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 report\(^1\) establishes a clear pattern of ethnic cleansing\(^2\) 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 though crimes including, but not limited to, murder,

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

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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
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.\(^12\)

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


\(^10\) 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](https://twitter.com/TigrayEAO/status/1512466736712491010)


Burkina Faso

The number of incidents of political violence recorded by ACLED have decreased from February 2022 through April. 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, which was most active in the Centre-North and East regions at the start of the month.

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. 100 jihadists were killed and at least 40 were arrested according to the military.

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. 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.

Former President Kabore was allowed to return home after being detained since being ousted in January 2022, following ECOWAS demands for his unconditional release. 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. 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.

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

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.

Context:

Attacks by militants linked to al Qaeda and the Islamic State have killed thousands in Burkina Faso since 2015. An estimated 1.8 million people have been displaced, concentrated in the north of the country. 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. 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.

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. The government believes anglophone separatists have joined forces with Nigerian militants and plans to shut down the

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29 ACLED Data.
trade across the border, halting over 90% of the trade. More troops were deployed to the border. 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. In the north-west, the prices of staple goods skyrocketed, leading the government to designate it as an economic disaster zone.

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. On 30 April, 14 civilians, taxi drivers and their passengers, were kidnapped by Boko Haram militants for defying the groups’ ban on movement.

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.

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. A dozen people protesting the anglophone rebels were abducted, the separatists claimed the government paid the protesters.

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.

33 ACLED Data.
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 Cameroonian 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

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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/30CQKXX7pF/](https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/car/card/30CQKXX7pF/)
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.\(^\text{47}\)

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.\(^\text{48}\)

Currently 30% of Central Africans are displaced while half the population is food insecure\(^\text{49}\). UNOCHA estimates 3.1 million people will need humanitarian assistance by the end of 2022, 63% of the total population.\(^\text{50}\)

**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.\(^\text{51}\)

The Humanitarian Coordinator in the Central African Republic, Ms. Denise Brown, condemned the recent attacks on humanitarian organisations.\(^\text{52}\)

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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 force.59 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/
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/
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/
and stability.”\textsuperscript{63} The seven member states of the EAC agreed to set up a regional military force in the DRC.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{65}

\textit{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{68}

\textit{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{70}


\textsuperscript{64} Yahoo, “East African Community agrees on regional force to try to end Congo unrest,” 22 April 2022, \url{https://finance.yahoo.com/news/east-african-community-agrees-regional-101840628.html}

\textsuperscript{65} ACLED Data


\textsuperscript{67} Kivu Security Tracker.


\textsuperscript{69} UN Secretary General, Statement attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General – on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 5 April 2022, \url{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}

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 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.\(^80\)

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\(^72\) 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


\(^76\) 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


\(^80\) 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.\(^1\)

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,\(^2\) a week later, over 300 civilians had been arrested suspected of supporting the OLF-Shane in Boji.\(^3\) 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.\(^4\) 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.\(^5\) 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.\(^6\)

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.\(^7\) 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.\(^8\)

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.


\(^{82}\) 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/](https://epo.acleddata.com/2022/04/13/epo-weekly-2-8-april-2022/)


\(^{84}\) Ibid.


\(^{86}\) Ibid.

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),

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as prime minister) participated. 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. 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. Losses amount to at least $60 million daily. Representatives of both the Government of National Unity (GNU) as well as the HoR have engaged with protesters to resume oil production.

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.

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

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

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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
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
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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{105}

\section*{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.\textsuperscript{106} Meanwhile Malian forces indicated they had killed 203 militants\textsuperscript{107} and Russia indicated all claims of their participation to constitute “disinformation.”\textsuperscript{108} However, survivors suggested Russian mercenaries were present during the executions.\textsuperscript{109} The crimes reported include summary executions and other killings, rape, arbitrary arrests, looting and theft.\textsuperscript{110}

Malian military investigators opened an investigation into the Moura massacre on 6 April.\textsuperscript{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.

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{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, \url{https://reliefweb.int/report/libya/adopting-resolution-2629-2022-security-council-extends-mandate-libya-support-mission}.
\bibitem{106} Human Rights Watch, “Mali: Massacre by Army, Foreign Soldiers,” 5 April 2022, \url{https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/04/05/mali-massacre-army-foreign-soldiers}.
\bibitem{108} Africa News, “Mali: Russia blocks UN security council request for investigation into Moura massacre,” 10 April 2022, \url{https://www.africanews.com/2022/04/10/mali-russia-blocks-un-security-council-request-for-investigation-into-moura-massacre/}.
\end{thebibliography}
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.\(^\text{114}\) 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.\(^\text{115}\) The JNIM, an al-Qaeda-aligned group, claimed to have captured a fighter from the Russian Wagner Group in Ségaou 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.\(^\text{116}\) Around the same time, Malian forces indicated over a dozen JNIM fighters were killed in the forest of Ganguel outside the village of Moura.\(^\text{117}\) 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.\(^\text{118}\)

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.\(^\text{119}\)

**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.\(^\text{120}\) 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.\(^\text{121}\) 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 Gota, arrested the transitional president Bah Ndaw and prime minister Moctar Ouane in what was called a “coup within a coup”.\(^\text{122}\)


\(^{114}\) The Africa Center for Strategic Studies, “Debunking the Malian Junta’s Claims,” 12 April 2022, [https://africacenter.org/spotlight/debunking-the-malian-juntas-claims/](https://africacenter.org/spotlight/debunking-the-malian-juntas-claims/)


\(^{121}\) Ibid.

