



Atrocities Watch Africa Monitor No 4, May 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 realisation 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.

Countries we were watching in April 2022:

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

Feature: “We will erase you from this land,” Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International joint report reactions.

On 5 April 2022, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch released a joint report based on information collected between November 2020 and March 2022 through 427 interviews and other research.

The report¹ establishes a clear pattern of ethnic cleansing² of Tigrayans from Western Tigray by Amhara regional officials and regional special forces and militias, with the acquiescence and possible participation of the Ethiopian federal forces, and in some cases, participation of Eritrean forces. Ethnic cleansing was accomplished through crimes including, but not limited to, murder,

¹ Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, “We Will Erase You from This Land,” 6 April 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2022/04/06/we-will-erase-you-land/crimes-against-humanity-and-ethnic-cleansing-ethiopia>

² The report adopts the definition provided by the United Nations Commission of Experts on the former Yugoslavia as a “purposeful policy by an ethnic or religious group to remove, by violent and terror-inspiring means, the civilian population of another ethnic or religious group from certain geographic areas.”

enforced disappearances, torture, rape, sexual slavery and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence, persecution, unlawful imprisonment, denying access to humanitarian aid, and other inhumane acts designed to suppress the rights and presence in the area of targeted groups, such as not allowing them to speak their own language. These acts amount to serious human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law, including war crimes and crimes against humanity.

This resulted in the forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of Tigrayans from their homes due to threats, intimidation, and a campaign of violence and forcible removal. To this day, the precise number of people displaced from Western Tigray remains unclear.

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch issued recommendations to each of the parties to the armed conflict, the UN, the AU and other key actors. Key recommendations include the need to protect civilians by releasing those arbitrarily detained, ensuring unimpeded access to humanitarian aid and the restoration of basic services. To promote this protection, they suggest the creation and deployment of a UN-backed, AU-led international peacekeeping force to be deployed with the consent of the parties. They argue, however, that a neutral peacekeeping force, which can be trusted by all sides, is critical to building trust. The organisations also call for immediate demobilisation and disarmament of all irregular forces such as Fano and other militias and call on the UN Security Council to include Ethiopia in its formal agenda and impose an arms embargo on all warring parties.

Amnesty International's secretary general, Agnès Callamard, insisted the international community had "failed to reflect the gravity of the crimes that continue to unfold in western Tigray."³ Kenneth Roth, Human Rights Watch Director reprimanded the Ethiopian government for having "denied the shocking breadth of the crimes that have unfolded and have egregiously failed to address them."⁴ Laetitia Bader, Horn of Africa director at Human Rights Watch, highlighted the role of three prominent individuals Colonel Demeke Zewdu, head of security of the Western Tigray Zone; Dejene Maru "Shaleqa," a commander of the Amhara special forces; and Belay Ayalew, believed to be an intelligence officer based in Humera. She called for the Ethiopian government to "immediately investigate them and suspend them from their positions of power where they continue to commit crimes against the civilians."⁵

Western Tigray remains the "thorniest obstacle to sustainable peace" in Ethiopia and the political disputes surrounding it could determine the fate of any negotiation between the federal government and Tigray.⁶

Response:

The Ethiopian Federal Government released a statement the day after the report's release indicating they would seriously examine all allegations of human rights violations and expressing

³ The Guardian, "Tigray has been the scene of 'ethnic cleansing', say human rights groups," 6 April 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/apr/06/tigray-has-been-the-scene-of-ethnic-cleansing-say-human-rights-groups>

⁴ The Citizen, "Rights groups accuse Ethiopian forces of committing war crimes in Tigray," 6 April 2022, <https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/africa/rights-groups-accuse-ethiopian-forces-of-committing-war-crimes-in-tigray-3773160>

⁵ The East African, "Ethiopia: Rights watchdogs name 'perpetrators' of Tigray atrocities," 7 April 2022, <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/rest-of-africa/rights-watchdogs-name-perpetrators-tigray-atrocities-3774132>

⁶ Ethiopia Peace Observatory, EPO Weekly 2-8 April 2022, 13 April 2022, <https://epo.acleddata.com/2022/04/13/epo-weekly-2-8-april-2022/>

concern regarding the “ethnic undertones” of the report, which they consider to disproportionately blame some parties and exculpate others. This, they argue, “fuels hatred and makes reconciliation and healing more difficult.” They argued that implementation of the report’s recommendations would further complicate peace efforts.⁷

The Amhara Regional Government rejected the report and accused it of being biased. They accused both human rights organisations of spreading “false accusations that don't play a positive role in preventing violations of human rights” and for “sharing the political stand of a designated terrorist group.”⁸ Spokesperson Gizachew Muluneh contended that the allegations were lies and fabricated news.⁹

The Government of Tigray welcomed the findings of the report but critiqued that “the report does not even begin to scratch the surface when it comes [to] documenting the true scale of the barbaric crimes committed against Tigrayans.”¹⁰

The US Department of State issued a press release expressing grave concern, requesting the release of those who had been arbitrarily detained and for granting international monitors access to all detention facilities. They also called on all foreign forces to withdraw from the country or regional security forces to leave neighbouring regions and the need for further investigation into the alleged atrocities and that accountability must be ensured.¹¹

The EU Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy condemned the violations in Western Tigray and called on the government to cooperate with the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia established by the Human Rights Council (HRC) in December 2021 and insisted an independent investigation is urgently needed, to establish accountability and ensure justice for victims.¹²

⁷ Twitter, FDRE Government Communication Service (@FdreService), 7 April 2022, https://twitter.com/FdreService/status/1511953365135151114?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Etweet

⁸ All Africa, “Ethiopia: News - Amhara State Rejects Rights Groups Report Detailing Crimes Against Humanity, Ethnic Cleansing in Western Tigray,” 11 April 2022, <https://allafrica.com/stories/202204120053.html>

⁹ SABC News, “US expresses alarm over reports of atrocities in Tigray,” 9 April 2022, <https://www.sabcnews.com/us-expresses-alarm-over-reports-of-atrocities-in-tigray/>

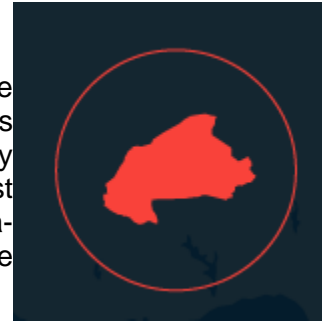
¹⁰ Twitter, Tigray External Affairs Office (@TigrayEAO), Statement on the Joint Report of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch on Atrocity Crimes Committed in Western Tigray, 8 April 2022, <https://twitter.com/TigrayEAO/status/1512466736712491010>

¹¹ US Department of State, Press Release, Reports of Mass Atrocities in Western Tigray, 8 April 2022, <https://www.state.gov/reports-of-mass-atrocities-in-western-tigray/>

¹² European Union External Action, Ethiopia/Tigray: Spokesperson statement on the reports on human rights violations and abuses of civilians, 9 April 2022, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/ethiopiaticigray-spokesperson-statement-reports-human-rights-violations-and-abuses-civilians_en

Burkina Faso

The number of incidents of political violence recorded by ACLED have decreased from February 2022 through April.¹³ The most violent events in the Sahel region occurred during the last weeks of the month, military forces conducted airstrikes and ground offensives against Islamist militants of both the Islamic State Sahel Province as well as the Al Qaeda-affiliated Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin,¹⁴ which was most active in the Centre-North and East regions at the start of the month.¹⁵



The joint Niger-Burkina Faso 'Taanli' 3 operation to combat Islamist militants along the countries' shared border operated throughout April, with military forces conducting airstrikes and ground offensives in the last weeks of the month.¹⁶ 100 jihadists were killed and at least 40 were arrested according to the military.¹⁷

At the start of the month, President Damiba announced new government measures: banning civilians from living or working in specific military operational zones and restricting large protests.¹⁸ Moreover, local committees for dialogue and the restoration of peace will be set up to promote dialogue with jihadist group leaders and livelihood opportunities will be offered for militants willing to disarm.¹⁹

Former President Kabore was allowed to return home after being detained since being ousted in January 2022, following ECOWAS demands for his unconditional release.²⁰ In spite of this, tensions with the regional block continued over the duration of the transitional period to constitutional rule without the military government presenting anything on it. At the start of the month, Damiba had indicated the current 36-month transition timeline could only be revised if the security situation demanded it.²¹ 25 April marked the deadline ECOWAS had offered both Guinea and Burkina Faso to come up with a more reasonable plan, but the government requested more time.²²

On 6 April, a military tribunal sentenced former president Blaise Compaore and two other associates in absentia to life imprisonment for complicity in the 1987 murder of his predecessor

¹³ ACLED Data.

