

ATROCITIES WATCH AFRICA

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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 May 2022:

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

Burkina Faso

Levels of violence remained high in Burkina Faso in May. ACLED reported a slight decrease in reported violence against civilians but an increase in acts of remote violence and battles. Throughout the country there has been a 20% increase in fatalities since the start of the year and over 50% when compared to the monthly average for the past year. Violence in the Sahel region of Burkina Faso has remained steady during the last 12 months, yet in the Centre North region fatalities have increased over 150% and violence in the Centre East has increased over 120% in the past year.



Both Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) and Islamic State (IS) Sahel Province carried out attacks targeting civilians across the Boucle du Mouhoun, Center-East, East, and Sahel regions.¹ In Seno province on 7 May, unknown militants killed at least 11 people between the

¹ ACLED, Regional overview Africa: 21-27 May, 1 June 2022, <https://acleddata.com/2022/06/01/regional-overview-africa-21-27-may-2022/>

towns of Dori and Gorgadji.² At least 43 were killed throughout the weekend of 15 May.³ On 22 May, 25 civilians were killed in attacks on two villages.⁴ On 26 May, about 50 people were killed by armed gunmen in Madjoari village. The village was attacked two other times this month, killing 17 civilians⁵ 11 soldiers and 15 gunmen.⁶

Throughout the month clashes were recorded between JNIM and the IS-Sahel militants and Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland (VDP) and the army in the Yagha and Soum provinces.⁷ 50 militants were killed in two separate military operations that took place on 9 May.⁸ 30 militants and 5 soldiers were killed in the Centre North region during the third week of May.⁹

Islamist armed groups and government security forces and their allied militias have committed grave human rights abuses, including include unlawful killings, summary executions, rape and enforced disappearances in the country according to information provided by Human Rights Watch.¹⁰

The situation is critical in Djibo in the far north as the town has been under siege since February. It has been the epicentre of violence linked to al-Qaeda and IS, insecurity in the region has been increasing since November and food hasn't been delivered since December as extremists have restricted movement in and out of the city and cut water supplies. At the end of April, local authorities met with jihadists, to negotiate lifting the siege, but little progress has been made.¹¹

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:

² Reuters, "Heavily armed militants break 60 inmates from Burkina Faso prison," 8 May 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/heavily-armed-militants-break-60-inmates-burkina-faso-prison-2022-05-08/>

³ Andalou Agency, "At least 43 dead in weekend attacks in Burkina Faso: Media," 16 May 2022, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/at-least-43-dead-in-weekend-attacks-in-burkina-faso-media/2588955>

⁴ News 24, "At least 11 civilians killed in Burkina Faso village attacks, says governor," 24 May 2022, <https://www.news24.com/news24/africa/news/at-least-11-civilians-killed-in-burkina-faso-village-attacks-says-governor-20220524>

⁵ DW, "Burkina Faso: Gunmen kill 50 civilians in flare-up of violence," 27 May 2022, <https://www.dw.com/en/burkina-faso-gunmen-kill-50-civilians-in-flare-up-of-violence/a-61942981>

⁶ The Defense Post, "11 Soldiers, 15 Gunmen Dead in Burkina Faso Attacks: Army," 20 May 2022, <https://www.thedefensepost.com/2022/05/20/soldiers-gunmen-dead-burkina/>

⁷ ACLED, Regional overview Africa: 14-20 May 2022, 26 May 2022, <https://acleddata.com/2022/05/26/regional-overview-africa-14-20-may-2022/>

⁸ Daily Mail, "Burkina army says killed over 50 'terrorists'," 10 May 2022, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-10800617/Burkina-army-says-killed-50-terrorists.html>

⁹ Andalou Agency, "30 terrorists, 5 soldiers killed in Burkina Faso clash," 22 May 2022, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/30-terrorists-5-soldiers-killed-in-burkina-faso-clash/2594383>

¹⁰ Human Rights Watch, "Burkina Faso: Armed Islamists Kill, Rape Civilians," 16 May 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/05/16/burkina-faso-armed-islamists-kill-rape-civilians>