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 MINUSMA 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.\(^{130}\)

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\(^{126}\) US Department of State, Press Statement, Reported Massacre in Mali, 3 April 2022, https://www.state.gov/reported-massacre-in-mali/


\(^{128}\) ACLED Data.


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 April. 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. On 5 April, a clash took place in Mandimba village, less than 30 km from Nangade town. In mid-April, insurgents kidnapped 10 civilians in the Chibau area. 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. The Islamic State though their social media platforms have not claimed responsibility for any attacks in Cabo Delgado since 19 March.

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.

**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 and UNHCR lists over 891,216 persons of concern in the country, including 735,000 in Cabo Delgado. South Africa

**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.

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133 Cabo Ligado, Cabo Ligado Weekly: 4-10 April 2022, 12 April 2022, [https://www.caboligado.com/reports/cabo-ligado-weekly-4-10-april-2022](https://www.caboligado.com/reports/cabo-ligado-weekly-4-10-april-2022)
136 Ibid.
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.\textsuperscript{142}

Nigeria

Recorded violent incidents throughout the country decreased during the first month of April, which showed the lowest number of incidents since the start of the year.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{144} The attacks that did occur were brutal. On 10 April, at least 154 people were killed by gunmen who attacked by 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.\textsuperscript{145}

In the aftermath of the Plateau massacre, organisations expressed concern over the possible alliance between bandits and Boko Haram,\textsuperscript{146} which was exacerbated when the federal government blamed last month’s Kaduna train attack on an alliance of both groups on 13 April.\textsuperscript{147}

Violence peaked in Kaduna state during the first week of the month.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{149} Fifteen soldiers were killed.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{153}

\textsuperscript{143} ACLED Data.
\textsuperscript{144} Twitter, Jihad Analytics (@Jihad_Analytics), 8 April 2022, https://twitter.com/Jihad_Analytics/status/1512383500766392324?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etownh%7Ctwterm%5E1512383500766392324%7Ctwgr%5E7Ctwcon%5Es1 &ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.thecable.ng%2Freport-nigeria-overtakes-iraq-as-country-with-highest-number-of-is-attacks
\textsuperscript{148} ACLED Data.
\textsuperscript{152} Al Jazeera, “ISWAP claims Nigeria bombing, says about 30 killed or hurt,” 21 April 2022, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/21/isis-group-claims-nigeria-bombing-says-about-30-killed-or-hurt
\textsuperscript{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. Among those killed was ISWAP commander, Abou Sufyan, 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.

On 11 April, Vice President Yemi Osinbajo declared his intention to contest the 2023 presidential election. 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. 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. In some areas of Imo state violence in voting stations led to a discontinuation of the voter registration.

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.

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

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


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/


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

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165 ACLED data dashboard, https://acleddata.com/dashboard/


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

\textit{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 Farmajo, 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.

\textit{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{173}

\textbf{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.\textsuperscript{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


\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{175} Among those killed was a local staff member of Médecins Sans Frontières.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{177} As elsewhere, deprivation may exacerbate the impact of conflict and the vulnerability of the population to mass atrocity.

\textit{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.

\textit{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.\textsuperscript{178}

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

\textsuperscript{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
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.\textsuperscript{180}

\section*{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.\textsuperscript{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.”\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.”\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{185} Although Al-Burhan pledged to release political detainees to enable them to participate in the dialogue,\textsuperscript{186} only some (25 detained resistance committee leaders) were released on 24 April, leaving many others including FFC leaders and remain in detention.\textsuperscript{187}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{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
\item \textsuperscript{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-unmission#ixzz7R0ZsSo6A
\item \textsuperscript{183} Sudan Tribune, “Burhan pledges to release Sudan’s FFC detainees within three days,” 16 April 2022, https://sudantribune.com/article257724/
\item \textsuperscript{186} Sudan Tribune, “Burhan pledges to release Sudan’s FFC detainees within three days,” 16 April 2022, https://sudantribune.com/article257724/
\end{itemize}
Violence continued in Darfur. Kreinik in West Darfur was attacked twice in three days, killing an estimated 200.\textsuperscript{188} The violence later reached El Geneina, capital of West Darfur, on 25 April.\textsuperscript{189} Tens of thousands were displaced.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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).\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{194} As elsewhere, economic and food crises can exacerbate the risk of mass atrocity.

\textit{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.\textsuperscript{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.

\begin{itemize}
\end{itemize}
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.  

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.

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