¹⁴ ACLED regional overview: Africa 16-22 April, 28 April 2022, <https://acleddata.com/2022/04/13/regional-overview-africa-2-8-april-2022/>

¹⁵ ACLED regional overview: Africa 02-08 April, 28 April 2022, <https://acleddata.com/2022/04/28/regional-overview-africa-16-22-april-2022/>

¹⁶ ACLED regional overview: Africa 16-22 April, 28 April 2022, <https://acleddata.com/2022/04/28/regional-overview-africa-16-22-april-2022/>

¹⁷ The Defense Post, "Niger, Burkina Faso Say 100 Jihadists Killed in Joint Op," 26 April 2022, <https://www.thedefensepost.com/2022/04/26/niger-burkina-100-jihadists-killed/>

¹⁸ Daily Mail, "Burkina Faso sets up local panels to talk to jihadists," 2 April 2022, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-10678761/Burkina-Faso-sets-local-panels-talk-jihadists.html>

¹⁹ The New Humanitarian, "Burkina Faso to support local talks with jihadists: A Q&A with the minister of reconciliation," 27 April 2022, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/interview/2022/04/27/dialogue-with-jihadists-interview-with-burkina-fasos-minister-of-reconciliation>

²⁰ La Prensa Latina, "Burkina Faso's military junta frees overthrown president Kabore," 7 April 2022, <https://www.laprensa-latina.com/burkina-fasos-military-junta-frees-overthrown-president-kabore/>

²¹ Reuters, "Burkina Faso leader says security situation will dictate transition timeline," 2 April 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/burkina-faso-leader-says-security-situation-will-dictate-transition-timeline-2022-04-01/?rpc=401&>

²² Africa News, "Burkina Faso, Guinea request more time to present transition plans," 28 April 2022, <https://www.africanews.com/2022/04/27/burkina-faso-guinea-request-more-time-to-present-transition-plans/>

Thomas Sankara.²³ Compaore denounced the trial as politically motivated and a play for popularity.²⁴ Lawyers representing Sankara's family demanded Compaore's extradition from the Ivory Coast to serve his life sentence.²⁵

The forced displacement due to the ongoing violence has prevented people from farming causing an 82% increase in food insecurity, with 3.5 million people food insecure and 630,000 expected to be on the brink of starvation.²⁶

Context:

Attacks by militants linked to al Qaeda and the Islamic State have killed thousands in Burkina Faso since 2015.¹⁷ An estimated 1.8 million people have been displaced, concentrated in the north of the country.¹⁸ The coup in January 2022, was sparked in part by the government's inability to fully address this.

International response:

Due to what appears to be a lack of intent to abide by ECOWAS' request for a more reasonable timeline for a return to civilian rule, the regional bloc announced that it would send missions to the country before a forthcoming summit of heads of state.²⁷ Meanwhile, civil society organisations in Guinea, Mali and Burkina Faso, urged ECOWAS to lift all political, individual and economic sanctions arguing that they were adversely affecting the population and were unlikely to resolve the problems they were intended to address.²⁸

Cameroon

Violence continued in the north-west and south-west regions, although the level decreased, with 25% fewer incidents and an almost 50% drop in fatalities during the last four weeks compared to the monthly average for the last year.²⁹ The government believes anglophone separatists have joined forces with Nigerian militants and plans to shut down the



²³ Reuters, "Burkina Faso's ex-president Compaore handed life sentence in absentia over Sankara murder," 6 April 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/burkina-fasos-former-president-compaore-sentenced-life-prison-over-sankara--04-06/>

²⁴ The National Interest, "Burkina Faso's Ex-President Convicted for Sankara Killing," 7 April 2022, <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/burkina-fasos-ex-president-convicted-sankara-killing-201701>

²⁵ Africa News, "Sankara lawyers demand former president's extradition," 8 April 2022, <https://www.africanews.com/2022/04/08/sankara-lawyers-demand-former-president-s-extradition/>

²⁶ Associated Press, "Hunger grips Burkina Faso due to increasing jihadi violence," 26 April 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-islamic-state-group-ouagadougou-burkina-faso-business-b40b1270fbd8f90afa6c9aaada4fde82>

²⁷ Africa News, "Burkina Faso, Guinea request more time to present transition plans," 28 April 2022, <https://www.africanews.com/2022/04/27/burkina-faso-guinea-request-more-time-to-present-transition-plans/>

²⁸ All Africa, "West Africa: CSOs, OSIWA Urge ECOWAS to Lift Sanctions, Support Inclusive Political Transitions in Guinea, Mali & Burkina Faso," 26 April 2022, <https://allafrica.com/stories/202204270223.html>

²⁹ ACLED Data.

trade across the border, halting over 90% of the trade. More troops were deployed to the border.³⁰

A water shortage in the south-west region led to a cholera outbreak. The capital city, Buea, was reportedly without water or electricity for over a week in April.³¹ In the north-west, the prices of staple goods skyrocketed, leading the government to designate it as an economic disaster zone.³²

In the Far North violence continues, although the number of incidents decreased by over 30% and fatalities went down 66% in April compared to the monthly average of the previous year.³³ On 30 April, 14 civilians, taxi drivers and their passengers, were kidnapped by Boko Haram militants for defying the groups' ban on movement.³⁴

On 12 April, the government signed a military cooperation agreement with Russia to exchange opinions and information, among other things, training troops and military education. No direct reference was made to the anglophone crisis in the north-west and south-west nor the conflict with Islamist extremists in the Far North.³⁵

At least 35 civilians have been kidnapped by Central African Republic rebels since the end of March. The Cameroonian government responded by sending hundreds of troops to the border. On 18 April they managed to free seven, though two died.³⁶ A dozen people protesting the anglophone rebels were abducted, the separatists claimed the government paid the protesters.³⁷

Context:

In 2016, a series of peaceful protests by lawyers and teachers who, 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.

³⁰ VOA, "Cameroon: Separatists, Nigerian Militants Paralyze Border," 25 April 2022,

<https://www.voanews.com/a/cameroon-separatists-nigerian-militants-paralyze-border/6543991.html>

³¹ Andalou Agency, "Cameroon's English-speaking region facing water shortage, cholera epidemic," 17 April 2022,

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/cameroon-s-english-speaking-region-facing-water-shortage-cholera-epidemic/2565585>

³² RFI, "Price hikes push staple foodstuffs beyond the reach of many in Cameroon's Anglophone region," 25 April

2022, <https://www.rfi.fr/en/africa/20220425-price-hikes-push-stable-foodstuffs-beyond-the-reach-of-many-in-cameroon-s-anglophone-region>

³³ ACLED Data.

³⁴ Macau News Agency, "14 kidnapped in Cameroon's Far North region," 1 May 2022,

<https://www.macaubusiness.com/14-kidnapped-in-camerouns-far-north-region/>

³⁵ Africa Centre for Strategic Studies, "Africa Media Review for April 25, 2022," <https://africacenter.org/daily-media-review/africa-media-review-for-april-25-2022/>

³⁶ VOA, "Cameroon Deploys Troops to CAR Border to Stop Rebel Abductions," 19 April 2022,

<https://www.voanews.com/a/cameroon-deploys-troops-to-car-border-to-stop-rebel-abductions/6535583.html>

³⁷ VOA, "Cameroon Says Separatists Abduct Women Protesting Fighters' Abuses," 8 April 2022,

<https://www.voanews.com/a/cameroon-says-separatists-abduct-women-protesting-fighters-abuses-/6520686.html>

International Response:

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) suspended their activities in Cameroon's anglophone south-west region and demanded the release of four of their workers who have been detained for months.³⁸

The US government granted Temporary Protected Status to Cameroonians living in the United States, protecting them from deportation. Over 40,000 will be eligible.³⁹ The US Department of State released their 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices and indicated violence has increased in the north-west and south-west regions and that ISIS-West Africa related attacks increased in the Far North. Members of the security forces reportedly committed numerous human rights violations in those regions.⁴⁰

Central African Republic

The long-awaited inaugural trial of the Special Criminal Court, tasked with trying individuals suspected of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity since 2003, was supposed to start on 19 April,⁴¹ but it was postponed twice and is now set to start on 16 May.⁴²



In April, citizens took to the streets to oppose a proposal for constitutional reform made in the contested reconciliation talks in March, due to opposition and civil society fears that this could allow President Faustin Archange Touadera to run for a third term. Supporters of the ruling party submitted a petition in favour of the revision.⁴³

Violent events continue to occur, recorded events of violence against civilians increased over 270% from March 2022 and over 15% since the start of the year. Despite this, violence has declined compared to 2021.⁴⁴ Attacks from explosive devices continue to raise concern. Civilians found anti-personnel mines for the first time in the country on 4 April. These weapons are prohibited under the Mine Ban Convention, which entered into force in the country in 2003.⁴⁵ Two attacks on humanitarian aid workers by armed individuals took place on 7 and 9 April 2022. Such attacks have increased in the past months, between 1 January and 15 April 2022, about 43 incidents affecting humanitarian organisations there were recorded, with 11 aid workers injured.⁴⁶

³⁸ The Guardian, "Médecins Sans Frontières suspends operations in parts of Cameroon over detained staff," 6 April 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/apr/06/medecins-sans-frontieres-suspends-operations-in-parts-of-cameroon-over-detained-staff>

³⁹ Democracy Now, "Cameroonians Win Temporary Protected Status After Outcry Over "Double Standard" for Ukrainians," 18 April 2022, <https://allafrica.com/stories/202204110019.html>