¹¹ Africa News, "Burkina Faso: Northern blockade cuts food supply to thousands of people," 28 May 2022, <https://www.africanews.com/2022/05/28/burkina-faso-northern-blockade-cuts-food-supply-to-thousands-of-people/>

ECOWAS experts visited the country in May to evaluate the security situation following a failure to agree on a transitional process.¹²

The UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, urged the military junta in Burkina Faso as well as those in Mali and Guinea and to hand power back to civilian rule as soon as possible.¹³ He condemned the 25 May killings in Madjoari.¹⁴

Cameroon

Violence increased in Cameroon in May, with an increase in both incidents and fatalities as compared to both April and the monthly average from the prior year.¹⁵

In late April and early May, violent events concentrated in the Extreme-North and North-West provinces. In the Extreme-North province, militants believed to be affiliated with either ISWAP or Boko Haram looted and destroyed property in Mayo-Sava. In the North-West province, military forces conducted several raids against Ambazonia separatist militants, resulting in several fatalities.¹⁶



On 11 May, Human Rights Watch released a report highlighting abuse against LGBTI persons in Cameroon, noting an uptick in incidents of such violence in 2021.¹⁷

On 15 May, armed men abducted two health workers from Kendem in South-West province.¹⁸ This action is likely to only further hamper efforts to address an ongoing cholera outbreak in the country. On 26 May, a BCC correspondent was abducted in Bamenda in the North-West.¹⁹

Separatists ordered a lock down in English speaking regions to oppose the celebration of Cameroon's national holiday, May 20 which commemorates the union of the French and English speaking regions of the country.²⁰ Senator Mundi, alongside other hostages, who had been held captive by separatists for a month, was freed at the end of May.²¹

¹² Africa News, "ECOWAS experts in Burkina to assess security situation," 19 May 2022, <https://www.africanews.com/2022/05/19/ecowas-experts-in-burkina-to-assess-security-situation/>

¹³ All Africa, "West Africa: UN Chief Guterres Urges West African Juntas to Return to Civilian Rule," 2 May 2022, <https://allafrica.com/stories/202205020222.html>

¹⁴ UN news, "Secretary-General Strongly Condemns Killing by Extremist Armed Groups in Burkina Faso," 27 May 2022, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/sgsm21300.doc.htm>

¹⁵ ACLED Dashboard, May 2022, <https://acleddata.com/dashboard/#/dashboard>

¹⁶ ACLED, "Regional Overview 23 April - 6 May 2022," 12 May 2022,

<https://acleddata.com/2022/05/12/regional-overview-africa-23-april-6-may-2022/>

¹⁷ Human Rights Watch, "Cameroon: Rising Violence Against LGBTI People," 11 May 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/05/11/cameroon-rising-violence-against-lgbti-people>

¹⁸ OCHA, West and Central Africa: Weekly Regional Humanitarian Snapshot (17-23 May 2022), 26 May 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/report/cameroon/west-and-central-africa-weekly-regional-humanitarian-snapshot-17-23-may-2022>

¹⁹ Hum Angle, "BBC Journalist Abducted In Restive Cameroon Anglophone Region," 27 May 2022, <https://humanglemedia.com/bbc-journalist-abducted-in-restive-cameroon-anglophone-region/>

²⁰ VOA, "Violence, Lockdown, Running Battles Paralyze Cameroon National Day in Western Regions," 20 May 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/violence-lockdown-running-battles-paralyze-cameroon-national-day-in-western-regions/6582116.html>

²¹ VOA, "Cameroon's Military Frees Senator, Other Separatist Hostages," 31 May 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/cameroon-s-military-frees-senator-other-separatist-hostages-/6596695.html>

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.

