects of conflict, economic crisis, and poor harvests, according to estimations by the UN World Food Programme and Food and Agriculture Organization<sup>238</sup>

### *Context*

Sudan has been the site of numerous atrocities. The north-south civil war raged from 1955-2001 with a brief respite following the signing of the Addis Ababa agreement in 1972. An estimated four million were displaced.<sup>239</sup> The war was characterised by brutal attacks on civilians and ethnically charged rhetoric. A Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed in 2001, eventually leading to the secession of South Sudan in 2011.

Shortly after the signing of the CPA, violence broke out in Darfur, with rebels taking up arms in response to the marginalisation of the region. Once again, ethnically charged rhetoric was deployed and groups associated with the rebels were subjected to massive human rights violations. Whole villages were razed, and women were systematically raped. A series of peace agreements signed in 2006, 2011 and 2020 have failed to end the violence.

### *International response:*

On 21 March 2022, the US government sanctioned the Sudan Central Reserve Police (CRP), a police unit responsible for much of the violence committed against protesters, for serious human rights abuses.<sup>240</sup>

After the incidents in Jebel Moon in West Darfur, UNITAMS Head, Volker Perthes, called for the de-escalation of the violence across the country. He called on the parties to work together to find a solution to the current political and economic situation<sup>241</sup> and towards a civilian protection plan that they could support.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> UNITAMS, "SRSG Mr. Volker Perthes Remarks to the Security Council," 28 March 2022, <https://unitams.unmissions.org/en/unitams-srsg-mr-volker-perthes-remarks-security-council>

<sup>238</sup> WFP, "Worsening food crisis looming in Sudan amid economic downturn, displacement, and ruined crops," 23 March 2022, <https://www.wfp.org/news/worsening-food-crisis-looming-sudan-amid-economic-downturn-displacement-and-ruined-crops>

<sup>239</sup> US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, "At Four Million, Sudan Leads the World in Internally Displaced Persons," 13 July 1998, <https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/four-million-sudan-leads-world-internally-displaced-persons>

<sup>240</sup> US Department of the Treasury, "Treasury Sanctions Sudanese Central Reserve Police for Serious Human Rights Abuse," 21 March 2022, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0668>

<sup>241</sup> "UNITAMS head calls to deescalate violence in Darfur and across Sudan," Dabanga, 13 March 2022, <https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/unitams-head-calls-to-deescalate-violence-in-darfur-and-across-sudan>

<sup>242</sup> Sudan Research and Consultancy Group, "Weekly Brief," 20 March 2022.

On 25 February, UNITAMS indicated they would be working alongside the AU and IGAD “to push the political process forward with the participation of all Sudanese actors in order to restore the path of civil and democratic transformation in Sudan.”<sup>243</sup> On 10 March 2022, UNITAMS Volker Perthes and AU Envoy Mohamed El Hacen Labatt announced that they would be working together on mediation.<sup>244</sup>

On 28 March, Perthes briefed the Security Council on the ongoing situation, on the Consultations on a Political Process for Sudan a consensus was reached on key aspects such as “the need for an end to violence, for a technocratic government or a government of experts, for a transitional legislative council.” Despite this, Perthes indicated the country is heading for an “economic and security collapse” unless the political situation is addressed.<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> UNITAMS, “Statement on the Release of UNITAMS Summary Report on its Consultations for a Political Process for Sudan,” 28 February 2022, <https://unitams.unmissions.org/en/statement-release-unitams-summary-report-its-consultations-political-process-sudan>

<sup>244</sup> “African Union, UN agree to partner on Sudan’s dialogue process,” *Sudan Tribune*, 10 March 2022, <https://sudantribune.com/article256218/>

<sup>245</sup> UNITAMS, SRSG Mr. Volker Perthes Remarks to the Security Council, 28 March 2022, <https://unitams.unmissions.org/en/unitams-srsg-mr-volker-perthes-remarks-security-council>