⁴⁰ US Department of State, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Cameroon, 12 April 2022, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/cameroon/>

⁴¹ DW, "Central African Republic: Long-awaited war crimes trial postponed," 19 April 2022, <https://www.dw.com/en/central-african-republic-long-awaited-war-crimes-trial-postponed/a-61516039>

⁴² Africa News, "CAR: 'Historic' trial postponed immediately after kick-off," 26 April 2022, <https://www.africanews.com/2022/04/26/car-historic-trial-postponed-immediately-after-kick-off/>

⁴³ Barrons, "Pro-govt Protesters Call For Constitutional Change In C. Africa," 29 April 2022, <https://www.barrons.com/news/pro-govt-protesters-call-for-constitutional-change-in-c-africa-01651253707>

⁴⁴ ACLED Data

⁴⁵ OCHA, Central African Republic The ever-growing threat of explosive devices, updated 6 April 2022, <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/car/card/30CQKXi7pF/>

⁴⁶ UN News, "UN condemns recent attacks on humanitarians in Central African Republic," 20 April 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/04/1116532>

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-defence groups that formed the "anti-Balaka" movement to resist the Séléka and many began targeting Muslim communities.⁴⁷

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.⁴⁸

Currently 30% of Central Africans are displaced while half the population is food insecure⁴⁹. UNOCHA estimates 3.1 million people will need humanitarian assistance by the end of 2022, 63% of the total population.⁵⁰

International response:

The US Department of State released their 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices and indicated human rights abuses amounted to violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law. It also contended that members of the security forces, alongside the Russian Wagner Group, engaged in active combat and carried out human rights abuses at a rate comparable to armed groups.⁵¹

The Humanitarian Coordinator in the Central African Republic, Ms. Denise Brown, condemned the recent attacks on humanitarian organisations.⁵²

⁴⁷ 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>

⁴⁸ 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>

⁴⁹ 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>

⁵⁰ UNOCHA, "Situation Report Central African Republic," 7 April 2022, <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/car/#cf-5JBAIwceyXkeLoEvJqi08v>

⁵¹ US Department of State, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Central African Republic, 12 April 2022, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/central-african-republic/>

⁵² OCHA, "The Humanitarian Coordinator strongly condemns two attacks on humanitarian organizations in the Central African Republic," 19 April 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/report/central-african-republic/humanitarian-coordinator-strongly-condemns-two-attacks-humanitarian>

Democratic Republic of the Congo



During the first week of April, governmental military forces regained control of several localities in Bwisha, North Kivu, previously in the hands of M23.⁵³ The group had resumed their activities at the end of March and captured various villages in North Kivu. On 6 April, M23 indicated they would withdraw in order to “facilitate the signing of a bilateral ceasefire and the opening of dialogue with the DR Congo government,” and that they would hand over the captured soldiers to the International Committee of the Red Cross.⁵⁴ Despite this, clashes were recorded the following week in Rutshuru territory in North Kivu province.⁵⁵

Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) attacks continued, including a suspected attack in Masambo village, North Kivu, which killed over a dozen people on 3 April.⁵⁶ Between 10-11 April 30 civilians were killed in attacks in Ituri Province, according to the Red Cross. The villages attacked are just outside of Drakpa town where 14 civilians, including seven children, were killed in a camp for displaced people in late March.⁵⁷ In mid-April, in a joint DRC-Ugandan operation between, accompanied by MONUSCO peacekeepers, took control of ADF bases in Mount Hoyo.⁵⁸

In Djugu territory, Ituri province, attacks from the Cooperative for Development of Congo (CODECO) continued, on 5 April, they clashed with a joint DRC military and MONUSCO force⁵⁹ On 25 April, 16 people, including nine soldiers, went to trial accused of selling weapons to the group.⁶⁰

The East African Community (EAC), which the DRC joined last month, initiated peace talks between local militias and the government. The first round took place during the last week of April, nearly 30 representatives from armed groups of Ituri, North and South Kivu took part. The ADF was not invited.⁶¹ Representatives from the M23 group were expelled after the first day after news of renewed fighting in Rutshuru.⁶² Kenyan President Kenyatta led the talks and called on the groups “to lay down their weapons and work with President Felix Tshisekedi in nurturing peace

⁵³ ACLED Data, Regional Overview: Africa 2-8 April 2022, 13 April 2022, <https://acleddata.com/2022/04/13/regional-overview-africa-2-8-april-2022/>

⁵⁴ All Africa, “Congo-Kinshasa: M23 Rebels Agree to Withdraw From Captured Positions to Allow for Negotiations,” 10 April 2022, <https://allafrica.com/stories/202204100161.html>

⁵⁵ Al Jazeera, “M23 rebels announce withdrawal from eastern DR Congo villages,” 10 April 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/10/m23-rebels-announce-withdrawal-from-dr-congo-villages>

⁵⁶ Africa News, “ADF attack in eastern DRC leaves more than a dozen killed,” 5 April 2022, <https://www.africanews.com/2022/04/05/adf-attack-in-eastern-drc-leaves-more-than-a-dozen-killed/>

⁵⁷ The Defense Post, “30 Killed in Two Days of Attacks in DR Congo: Red Cross,” 11 April 2022, <https://www.thedefensepost.com/2022/04/11/30-killed-attacks-dr-congo/>

⁵⁸ ACLED Data, Regional overview: Africa 16-22 April, 28 April 2022, <https://acleddata.com/2022/04/28/regional-overview-africa-16-22-april-2022/>

⁵⁹ ACLED Data, Regional Overview: Africa 2-8 April 2022, 13 April 2022, <https://acleddata.com/2022/04/13/regional-overview-africa-2-8-april-2022/>

⁶⁰ The East African, “DR Congo soldiers on trial for selling arms to militia groups,” 26 April 2022, <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/rest-of-africa/dr-congo-soldiers-on-trial-for-selling-arms-to-militia-3794864>

⁶¹ DW, “Few optimistic about DRC peace talks in Kenya,” 28 April 2022, <https://www.dw.com/en/few-optimistic-about-drc-peace-talks-in-kenya/a-61620879>

⁶² Africa News, “DR Congo: M23 rebels absent as peace talks with rebel groups continue in Nairobi,” 25 April 2022, <https://www.africanews.com/2022/04/25/dr-congo-m23-rebel-group-absent-as-peace-talks-with-rebel-groups-continue-in-nairobi/>

and stability.⁶³ The seven member states of the EAC agreed to set up a regional military force in the DRC.⁶⁴

There was a sharp decline in recorded events of violence against civilians as well as battles during April, when compared to March, and it represents the lowest in the last 12 months.⁶⁵

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 north-eastern 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.⁶⁶

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. 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 2021.⁶⁷

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.⁶⁸

International response:

UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, condemned the CODECO attack against MONUSCO that killed one blue helmet at the start of the month. He indicated that attacks against peacekeepers may constitute a war crime and requested Congolese authorities to hold those responsible accountable.⁶⁹ The UNSC expressed concern at the increase in armed group activity in the eastern provinces and called on all actors to end the violations and abuse of international human rights and humanitarian law.⁷⁰

⁶³ TRT World, "DRC, eastern rebels wrap up first round of peace talks in Kenya," 28 April 2022,

<https://www.trtworld.com/africa/drc-eastern-rebels-wrap-up-first-round-of-peace-talks-in-kenya-56741>

⁶⁴ Yahoo, "East African Community agrees on regional force to try to end Congo unrest," 22 April 2022,

<https://finance.yahoo.com/news/east-african-community-agrees-regional-101840628.html>

⁶⁵ ACLED Data

⁶⁶ 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>

⁶⁷ Kivu Security Tracker.

⁶⁸ 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>

⁶⁹ UN Secretary General, Statement attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General – on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 5 April 2022, <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2022-04-05/statement-attributable-the-spokesperson-for-the-secretary-general-%E2%80%93-the-democratic-republic-of-the-congo%C2%A0scroll-down-for-french-version>

⁷⁰ UNSC, Security Council Press Statement on Attack against United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in Democratic Republic of Congo, 5 April 2022, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/sc14855.doc.htm>

Both the AU and the UN backed the EAC peace talks as well as the creation of a regional peacekeeping force to deal with all armed groups who refuse dialogue.⁷¹

Ethiopia

The situation in Ethiopia has been generally calm although unpredictable. Despite the declaration of a “humanitarian truce” over a month ago, humanitarian aid is not steadily reaching northern Ethiopia, the federal government has insisted that the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) withdraw to Tigray, meanwhile the TPLF has insisted that aid should flow freely and Amhara forces should withdraw from western Tigray first.⁷² On 1 April an aid convoy entered Tigray for the first time by land since December 2021,⁷³ but three weeks after the truce only 4% of required food had reached targeted areas.⁷⁴ On 12 April, the Tigrayan government announced the withdrawal of Tigray forces from Afar.⁷⁵ On 16 April a second convoy of 50 trucks reached Tigray.⁷⁶ TPLF spokesperson, Getachew Reda, on April 26 said that no Tigrayan forces remained in Afar in hopes that more aid will enter Tigray.⁷⁷ Only 144 trucks had reached Tigray between the announcement of the ceasefire and the end of April, the latest 74 arrived on 25 April.⁷⁸ The humanitarian situation is dire, due to lack of food supplies, 240 patients were discharged from Tigray's main hospital in mid-April and new patients without food or money were not being admitted. Medication was running low, and doctors have been trying to treat diseases with any antibiotics they could scrounge.⁷⁹ Doctors estimate at least 1,900 children under the age of 5 have died from malnutrition in the region between March 2021 and April 2022.⁸⁰