Central African Republic

Violence in the Central African Republic (CAR) has decreased when compared to the previous year. There has been a 38% decrease in violent incidents and fatalities during the last four weeks when compared to the monthly average of the previous year. During May there was a sharp decrease in violent attacks against civilians but an increase in battles when compared to April 2022.²²



Despite the decrease, violence continues and civilians continue to suffer the consequences. At least 10 civilians were killed by Union for Peace in Central Africa (UPC) rebels in the village of Bokolobo, northeast of the capital, the UN reported. A few days earlier, at least 30 civilians of the Muslim faith, including 27 Fulani, were killed by the Central African army alongside Russian mercenaries and local militia, according to Ali Darassa, military leader of the UPC and chief of staff of the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC).²³ On 24 May, seven people were killed in Nana-Bakassa. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack.²⁴

Information on the presence of the Russian Wagner group in the country continues to surface. According to an investigation conducted by Human Rights Watch, Russian forces, including the Wagner group, have been conducting summary executions, tortures, and other forms of violence against civilians in the country since 2019. Among the incidents investigated were the Bossangoa massacre that claimed the lives of 13 people in June 2021 and cases of detention and torture in Bambari in 2019.²⁵ More recently, three Russian mercenaries have been accused of attacking mothers recovering from childbirth at the hospital in the Henri Izamo military camp in the capital, Bangui, last month.²⁶ Two others were killed by suspected CPC fighters in the northern Ouham-Pende region at the end of May.²⁷

²² ACLED Data.

²³ VOA, "Rebels Kill 10 Civilians in Central African Republic, UN Says," 14 May 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/rebels-kill-10-civilians-in-central-african-republic-un-says-/6574009.html>

²⁴ Hum Angle, "Armed Group Kills 7 People In Nana-Bakassa, Central African Republic," 27 May 2022, <https://humanglemedia.com/armed-group-kills-7-people-in-nana-bakassa-central-african-republic/>

²⁵ Human Rights Watch, "Central African Republic: Abuses by Russia-Linked Forces," 3 May 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/05/03/central-african-republic-abuses-russia-linked-forces>

²⁶ The Daily Beast, "Putin's Private Army Accused of Raping New Moms on Maternity Ward," 7 May 2022, <https://www.thedailybeast.com/wagner-group-mercenaries-accused-of-raping-new-moms-on-maternity-ward-in-central-african-republic>

²⁷ Andalou Agency, "2 Wagner paramilitaries killed in Central African Republic," 30 May 2022, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/2-wagner-paramilitaries-killed-in-central-african-republic/2601125>

Allies of President Faustin-Archange Touadera proposed changes to the constitution that would remove the two term limit, allowing him to be reelected, this led to protests from the opposition. Presidential elections in the country are to be held in 2025.²⁸

The first trial at the CAR Special Criminal Court (SCC) started in mid-May. The defendants, Sallet Adoum also known as Bozize, Yaouba Ousman, and Mahamat Tahir, are former members of the 3R militia accused of the massacre of 46 villagers in Lemouna and Koundjili in the northwest of the country in May 2019.²⁹ The International Criminal Court prosecutor indicated his office will actively support the work of the SCC in line with the principle of complementarity.³⁰ Lawmakers voted to abolish the death penalty in late May 2022, although the last official execution took place in 1981 the practice had remained legally applicable. The legislation must still be issued by president Touadera.³¹

Humanitarian workers are being targeted. Between January and April 2022, 52 incidents affecting humanitarian workers were recorded, affecting mostly Ouham, Bangui and Ouaka.³² More than 60% of the population is in need of humanitarian assistance and prices of basic commodities, especially food, medicine and fuel, have increased. The price of wheat went up 36% in the last two weeks and is expected to increase at least 30% more by August.³³ Health agencies only have 38% of the needed aid to respond to the growing crisis.³⁴ This aggravates the ongoing political tensions and insecurity, increasing the risk for mass atrocities.

Context:

The CAR has a long history of violence and rebellion. After coming to power in a coup, Bozizé's 2003- 2013 rule was characterized by corruption and violent repression of rebellions in the majority Muslim communities in the north. A predominantly Muslim rebel alliance, Séléka, began ousted Bozizé in 2013. Christian and animist self-defense groups that formed the "anti-Balakaka" movement to resist the Séléka and many began targeting Muslim communities.³⁵

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

²⁸ Reuters, "Allies of Central African Republic president propose removing term limits," 27 May 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/allies-cafrican-republic-president-propose-removing-term-limits-2022-05-27/>