⁷¹ The East African, “AU, UN endorse new regional peace bid in DR Congo,” 26 April 2022, <https://www.theeastafrikan.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/au-un-endorse-new-regional-peace-bid-in-dr-congo-3795014>

⁷² Agenzia Fides, ““Intentional mass starvation”: humanitarian truce in Tigray is at stake,” 20 April 2022, <http://www.fides.org/en/news/72024->

[AFRICA ETHIOPIA Intentional mass starvation humanitarian truce in Tigray is at stake](https://www.fides.org/en/news/72024-)

⁷³ Security Council Report, Ethiopia: Meeting under “Any Other Business,” 13 April 2022, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2022/04/ethiopia-meeting-under-any-other-business-3.php>

⁷⁴ News 24, “Only 4% of required aid has reached Tigray during mini-truce, says WHO chief,” 19 April 2022, <https://www.news24.com/news24/africa/news/only-4-of-required-aid-has-reached-tigray-during-mini-truce-says-who-chief-20220419>

⁷⁵ Twitter, Tigray Television (@Tigrai_TV), “Statement of the Tigrai Government,” 12 April 2022, https://twitter.com/Tigrai_TV/status/1513963347917557763

⁷⁶ Xinhuanet, “UN aid convoy reaches Ethiopia's conflict-hit Tigray region,” 16 April 2022, <https://english.news.cn/africa/20220416/b6ba63ced04e45edae40abd3c6256d45/c.html>

⁷⁷ Twitter, Getachew K Reda (@reda_getachew), 26 April 2022, https://twitter.com/reda_getachew/status/1519047981361770497

⁷⁸ Al Jazeera, “Tigray rebels leave Ethiopia's Afar region: TPLF spokesperson,” 25 April 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/25/tigray-rebels-leave-ethiopia-afar-region-officials>

⁷⁹ Reuters, “Main hospital in Ethiopia's Tigray's region runs out of food,” 22 April 2022, https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/main-hospital-ethiopia-tigrays-region-runs-out-food-2022-04-21/?taid=62627920e7253e0001307ab3&utm_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=twitter

⁸⁰ The National News, “Tigray war claims the lives of at least 1,900 children through malnutrition,” 20 April 2022, <https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/africa/2022/04/20/tigray-war-claims-the-lives-of-at-least-1900-children-through-malnutrition/>

Eritrean refugees were once again targeted in an attack that took place on 2 April where six unknown gunmen opened fire on civilians at the Alem-Wach refugee camp, two were killed and six were injured. Another refugee died on 11 April, due to lack of medical care.⁸¹

Clashes between government forces and the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF)-Shane continued throughout April, the Oromo Regional Government announced joint operations with the federal security forces on 11 April,⁸² a week later, over 300 civilians had been arrested suspected of supporting the OLF-Shane in Boji.⁸³ ACLED recorded events in Amhara and Oromia involving the Fano, an Amhara militia. The group's presence is highly controversial and has exacerbated tensions between states. On 10 April, clashes were recorded between members of the Ethiopian National Defence Forces and Fano militias.⁸⁴ Local residents reported that Fano militia opened fire against civilians on 18 April, in the Oromo Special Zone, killing 10 and wounding at least 34.⁸⁵ On the week of 16 April, renewed fighting was reported in the contested area of Oromia Special Zone in Amhara region, at least 20 people were killed and 48 injured. In the North Shewa Zone, property was looted and more than 3,000 people were forcibly displaced.⁸⁶

A report from Gondar University revealed mass graves where Amharas were massacred by TPLF forces in Wolkayit Tegede Telemtg between 1983 and 1990. According to information in the report, these crimes may amount to genocide.⁸⁷ In Gondar, on 27 April, 20 Muslim worshippers were killed and there was an attempt to set fire to three mosques in an attack that seems unrelated to the conflicts in neighbouring areas.⁸⁸

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 regions, there was 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 continued to hit the Tigray region into 2022.

⁸¹ Human Rights Concern Eritrea, "The Dilemma of Eritrean Refugees in Alem-Wach camp in Amhara Region, and in Mai Aini and Adi Harush camps in Tigray – Ethiopia," 15 April 2022, <https://hrc-eritrea.org/the-dilemma-of-eritrean-refugees-in-alem-wach-camp-in-amhara-region-and-in-mai-aini-and-adi-harush-camps-in-tigray-ethiopia/>

⁸² Ethiopia Peace Observatory, EPO Weekly 2-8 April 2022, 13 April 2022, <https://epo.acleddata.com/2022/04/13/epo-weekly-2-8-april-2022/>

⁸³ Ethiopia Peace Observatory, EPO Weekly 9-15 April 2022, 19 April 2022, <https://epo.acleddata.com/2022/04/19/epo-weekly-9-15-april-2022/>

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Addis Standard, "News Analysis: Conflict resurfaces in Oromo Special zone, North Showa zones of Amhara region," 19 April 2022, <https://addisstandard.com/news-analysis-conflict-resurfaces-in-oromo-zone-north-showa-zones-of-amhara-region/>

⁸⁶ Ethiopia Peace Observatory, EPO Weekly 16-22 April 2022, 26 April 2022, <https://epo.acleddata.com/2022/04/26/epo-weekly-16-22-april-2022/>

⁸⁷ Facebook, Amhara Media Corporation, 3 April 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/AmharaMediaCorporation/posts/1781251845383135>

⁸⁸ Al Jazeera, "Ambush kills 20 Muslim worshippers in Ethiopia's Amhara region," 27 April 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/27/ambush-kills-20-muslim-worshippers-in-ethiopia-amhara-region>

International Response:

The spokesperson for UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres', issued a statement welcoming the news of aid reaching Tigray for the first time after the declaration of truce and called for the restoration of basic services.⁸⁹

A joint report by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch documented ethnic cleansing in Western Tigray.⁹⁰ The US State Department⁹¹ as well as the EU spokesperson for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy⁹² released statements condemning the ethnically motivated atrocities committed by Amhara authorities and requested further investigation to establish accountability and ensure justice for victims.

On April 13, the UN Security Council convened to discuss on Women, Peace and Security, for sexual violence in armed conflict, Hilina Berhanu from Ethiopia spoke of the use of rape as a tactic of war or means of reprisal in the Tigray region. She urged the UNSC to demand that "all efforts towards documenting, investigating and preventing sexual violence in conflict are centred around survivors" and urged the three African countries in the Council (the A3) to work with the UN and AU on this issue.⁹³ A day later, the Council discussed Ethiopia in closed session under "any other business," the meeting was requested for the first time by A3 and discussed the security and humanitarian situation in the northern part of the country.⁹⁴

USAID Samantha Power met with the Ethiopian Minister of Finance on 23 April. She expressed concern regarding humanitarian stressed that much more can be done to facilitate significant and sustained humanitarian access and restore essential services to the region.⁹⁵

Libya

The stand-off between Abdul Hamid Mohammed Dbeibah and Fathi Bashagha continued in April. Despite this, the first meeting of the UN led Joint Committee took place from 13 to 18 April, aiming to determine the constitutional framework for elections. Members of both parliamentary chambers, the House of Representatives (HoR) (who appointed Fathi Bashagha) and the High Council of State (HCS) (who recognise Dbeibah



⁸⁹ UNSG, Press Release, "Welcoming News of Food Aid Reaching Ethiopia's Tigray, Afar Regions, Secretary-General Reiterates Call to Restore Public Services," 6 April 2022, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/sgsm21232.doc.htm>

⁹⁰ Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, "We Will Erase You from This Land," 6 April 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2022/04/06/we-will-erase-you-land/crimes-against-humanity-and-ethnic-cleansing-ethiopia>

⁹¹ US Department of State, Press Statement, Reports of Mass Atrocities in Western Tigray, 8 April 2022, <https://www.state.gov/reports-of-mass-atrocities-in-western-tigray/>

⁹² European Union External Action, Ethiopia/Tigray: Spokesperson statement on the reports on human rights violations and abuses of civilians, 9 April 2022, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/ethiopiaticracy-spokesperson-statement-reports-human-rights-violations-and-abuses-civilians_en

⁹³ UN News, "Justice critical to fighting sexual violence in conflict," 13 April 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/04/1116192>

⁹⁴ Security Council Report, Ethiopia: Meeting under "Any Other Business," 13 April 2022, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2022/04/ethiopia-meeting-under-any-other-business-3.php>

⁹⁵ USAID, Administrator Samantha Power meets Ethiopian Minister of Finance Ahmed Shide, 23 April 2022, <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/press-releases/apr-23-2022-administrator-samantha-power-meets-ethiopian-minister-finance>

as prime minister) participated.⁹⁶ The meetings ended with no agreement in sight and a second round of talks are expected to take place.

While global oil prices are at their highest in years, during mid-April, pro-Bashaga forces forced the closure of oil facilities to pressure Dbeibah to step down. Dbeibah continues to insist that he will only hand power to an elected successor.⁹⁷ The National Oil Corporation declared force majeure and was forced to shut down some of its facilities, tribal leaders appear to be behind it. This move was accompanied by the closure of all oil facilities in Whahat according to local residents.⁹⁸ Losses amount to at least \$60 million daily.⁹⁹ Representatives of both the Government of National Unity (GNU) as well as the HoR have engaged with protesters to resume oil production.¹⁰⁰

On 21 April, Bashagha and his cabinet held their first meeting in Sabha where they discussed the recent closure of many Libyan oil fields and ports by protesters who demanded Dbeibah step down and hand over power.¹⁰¹

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.¹⁰² Dbeibah announced plans for presidential elections in June, an exact date has not been set.¹⁰³

International response:

The UN Security Council extended the mandate of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and emphasised there can be no military solution to the ongoing situation and demanded all

⁹⁶ UNSMIL, SASG Williams closing remarks to members of the High Council of State and the House of Representatives, 18 April 2022, <https://unsmil.unmissions.org/sasg-williams-closing-remarks-members-high-council-state-and-house-representatives>

⁹⁷ The Arab Daily, "Libya losing \$60 million a day in oil installations shutdown," 30 April 2022, <https://theArabweekly.com/libya-losing-60-million-day-oil-installations-shutdown>

⁹⁸ Daily Sabah, "Libya's largest oil field shut amid tensions between 2 sides," 19 April 2022, <https://www.dailysabah.com/world/africa/libyas-largest-oil-field-shut-amid-tensions-between-2-sides>

⁹⁹ The Arab Daily, "Libya losing \$60 million a day in oil installations shutdown," 30 April 2022, <https://theArabweekly.com/libya-losing-60-million-day-oil-installations-shutdown>

¹⁰⁰ Security Council Report, May 2022 Monthly Forecast, 29 April 2022, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2022-05/libya-30.php>

¹⁰¹ Security Council Report, May 2022 Monthly Forecast, 29 April 2022, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2022-05/libya-30.php>

¹⁰² 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>

¹⁰³ 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>

Member States follow the 2011 arms embargo, which prohibited Libyans from exporting arms and obliged Member States to prevent the supply of all weaponry to the country.¹⁰⁴

ICC Prosecutor, Karim A.A. Khan, presented to the UNSCa new approach to investigations in the Situation in Libya which was referred by the Council to the Court in 2011. The new approach consists of prioritising referrals made by the Council; working alongside witnesses and survivors to enable their participation in the investigation process; improving the relations with Libyan national authorities and lastly improving cooperation with third States as well as international and regional organisations.¹⁰⁵

Mali

Clashes between the government and allied forces against Islamist extremist groups continued throughout April. The Moura Massacre, which occurred in late March 2022, cost the lives of over 300 civilians, some of them suspected jihadists, who were executed during a military operation. The Malian armed forces, as well as Russian private military personnel, are suspected to be responsible.¹⁰⁶ Meanwhile Malian forces indicated they had killed 203 militants¹⁰⁷ and Russia indicated all claims of their participation to constitute “disinformation.”¹⁰⁸ However, survivors suggested Russian mercenaries were present during the executions.¹⁰⁹ The crimes reported include summary executions and other killings, rape, arbitrary arrests, looting and theft.¹¹⁰



Malian military investigators opened an investigation into the Moura massacre on 6 April.¹¹¹ Despite this, it is unclear if the investigation will bear fruit, research by Amnesty International suggests the existing insecurity, lack of resources and lack of protection for victims enable impunity to prevail. For example, the investigations into the Ogossagou and Sobane Da killings in 2019 have made little to no progress, leaving victims demanding justice while fearing reprisals

¹⁰⁴ UNSC, Adopting Resolution 2629 (2022), Security Council Extends Mandate of Libya Support Mission until 31 July, Asks Secretary-General to Appoint Special Representative, 29 April 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/report/libya/adopting-resolution-2629-2022-security-council-extends-mandate-libya-support-mission>

¹⁰⁵ Jurist, “ICC prosecutor reveals Libya investigation strategy to UN Security Council,” 2 May 2022, <https://www.jurist.org/news/2022/05/icc-prosecutor-reveals-libya-investigation-strategy-to-un-security-council/>

¹⁰⁶ Human Rights Watch, “Mali: Massacre by Army, Foreign Soldiers,” 5 April 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/04/05/mali-massacre-army-foreign-soldiers>

¹⁰⁷ VOA, “Mali Says 203 Killed in Military Operation in Sahel State,” 1 April 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/mali-says-203-killed-in-military-operation-in-sahel-state/6512181.html>

¹⁰⁸ Africa News, “Mali: Russia blocks UN security council request for investigation into Moura massacre,” 10 April 2022, <https://www.africanews.com/2022/04/10/mali-russia-blocks-un-security-council-request-for-investigation-into-moura-massacre/>

¹⁰⁹ Reuters, “Mali massacre survivors say white mercenaries involved in killings,” 14 April 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/mali-massacre-survivors-say-white-mercenaries-involved-killings-2022-04-14/>

¹¹⁰ OHCHR, Mali: UN expert urges probe into grave rights violations in Moura, 6 April 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/04/mali-un-expert-urges-probe-grave-rights-violations-moura>

¹¹¹ France 24, “Mali says it has opened investigation into alleged massacre in village of Moura,” 7 April 2022, <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20220406-mali-opens-investigation-into-alleged-massacre-in-village-of-moura>

in the absence of protection measures.¹¹² Malian authorities have also not allowed independent investigators to access the Moura.¹¹³

There has been an almost 70% increase in violent events by militant Islamist groups since the military takeover in May 2021 and civilian fatalities caused by militant extremists in the first quarter of 2022 are higher than any previous calendar year.¹¹⁴ During the second week of April, several children and an older man were killed by military forces and Wagner Group mercenaries in Koro, Mopti Region.¹¹⁵ The JNIM, an al-Qaeda-aligned group, claimed to have captured a fighter from the Russian Wagner Group in Ségou state. On 19 April, a Russian on an operation with Malian soldiers was killed in central Mali, the first confirmed death of a Russian in military operations since the military took over government in 2020.¹¹⁶ Around the same time, Malian forces indicated over a dozen JNIM fighters were killed in the forest of Ganguel outside the village of Moura.¹¹⁷ During the last weekend of the month, six soldiers were killed and 20 injured during simultaneous attacks by JNIM fighters against three army bases in Central Mali.¹¹⁸

The military government announced the launch of a two-year transition process for a return to civilian rule despite ECOWAS' demand for a 12-to-16-month transition.¹¹⁹

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.¹²⁰ After the coup, Tuareg separatists and Islamist groups took control of the northern part of the country. Although they were dislodged, the region is still plagued by intercommunal and extremist violence and Islamist armed groups are taking control of villages and imposing sharia law.¹²¹

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".¹²² The

¹¹² Amnesty International, "Mali. A justice at loss with the crimes against civilians in the central regions," 13 April 2022, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/04/mali-a-justice-at-loss-with-the-crimes-against-civilians-in-the-central-regions/>

¹¹³ Radio France International, "UN investigators denied access to site of Mali killings," 20 April 2022, <https://www.rfi.fr/en/africa/20220421-un-investigators-denied-access-to-site-of-mali-killings-moura>

¹¹⁴ The Africa Center for Strategic Studies, "Debunking the Malian Junta's Claims," 12 April 2022, <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/debunking-the-malian-juntas-claims/>

¹¹⁵ ACLED, Regional overview: Africa 9-15 April 2022, 21 April 2022, <https://acleddata.com/2022/04/21/regional-overview-africa-9-15-april-2022/>

¹¹⁶ Africa News, "Mali jihadist group claims capture of Russian Wagner group," 25 April 2022, <https://www.africanews.com/2022/04/25/mali-jihadist-group-claims-capture-of-russian-wagner-group/>

¹¹⁷ France 24, "A dozen terrorists' killed in air strikes in central Mali, army says," 17 April 2022, <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20220417-a-dozen-terrorists-killed-in-air-strike-in-central-mali-army-says>

¹¹⁸ Africa News, "Mali: 6 soldiers killed, 20 injured in simultaneous terrorist attacks," 24 April 2022, <https://www.africanews.com/2022/04/24/mali-6-soldiers-killed-20-injured-in-simultaneous-terrorist-attacks/>

¹¹⁹ Africa News, "Mali junta says sticking to two-year transition," 22 April 2022, <https://www.africanews.com/2022/04/22/mali-junta-says-sticking-to-two-year-transition/>

¹²⁰ 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

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² The Conversation, "Inside Mali's coup within a coup," 26 May 2021, <https://theconversation.com/inside-malis-coup-within-a-coup-161621>

move came after the announcement of a cabinet reshuffle, where leaders of the coup were removed.