²⁹ International Federation for Human Rights, "Q&A: Opening of the first trial before the Special Criminal Court in CAR," 17 May 2022, <https://www.fidh.org/en/region/Africa/central-african-republic/q-a-opening-of-first-trial-before-special-criminal-court>

³⁰ International Criminal Court, Statement, ICC Prosecutor underlines commitment to support the Special Criminal Court of the Central African Republic following address by Deputy Prosecutor, Mr Mame Mandiaye Niang at opening of first trial in Bangui, 11 May 2022, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/icc-prosecutor-underlines-commitment-support-special-criminal-court-central-african-republic>

³¹ Africa News, "CAR: Bangui residents react to MPs voting to end death penalty," 30 May 2022, <https://www.africanews.com/2022/05/30/car-bangui-residents-react-to-mps-voting-to-end-death-penalty/>

³² OCHA, Central African Republic: Overview of incidents affecting humanitarian workers (April 2022), 5 May 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/report/central-african-republic/central-african-republic-overview-incidents-affecting-31>

³³ OCHA, Daily Noon Briefing Highlights: Ukraine, Ethiopia, Central African Republic, 5 May 2022, <https://www.unocha.org/story/daily-noon-briefing-highlights-ukraine-ethiopia-central-african-republic>

³⁴ OCHA, Central African Republic, Situation Report Last updated: 27 May 2022, <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/car/>

³⁵ 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>

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.³⁶

Currently 30% of Central Africans are displaced while half the population is food insecure.³⁷ UNOCHA estimates 3.1 million people will need humanitarian assistance by the end of 2022, 63% of the total population.³⁸

International response:

Virginia Gamba, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, briefed the Security Council's 2127 Sanctions Committee on 6 May 2022. Since July 2019, the situation of children has deteriorated due to the increasing levels of violence, the deterioration of basic services and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. She recommended that protection of children remain central to peace efforts, that dialogue with armed groups must continue and that a National Plan for the prevention of violence against children in armed conflict must be put in place.³⁹

The new Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in the Central African Republic, Valentine Rugwabiza, called for a readjustment of the UN peacekeeping force, to "adopt a proactive and preventive posture of exactions on civilian populations based on reliable information," in order to protect civilians. She also expressed concern over the ongoing humanitarian situation and the lack of funding for humanitarian response.⁴⁰

On 9 May, US President Biden issued a proclamation extending sanctions against certain individuals in the CAR for another year.⁴¹

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Fighting continues in eastern Congo. Although ACLED reports fewer incidents and fatalities over the last four weeks than average over the past year,⁴² new patterns of violence – including the resurgence of



³⁶ 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>

³⁷ 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>

³⁸ UNOCHA, "Situation Report Central African Republic," 7 April 2022, <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/car/#cf-5JBAIwceyXkeLoEvJqi08v>

³⁹ UNSC, SC/14898, Press release, Security Council 2127 Committee Meets Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, 20 May 2022, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/sc14898.doc.htm>

⁴⁰ Africa News, "CAR: New UN Rep calls for readjustment of MINUSCA to protect civilians," 19 May 2022, <https://www.africanews.com/2022/05/19/car-new-un-rep-calls-for-readjustment-of-minusca-to-protect-civilians/>

⁴¹ White House, Notice on the Continuation of the National Emergency with Respect to the Central African Republic, 9 May 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2022/05/09/notice-on-the-continuation-of-the-national-emergency-with-respect-to-the-central-african-republic-2/>

⁴² ACLED dashboard, <https://acleddata.com/dashboard/#/dashboard>

M23 rebels and increasing tensions with Rwanda raise serious concerns about the potential for escalation.