International response:

On 6 April, Alioune Tine, the Independent Expert on the human rights situation in Mali, highlighted the problem related to impunity for Malian soldiers.¹²³ He requested Malian authorities grant unhindered access to MINUMSA to conduct an investigation on the Moura massacre and called on the ICC prosecutor to open an investigation as soon as possible.¹²⁴ France proposed a resolution to the UNSC requesting an independent investigation into the massacre, but the request was opposed by Russia and China, who argued that it was unnecessary as a Malian investigation was already underway.¹²⁵

On 3 April, the US Department of State issued a statement condemning the massacre and expressed concern over the apparent involvement of the Russian Wagner Group and called for impartial investigations.¹²⁶

After almost a decade, the EU will halt its training operations in Mali but will maintain a presence in the Sahel.¹²⁷

Mozambique

There appears to be a decrease in violence since January 2022, which was the month with the highest level of violence in the last year. April showed the lowest levels of violence yet, which represents a 57% decrease in incidents and an almost 90% decrease in fatalities compared to the monthly average for the past year.¹²⁸ In what appears to be the success from the joint operations of Mozambican, Rwandan and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) forces, some roads have been reopened and a certain calm has returned to Cabo Delgado.¹²⁹ In some areas people have started to return to their normal lives as militant extremist groups are suffering “massive losses” according to South Africa’s top general.¹³⁰



¹²³ UN News, “Interview: Despite security and political crises, UN expert remains optimistic about Mali,” 20 April 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/04/1116572>

¹²⁴ OHCHR, Mali: UN expert urges probe into grave rights violations in Moura, 6 April 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/04/mali-un-expert-urges-probe-grave-rights-violations-moura>

¹²⁵ Africa News, “Mali: Russia blocks UN security council request for investigation into Moura massacre,” 10 April 2022, <https://www.com/2022/04/10/mali-russia-blocks-un-security-council-request-for-investigation-into-moura-massacre/>

¹²⁶ US Department of State, Press Statement, Reported Massacre in Mali, 3 April 2022, <https://www.state.gov/reported-massacre-in-mali/>

¹²⁷ France 24, “EU halts military training in Mali, German foreign minister to hold talks with junta,” 12 April 2022, <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20220412-eu-halts-military-training-in-mali-but-not-giving-up-on-sahel>

¹²⁸ ACLED Data.

¹²⁹ Institute for Security Studies, “SADC and Rwanda shouldn’t go it alone in Mozambique,” 11 April 2022, <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/sadc-and-rwanda-shouldnt-go-it-alone-in-mozambique>

¹³⁰ Daily Maverick, “SANDF chief says regional force in Mozambique is winning,” 13 April 2022, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-04-13-sandf-chief-says-regional-force-in-mozambique-is-winning/>

On 6 April Mozambican Defence Minister Chume claimed security forces had brought “stability” to Nangade, and a low number of violent incidents were recorded in April¹³¹ Among the incidents recorded, on 3 April, clashes near Chicuaia Velha, 20 km south of Nangade town, one of the insurgents was a 13-year-old boy who managed to escape.¹³² On 5 April, a clash took place in Mandimba village, less than 30 km from Nangade town.¹³³ In mid-April, insurgents kidnapped 10 civilians in the Chibau area.¹³⁴ On 22 April, in the Chipingo locality of Mueda district, insurgents were intercepted on their way to Muiha in Nangade district, all insurgents were reportedly killed but the total number of fatalities is unknown.¹³⁵ The Islamic State though their social media platforms have not claimed responsibility for any attacks in Cabo Delgado since 19 March.¹³⁶

On 1 April, a video of the Islamic State Central Africa Province (ISCAP), rendering allegiance to the new caliph, Abu Hasan Al Hashimi Al Qurayshi, was published, two distinct groups of fighters bearing arms and the IS flag were identified, one believed to be from the DRC and another from Mozambique.¹³⁷

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 killed¹³⁸ and UNHCR lists over 891,216 persons of concern in the country,¹³⁹ including 735,00 in Cabo Delgado.¹⁴⁰

International response:

On 12 April, SADC member states agreed to adapt their security operation to include more troops as well as “strengthening governance structures, rebuilding infrastructure, re-establishing education and creating general normality for the region’s residents.” This entails further coordination and cooperation with the Mozambican and Rwandan Army’s.¹⁴¹ South Africa

¹³¹ Cabo Ligado, Cabo Ligado Weekly: 18-24 April 2022, 26 April 2022, <https://www.cabolidgado.com/reports/cabo-ligado-weekly-18-24-april-2022>

¹³² Cabo Ligado, Cabo Ligado Weekly: 28 March-3 April 2022, 5 April 2022, <https://www.cabolidgado.com/reports/cabo-ligado-weekly-28-march-3-april-2022>

¹³³ Cabo Ligado, Cabo Ligado Weekly: 4-10 April 2022, 12 April 2022, <https://www.cabolidgado.com/reports/cabo-ligado-weekly-4-10-april-2022>

¹³⁴ Cabo Ligado, Cabo Ligado Weekly: 11-17 April 2022, 20 April 2022, <https://www.cabolidgado.com/reports/cabo-ligado-weekly-11-17-april-2022>

¹³⁵ Cabo Ligado, Cabo Ligado Weekly: 18-24 April 2022, 26 April 2022, <https://www.cabolidgado.com/reports/cabo-ligado-weekly-18-24-april-2022>

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Cabo Ligado, Cabo Ligado Weekly: 28 March-3 April 2022, 5 April 2022, <https://www.cabolidgado.com/reports/cabo-ligado-weekly-28-march-3-april-2022>

¹³⁸ 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>

¹³⁹ UNHCR data portal, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/moz>

¹⁴⁰ UNHCR, “Northern Mozambique Situation,” January 2022.

¹⁴¹ The Irish Times, “Mozambique’s battle with terrorism hinges on unprecedented co-operation,” 19 April 2022, <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/africa/mozambique-s-battle-with-terrorism-hinges-on-unprecedented-co-operation-1.4855933>

extended the deployment of its troops in accordance with the new peacekeeping mandate as part of the SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) for 12 months.¹⁴²

Nigeria

Recorded violent incidents throughout the country decreased during the month of April, which showed the lowest number of incidents since the start of the year.¹⁴³ At the same time, Islamic state has been refocusing its efforts on the country. Since the start of the year, Nigeria has been the site of the largest number of operations claimed by the Islamic State in the world surpassing Iraq and Syria.¹⁴⁴ The attacks that did occur were brutal. On 10 April, at least 154 people were killed by gunmen who attacked by shooting sporadically into homes and businesses, more than 4,800 people were forced to flee from their homes in Garga District.



Nigeria's Information Minister blamed armed criminal bandits as well as Boko Haram fighters.¹⁴⁵ In the aftermath of the Plateau massacre, organisations expressed concern over the possible alliance between bandits and Boko Haram,¹⁴⁶ which was exacerbated when the federal government blamed last month's Kaduna train attack on an alliance of both groups on 13 April.¹⁴⁷

Violence peaked in Kaduna state during the first week of the month.¹⁴⁸ On 2 April, 52 bandits were killed in Zamfara, 33 in Kaduna and 15 in northeast Borno State in a series of ground and air attacks launched after the airport attack that took place at the end of March.¹⁴⁹ Fifteen soldiers were killed.¹⁵⁰ Violent events increased up to 300% in Taraba state during the second week of April, when gunmen from Zamfara and Katsina clashed with military forces and took control of territory.¹⁵¹ On 19 April, an explosion at a market in Taraba killed or wounded about 30 people, ISWAP claimed responsibility for the attack, expanding their area of operation in the country.¹⁵² In Yobe state, at least 10 people were killed and several others wounded in an attack by Boko Haram militants during the third week of April.¹⁵³

¹⁴² AP News, "South African Army Extends Mission Against Mozambique Rebels," 13 April 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/south-africa-southern-lesotho-pretoria-097d65f7a792e27cb94535b7e45576ca>

¹⁴³ ACLED Data.

¹⁴⁴ Twitter, Jihad Analytics (@Jihad_Analytics), 8 April 2022, https://twitter.com/Jihad_Analytics/status/1512383500766392324?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1512383500766392324%7Ctwgr%5E%7Ctwcon%5Es1_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.thecable.ng%2Freport-nigeria-overtakes-iraq-as-country-with-highest-number-of-is-attacks

¹⁴⁵ Al Jazeera, "Death toll hits 154 following attack in central Nigeria," 13 April 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/13/death-toll-hits-154-following-attack-in-northern-nigeria>

¹⁴⁶ Al Jazeera, "Death toll hits 154 following attack in central Nigeria," 13 April 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/13/death-toll-hits-154-following-attack-in-northern-nigeria>

¹⁴⁷ All Africa, "Nigeria: Govt Links Kaduna Train Attack to Synergy Between Boko Haram and Bandits," 14 April 2022, <https://allafrica.com/stories/202204140467.html>

¹⁴⁸ ACLED Data.

¹⁴⁹ 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>

¹⁵⁰ Reuters, "Gunmen attack kills at least 50 in Nigeria's Plateau state," 11 April 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/gunmen-attack-kills-least-50-nigerias-plateau-state-2022-04-11/>

¹⁵¹ ACLED data, Regional Overview: Africa 9-15 April 2022, 21 April 2022, <https://acleddata.com/2022/04/21/regional-overview-africa-9-15-april-2022/>

¹⁵² Al Jazeera, "ISWAP claims Nigeria bombing, says about 30 killed or hurt," 21 April 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/21/isil-group-claims-nigeria-bombing-says-about-30-killed-or-hurt>

¹⁵³ Xinhuanet, "Nigerian police confirm 10 killed in Boko Haram attack," 24 April 2022, <https://english.news.cn/20220424/6904e5b0feec4c139b81863327f8089d/c.html>

On 16 April, the Nigerian Air Force claimed it had killed or severely injured over 70 ISWAP fighters on the border with Niger in a joint operation with the neighbouring country.¹⁵⁴ Among those killed was ISWAP commander, Abou Sufyan,¹⁵⁵ according to the Nigerian armed forces. On 20 April, the Multinational Joint Task Force killed 27 Boko Haram and ISWAP insurgents and rescued over 6 women who had been kidnapped months prior.¹⁵⁶

On 11 April, Vice President Yemi Osinbajo declared his intention to contest the 2023 presidential election.¹⁵⁷ On that same day, Chief Gbenga Ogbara, Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC) was killed by suspected gunmen. The crime may be politically motivated as elections in Osun State are less than 3 months away.¹⁵⁸ Tensions over governmental elections increased in Ekiti state too, in Efon Local Government Area, unidentified armed groups attacked the convoy of the Social Democratic Party candidate.¹⁵⁹ In some areas of Imo state violence in voting stations led to a discontinuation of the voter registration.¹⁶⁰

The International Crisis Group warned of the increasing number of vigilante groups that are functioning throughout the country, some have even been filling in for the Nigerian Police Force. These groups are solving some issues but exacerbating others, and if not controlled could aggravate existing intercommunal tensions as well as heighten the risks of conflict.¹⁶¹

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 2021.¹⁶² In January 2022, under the Terrorism Prevention Act, the government of Nigeria designated bandit groups as “terrorists.”¹⁶³

¹⁵⁴ Alarabya News, “Nigerian air strikes kill 70 ISIS-linked terrorists,” 17 April 2022,

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/world/2022/04/17/Nigerian-air-strikes-kill-70-ISIS-linked-terrorists>

¹⁵⁵ Sahara Reporters, “Nigerian Military Kills ISWAP Commander, Abou Fatima, 15 Others With Super Tucano's Airstrikes In Lake Chad,” 15 April 2022, <http://saharareporters.com/2022/04/15/nigerian-military-kills-iswap-commander-abou-fatima-15-others-super-tucanos-airstrikes>

¹⁵⁶ Channels TV, “Troops Kill Over 27 Boko Haram/ISWAP Terrorists, Rescue Six Female Hostages,” 20 April 2022, <https://www.channelstv.com/2022/04/20/troops-kill-over-27-boko-haram-iswap-terrorists-rescue-six-female-hostages/>

¹⁵⁷ Twitter @ProfOsinbajo, 11 April 2022, <https://twitter.com/ProfOsinbajo/status/1513396861037694981>

¹⁵⁸ The Guardian, “Police confirm killing of APC Chairman in Osun,” 11 April 2022, <https://guardian.ng/news/police-confirm-killing-of-apc-chairman-in-osun/>

¹⁵⁹ ACLED data, Regional Overview: Africa 2-8 April 2022, 13 April 2022, <https://acleddata.com/2022/04/13/regional-overview-africa-2-8-april-2022/>

¹⁶⁰ ACLED data, Regional Overview: Africa 9-15 April 2022, 21 April 2022, <https://acleddata.com/2022/04/21/regional-overview-africa-9-15-april-2022/>

¹⁶¹ International Crisis Group, “Managing Vigilantism in Nigeria: A Near-term Necessity,” 21 April 2022, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/308-managing-vigilantism-nigeria-near-term-necessity>

¹⁶² 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/>

¹⁶³ The Guardian, “FG declares bandits as terrorists,” 5 January 2022, <https://guardian.ng/news/fg-declares-bandits-as-terrorists/>

Boko Haram has been active in the country since the early 2000's. Based in north-eastern 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:

International Criminal Court prosecutor Mr Karim Khan visited the country and reminded the government that accountability is needed for crimes committed, extremist groups associated with ISIS and Al-Qaeda, including Boko Haram, could be effectively addressed either in national courts, through joint efforts by the affected states within the regions of West Africa and the Sahel, or failing that, at the ICC.¹⁶⁴

Somalia

Violence in Somalia increased in April in the run up to the presidential elections in May. According to ACLED, 190 battles occurred in April 2022, more than in any month in 2021 or in the first three months of 2022. At the same time, the number of fatalities decreased.¹⁶⁵



On 14 April, new parliamentarians were sworn in, paving the way for presidential elections.¹⁶⁶ The parliament was attacked on 18 April as the country's newly elected lawmakers were meeting for the second time since taking office, there were some injuries but no fatalities. Six people were killed at a restaurant in the capital on 22 April, the blast targeted security officers and politicians of the government.¹⁶⁷ Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for both attacks.¹⁶⁸ The group has experienced a bit of a resurgence, exacerbated by political infighting in the government.

At the same time, the country is facing the threat of the worst drought in a generation. 25,468 people were displaced due to the drought in April.¹⁶⁹ An additional estimate 19,000 were displaced by conflict and insecurity.¹⁷⁰ Drought and need can force displacement, making women and girls

¹⁶⁴ International Criminal Court, Statement "ICC Prosecutor, Mr Karim A.A. Khan QC, concludes first official visit to Nigeria," 22 April 2022, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/icc-prosecutor-mr-karim-aa-khan-qc-concludes-first-official-visit-nigeria>

¹⁶⁵ ACLED data dashboard, <https://acleddata.com/dashboard/#/dashboard>

¹⁶⁶ Abdi Sheikh, "Somalia swears in lawmakers, paving way for presidential vote," Reuters, 15 April 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/somalia-swears-lawmakers-paving-way-presidential-vote-2022-04-14/>

¹⁶⁷ Reuters, "Six people killed in blast at restaurant in Somalia's capital," 22 April 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/six-people-killed-by-blast-restaurant-somalias-capital-ambulance-official-2022-04-22/>

¹⁶⁸ Digital Journal, "WORLD: Shabaab claims mortar attack as Somalia's new parliament meets," 18 April 2022, <https://www.digitaljournal.com/world/shabaab-claims-mortar-attack-as-somalias-new-parliament-meets/article#ixzz7QovwXPOy>

¹⁶⁹ UN OCHA, "Somalia: Drought Displacement Monitoring Dashboard," April 2022, https://reliefweb.int/attachments/3404f73f-b4d8-4919-9b46-3c962cd1fb1f/20220516_Somalia_Drought%20Displacement%20Monitoring%20Dashboard-April.pdf

¹⁷⁰ UNHCR, "Somalia: Population Dashboard (1-30 April 2022), 12 May 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-population-dashboard-1-30-april-2022>

more vulnerable to sexual violence and forcing children from school.¹⁷¹ The intense need may increase the vulnerability of the population to mass atrocity.

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:

At the start of April 2022, the AU Transition Mission in Somalia took over from the AU Mission in Somalia. The new set up is intended to give Somali authorities a stronger role in the management of the country's security.¹⁷²

On 7 April, the African Union representative, Francisco Madeira, was declared persona non grata by the country's Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble because of "acts incompatible with his status," President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed rejected the order.¹⁷³

South Sudan

Violence continued in South Sudan at similar levels to prior months, according to ACLED data. After increasing tensions throughout March and pressure from donors and international partners, Kiir and Machar met on 8 April to discuss the revitalisation of the integration of security services. Machar submitted a list of officers to be absorbed into government security services. On 12 April, Kiir ordered these officers to be officially integrated into a unified command of the army. The details of the integration at lower levels remain to be worked out.¹⁷⁴



The UN mission in South Sudan condemned violations in Unity State, reporting that between 17 February and 7 April, 72 civilians were killed, 11 were injured and 64 cases of sexual violence

¹⁷¹ UNICEF, "At least 10 million children face severe drought in the Horn of Africa - UNICEF," 25 April 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/least-10-million-children-face-severe-drought-horn-africa-unicef>

¹⁷² Musinguzi Blanshe, "Somalia: Uncertain Future as AMISOM transitions to ATMIS," The Africa Report, 1 April 2022, <https://www.theafricareport.com/190409/somalia-uncertain-future-as-amisom-transition-to-atmis/>

¹⁷³ Reuters, "Sparring Somali leaders now at odds over expulsion of African Union envoy," 7 April 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/somali-leaders-tussle-over-expulsion-african-union-envoy-2022-04-07/>

¹⁷⁴ Al Jazeera, "South Sudan President Kiir integrates rival's officers into army," 13 April 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/13/south-sudan-president-kiir-integrates-rivals-officers-into-army>

were reported in Leer County.¹⁷⁵ Among those killed was a local staff member of *Médecins Sans Frontières*.¹⁷⁶

Like much of the rest of the region, South Sudan is facing a humanitarian crisis. The combined impact of climate change and conflict is expected to leave nine million people, or two thirds of the population, in need of humanitarian assistance by the end of the year.¹⁷⁷ As elsewhere, deprivation may exacerbate the impact of conflict and the vulnerability of the population to mass atrocity.