Military offensives against the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) continued during the third week of May.⁴³ Despite government military action, an ADF attack in the Beni region reportedly killed 24.⁴⁴

At the same time, the March 23 Movement (M23) launched a renewed offensive in North Kivu.⁴⁵ The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimated that 61,000 were displaced from Rutshuru and Nyiragongo regions of South Kivu as a result of ongoing fighting between the government and M23 by 27 May.⁴⁶

Meanwhile, relations between the DRC and Rwanda are worsening. The DRC has accused Rwanda of supporting M23 and suspended flights from the country in response. Rwanda, in turn, has accused the DRC of supporting FDLR rebels and reports that two of its soldiers were kidnapped by the group while on patrol.⁴⁷ Rwandan President Kagame has suggested that he may send troops into the DRC, even without permission from the Congolese government. He has cited concerns about the activities of the Rwandan rebel FDLR movement. It has been argued, however, that concerns about ongoing Ugandan and Burundian military operations may also be a concern.⁴⁸ More recently, Rwandan Foreign Minister Vincent Biruta said, "If attacks continue we will not sit idly by... Rwanda will have the right to respond to protect the security of the country, to protect the security of its citizens and we have the means to do that".⁴⁹ Human Rights Watch has also expressed concern about growing hate speech, particularly against groups associated with other countries.⁵⁰

In the first ten days of May, three attacks occurred in Ituri. On 8 May an attack on an artisanal mining site killed at least 35 in Djugu in Ituri. On 9 May, rebels killed at least 14 people, including children, in an overnight attack on a displaced persons camp in Djugu. CODECO is suspected responsible for both attacks.⁵¹

⁴³ ACLED, Regional overview Africa: 14-20 May 2022, 26 May 2022,

<https://acleddata.com/2022/05/26/regional-overview-africa-14-20-may-2022/>

⁴⁴ Al Jazeera, "Civilians killed in eastern DR Congo rebel attack," 29 May 2022,

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/29/more-than-a-dozen-civilians-killed-in-dr-congo-rebel-attack>

⁴⁵ ACLED, Regional overview Africa: 14-20 May 2022, 26 May 2022,

<https://acleddata.com/2022/05/26/regional-overview-africa-14-20-may-2022/>

⁴⁶ UNOCHA, "Flash Update #6: Humanitarian Situation in Rutshuru and Nyiragongo Territories," 27 May 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/democratic-republic-congo-north-kivu-flash-update-6-humanitarian-situation-rutshuru-territory-27th-may-2022>

⁴⁷ Al Jazeera, "Rwanda says soldiers kidnapped by rebels in DR Congo," 28 May 2022,

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/28/rwanda-says-soldiers-kidnapped-by-rebels-in-dr-congo>

⁴⁸ Crisis Group, "Easing the Turmoil in the Eastern DR Congo and Great Lakes," 25 May 2022,

<https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/b181-dr-congo-great-lakes.pdf>

⁴⁹ Clement Uwiringiyimana, "Rwanda says 'will not sit idly by' if attacked in dispute with Congo," *Reuters*, 31 May 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/rwanda-says-will-not-sit-idly-by-if-attacked-dispute-with-congo-2022-05-31/>

⁵⁰ Human Rights Watch, "Civilians at Risk Amid Resurgence of M23 Rebels," 1 June 2022,

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/06/01/dr-congo-civilians-risk-amid-resurgence-m23-rebels>

⁵¹ Al Jazeera, "DR Congo: Rebels carry out deadly attack on refugee camp in Ituri," 10 May 2022,

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/10/at-least-14-killed-in-eastern-dr-congo-refugee-camp-attack>

On a more positive note, the guilty verdict against two senior police officers in the high profile killing of human rights activist Floribert Chebeya and his driver, Fidele Bazana, in 2010 was upheld by a military high court on 11 May.⁵²

Context:

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

Since April 2017, ADF has reportedly been responsible for the deaths of at least 2300 people and the abduction of 900, according to KST. Bombings in neighbouring Uganda during October and November 2021 paved the way for a joint Congolese-Ugandan military operation against ADF. Many continue to believe Uganda has ulterior motives for intervention.⁵³

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 2021.⁵⁴

The M23 or March 23 Movement are a faction 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.⁵⁵

International response:

MONUSCO condemned the M23 attacks against the UN and FARDC forces that took place on 22 May in Rutshuru, North Kivu.⁵⁶ The M23 group accused MONUSCO of working with government forces as well as local militia groups to stage “simultaneous attacks” against them.⁵⁷ On 24 May, the UN Security Council issued a press statement which also condemned the attacks.⁵⁸

⁵² Carine Dikiefu Banona, “A First Step for Justice in DR Congo: Appeal Court Confirms Role of Senior Officials in 2010 Chebeya-Bazana Murders,” 12 May 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/05/12/first-step-justice-dr-congo>

⁵³ 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>

⁵⁴ Kivu Security Tracker.