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 children into their ranks. A mediation conducted by Uganda and Sudan in 2018 led the two main belligerents, Kiir and Machar to 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 Revitalised Agreement, yet they have been slow to execute many of its provisions.

International response

On 22 and 23 April, the Humanitarian Coordinator for South Sudan, Ms. Sara Beysolow Nyanti led a high-level mission to Bentiu and Malakal and sought to draw attention to the dire humanitarian situation.¹⁷⁸

The UN peacekeeping mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) deployed additional peacekeepers to Leer County, in response to the recent wave of violations there.¹⁷⁹

The UN Panel of Experts on South Sudan on 28 April submitted a report to the UN Security Council arguing that the 2018 Revitalised Peace Agreement has become part of the conflict in South Sudan, and the parties hold nearly every component hostage as part of their political consultations. In addition, the Secretary General's Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa briefed

¹⁷⁵ UN News, "UN Condemns 'Horrific' Surge of Violence in South Sudan," 25 April 2022, https://allafrica.com/stories/202204260071.html?utm_campaign=daily-headlines&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_content=aans-view-link

¹⁷⁶ Deng Machol, "Dozens killed in violence in one volatile South Sudan county," ABC News, 25 April 2022, <https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/dozens-killed-violence-volatile-south-sudan-county-84296111>

¹⁷⁷ AFP, "UN says nine million in need of aid in South Sudan," 14 April 2022, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20220414-un-says-nine-million-in-need-of-aid-in-south-sudan>

¹⁷⁸ UNOCHA, "Humanitarian Coordinator in South Sudan condemns the latest violence against civilians, women and humanitarian personnel," 25 April 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/humanitarian-coordinator-south-sudan-condemns-latest-violence-against-civilians>

¹⁷⁹ UN News, "UN condemns 'horrific' surge of violence in South Sudan," 25 April 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/04/1116862>

the Council on the situation in Sudan and South Sudan, pointing out that joint Sudanese/South Sudanese mechanisms had been disrupted by the 25 October coup.¹⁸⁰

Sudan

The tense standoff between the post-coup government and pro-democracy forces continued through April. Overall levels of violence remained similar to earlier months according to ACLED reporting.

Factions aligned with the military proposed a deal to form a transitional government that would bypass pro-democracy groups it shared power with before the coup. The deal elevates the military as Sudan's highest authority, it also includes the appointment of a technocratic cabinet and parliament to govern until elections expected next year.¹⁸¹ Pro-democracy groups have continued to protest.



International mediators have attempted to facilitate a solution, but their efforts have faced opposition. After the UNITAMS statement to the UNSC at the end of March, tensions between Al-Burhan and the mission increased as Burhan publicly threatened to expel Volker Perthes, accusing him of "interfering in the country's affairs and violating the powers of his mandate."¹⁸² The government has argued that UNITAMS should focus on the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement. Despite this, the joint AU, UN and IGAD mediation continues.¹⁸³

The government continued to use repressive tactics against protesters. 11 April marked the 3 year anniversary of Bashir's ouster, protesters took to the streets saying, "Bashir's downfall did not mean a final victory for the revolution, because Burhan is a continuation of his regime."¹⁸⁴ At the end of April, Human Rights Watch released research showing that hundreds of protesters have been unlawfully detained and some have been subject to ill treatment and forcibly disappeared.¹⁸⁵ Although Al-Burhan pledged to release political detainees to enable them to participate in the dialogue,¹⁸⁶ only some (25 detained resistance committee leaders) were released on 24 April, leaving many others including FFC leaders and remain in detention.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁰ UN DPPA, "Tetteh: Sudan and South Sudan continue to complement one another in the search for peace," 27 April 2022, <https://dppa.un.org/en/tetteh-sudan-and-south-sudan-continue-to-complement-one-another-search-peace>

¹⁸¹ Reuters, "EXCLUSIVE- Draft Sudan deal seeks to cement military's grip," 6 April 2022,

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/exclusive-draft-sudan-deal-seeks-cement-militarys-grip-2022-04-06/>

¹⁸² Al Monitor, "Tensions escalate between Sudanese military, UN mission," 18 April 2022, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/04/tensions-escalate-between-sudanese-military-un-mission#ixzz7R0ZsSo6A>

¹⁸³ Sudan Tribune, "Burhan pledges to release Sudan's FFC detainees within three days," 16 April 2022, <https://sudantribune.com/article257724/>

¹⁸⁴ Reuters, "Sudanese protesters mark third anniversary of Bashir's ouster with fresh protests," 11 April 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/sudanese-protesters-mark-third-anniversary-bashirs-ouster-with-fresh-protests-2022-04-11/>

¹⁸⁵ Human Rights Watch, "Sudan: Hundreds of Protesters Detained, Mistreated," 28 April 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/04/28/sudan-hundreds-protesters-detained-mistreated>

¹⁸⁶ Sudan Tribune, "Burhan pledges to release Sudan's FFC detainees within three days," 16 April 2022, <https://sudantribune.com/article257724/>

¹⁸⁷ Radio Dabanga, "Junta Releases 25 Detainees - Dozens Remain in Prison," 24 April 2022, https://allafrica.com/stories/202204240191.html?utm_campaign=daily-headlines&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_content=aans-view-link

Violence continued in Darfur. Kreinik in West Darfur was attacked twice in three days, killing an estimated 200¹⁸⁸ The violence later reached El Geneina, capital of West Darfur, on 25 April.¹⁸⁹ Tens of thousands were displaced.¹⁹⁰ The violence shows the ineffectiveness of the Juba Peace Agreement, which was signed in 2020 and the majority of whose provisions have not been implemented. The latest violence shows not only how fraught ethnic relations remain in Darfur, but also the incapacity or unwillingness of state actors to respond.¹⁹¹

In addition, there has been intercommunal violence in Abyei, a disputed area between North and South Sudan. At least 29 people were killed and 30 were wounded.¹⁹²

As elsewhere in the region, intercommunal violence is exacerbating a dire humanitarian situation. Harvests are expected to be under average, with displacement further reducing yields. The country normally only produces about 15% of the wheat it consumes, with 60% of stocks coming from Russia and Ukraine (and likely to be impacted by that conflict).¹⁹³ Severe economic shocks that have roiled Sudan in recent months are now being exacerbated by a severe drinking water crisis in several areas of Khartoum.¹⁹⁴ As elsewhere, economic and food crises can exacerbate the risk of mass atrocity.

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.²³⁹ 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.

¹⁸⁸ Michael Atit, "Over 200 Reported Killed in West Darfur Tribal Clashes," *Voice of America*, 25 April 2022, https://allafrica.com/stories/202204260084.html?utm_campaign=daily-headlines&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_content=aans-view-link

¹⁸⁹ Reuters, "West Darfur fighting spreads to capital city El Geneina - residents," 25 April 2022,

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/west-darfur-fighting-spreads-capital-city-el-geneina-residents-2022-04-25/>

¹⁹⁰ Norwegian Refugee Council, "Sudan: Tens of thousands flee after deadly attacks in West Darfur," 25 April 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/sudan-tens-thousands-flee-after-deadly-attacks-west-darfur>

¹⁹¹ Sudan Transparency and Policy Tracker, "What Happens in Darfur Doesn't Stay in Darfur," May 2022.

¹⁹² UN News, "Security Council hears of 'trust deficit' in disputed Abyei region," 21 April 2022,

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/04/1116602>

¹⁹³ FEWSNET, "Sudan: Food Security Outlook Update," April 2022, <https://fews.net/east-africa/sudan/food-security-outlook-update/april-2022>

¹⁹⁴ Radio Dabanga, "Sudan's Drinking Water Crisis Continues," 22 April 2022,

https://allafrica.com/stories/202204250098.html?utm_campaign=daily-headlines&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_content=aans-view-link

International Response:

Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-Al-Rahman's trial began at the ICC, the former Janjaweed leader, accused of 31 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, pleaded not guilty.¹⁹⁵

20 Sudanese and international human rights organisations addressed the international community "to the growing threats of racism, hate speech and intolerance in Sudan" specially on social media platforms and the incident that took place on 12 April where lawyers uttered racist comments against the recently dismissed Director-General of the Public Authority for Radio and Television.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ Reuters, "Alleged Janjaweed leader denies Darfur atrocities at war crimes court," 6 April 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/janjaweed-militia-leader-denies-darfur-atrocities-start-icc-trial-2022-04-05/>

¹⁹⁶ Dabanga Sudan, "NGOs 'outraged' by Sudan lawyers' hot mic racist slurs," 17 April 2022, <https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/ngos-outraged-by-sudan-lawyers-hot-mic-racist-slurs>