⁵⁵ 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>

⁵⁶ Twitter, Monusco (@MONUSCO), 22 May 2022, https://twitter.com/MONUSCO/status/1528497427153657858?s=20&t=7W0Xand_ztC8EFkZydbTdw

⁵⁷ BBC, “UN condemns M23 attacks on its forces in DR Congo,” 23 May 2022, https://www.bbc.com/news/live/world-africa-61170224?ns_mchannel=social&ns_source=twitter&ns_campaign=bbc_live&ns_linkname=628b34affc2fb576dc00bd6b%26UN%20condemns%20M23%20attacks%20on%20its%20forces%20in%20DR%20Congo%262022-05-23T10%3A07%3A41.797Z&ns_fee=0&pinned_post_locator=urn:asset:489dc60e-1077-4867-b7e0-56d414ebab&pinned_post_asset_id=628b34affc2fb576dc00bd6b&pinned_post_type=share

⁵⁸ Security Council Press Statement on the Situation in Democratic Republic of Congo, 24 May 2022, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/sc14903.doc.htm>

The Rwandan military accused Congolese forces of injuring civilians in cross-border shelling, they requested the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism to investigate.⁵⁹ AU Chairperson Mack Sall has called for dialogue between Congo and Rwanda to reduce recent heightened tensions.⁶⁰

Ethiopia

The situation in Ethiopia remains volatile. Although levels of violence in northern Ethiopia have declined, there are now more, less deadly incidents spread out over a larger geographic area. . The situation in northern Ethiopia remains calm, yet unpredictable and fighting could start up again. ACLED data shows a decline in violence in May compared to April 2022, and an almost 50% decline in fatalities compared to the monthly average of the previous 12 months. In Tigray, Afar and Amhara violence in the last three months has reduced over 75%, not the same can be said for Oromia where fatalities have increased over 50%. In the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR) violent events have increased 143% and fatalities have increased 160% in May when compared to the monthly average of the previous 12 months.



Although violence overall declined in the north, fighting between Tigrayan rebels and the government allied with Eritrean troops was recorded around 8 May. Government troops blocked the roads north stopping food aid convoys.⁶¹ Clashes between Eritrean and TPLF forces were reported in the Rama area.⁶² During the last weekend of the month, Eritrean troops shelled a town killing at least 18 people. On the same day, the Eritrean military attacked the Tigrayan forces in Shiraro, about seven miles from the Eritrea-Ethiopia border, according to the TPLF.⁶³

Amid rising tensions with the federal government, the Tigray forces released 4,208 prisoners of war, including 401 women, in an amnesty grant on 21 May. The federal government, however, claimed most of them were in fact civilians who had been abducted in Afar and Amhara, not soldiers, and claimed the TPLF is trying to “divert [the] attention of the international community.”⁶⁴

Claims of forced recruitment by Tigrayan forces have also recently surfaced. Kindeya Gebrehiwot, from the Tigray external relations office, confirmed some low ranking government

⁵⁹ Associated Press, “Rwanda accuses Congolese forces of cross-border shelling,” 24 May 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/africa-rwanda-kigali-f15398437a0f83c1939e8208d84179cd>

⁶⁰ AFP, “AU Chief ‘Gravely Concerned’ by Rwanda/DR Congo Tension,” *Barrons*, <https://www.barrons.com/news/au-chief-gravely-concerned-by-rwanda-dr-congo-tension-01653827407>

⁶¹ Republic World, “Fighting Resumes In Ethiopia's Tigray Region,” 9 May 2022, <https://www.republicworld.com/world-news/africa/fighting-resumes-in-ethiopia-tigray-region.html>

⁶² Ethiopia Peace Observatory, *Epo weekly: 7 - 13 May 2022*, 18 May 2022, <https://epo.acleddata.com/2022/05/18/epo-weekly-7-13-may-2022/>

⁶³ Al Jazeera, “UN: Eritrean troops shelled school in north Ethiopia,” 31 May 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/31/eritrean-troops-shell-town-in-north-ethiopia-u-n>

⁶⁴ The East African, “Ethiopia: Tigray forces released captive civilians, not soldiers,” 24 May 2022, <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/rest-of-africa/ethiopia-denies-release-of-war-captives-by-tigray-forces-3825608>

officials had detained family members to force their relatives to enlist but that these irregularities were “rare and sporadic, not systemic.”⁶⁵

At least 30 people were killed in recent religious violence.⁶⁶ Clashes broke out in Addis Ababa surrounding Eid celebrations and police responded by firing tear gas into the crowd, 76 suspected riot leaders were arrested. In Oromia, 145 people were accused of conspiring to incite religious attacks. These events followed the killing of Muslims in Gondar at the end of April.⁶⁷

Attacks against civilians continued in Oromia, most predominant are the reports of the Ethiopian National Defence forces (ENDF) as well as the Oromia Regional Special Forces killing civilians accused of being Oromo Liberation Front (OLF)-Shane members. About 297 civilians have been killed by government forces in the past few months.⁶⁸ Protests have also been organised against OLF-Shane.⁶⁹ OLF-Shane militants clashed with the ENDF throughout May. Some attacks from the group were recorded outside Oromia, in SNNPR.⁷⁰

In Amhara, Fano militia have conducted attacks. During the last week of May, Amhara authorities arrested more than 4,500 people as part of an operation “to enforce law and order,” militia fighters, critics and the press were targeted. Over 200 were suspected of conducting illegal activities in the name of the group, among those arrested are Brigadier General Teferra Mamo, a former commander of the Amhara Special Forces, allied with the army in the fight against Tigrayan forces. Serious concerns have been raised about the human rights of those arrested. The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission has reported that many of the arrests were carried out without proper warrants and that many were denied their rights to contact family members.⁷¹

During the last two weeks of May, at least 16 journalists were arrested. Amhara and Oromia regions have been heavily targeted, most of those arrested are accused of supporting rebels. Despite concerns and requests for release from human rights defenders, the government released a statement indicating it “will continue to take irreversible measures on individuals

⁶⁵ Reuters, “Some Ethiopians claim forced recruitment by Tigrayan forces,” 16 May 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/some-ethiopians-claim-forced-recruitment-by-tigrayan-forces-2022-05-16/>

⁶⁶ The East African, “UN calls for independent probe into religious violence in Ethiopia,” 10 May 2022, <https://www.theeastafican.co.ke/tea/rest-of-africa/un-calls-for-independent-probe-into-violence-in-ethiopia-3810396>

⁶⁷ Ethiopia Peace Observatory, Epo weekly: 23 April - 6 May 2022, 11 May 2022, <https://epo.acleddata.com/2022/05/11/epo-weekly-23-april-6-may-2022/>

⁶⁸ Ethiopia Peace Observatory, Epo weekly: 7 - 13 May 2022, 18 May 2022, <https://epo.acleddata.com/2022/05/18/epo-weekly-7-13-may-2022/>

⁶⁹ Ethiopia Peace Observatory, Epo weekly: 23 April - 6 May 2022, 11 May 2022, <https://epo.acleddata.com/2022/05/11/epo-weekly-23-april-6-may-2022/>

⁷⁰ Ethiopia Peace Observatory, Epo weekly: 14 - 20 May 2022, 25 May 2022, <https://epo.acleddata.com/2022/05/25/epo-weekly-14-20-may-2022/>

⁷¹ BBC, “Ethiopia arrests thousands including ex-army commander,” 23 May 2022, https://www.bbc.com/news/live/world-africa-61170224?ns_mchannel=social&ns_source=twitter&ns_campaign=bbc_live&ns_linkname=628b66d8b622de4ef91223e4%26Ethiopia%20arrests%20thousands%20including%20ex-army%20commander%262022-05-23T11%3A40%3A42.582Z&ns_fee=0&pinned_post_locator=urn:asset:a63f8c43-ebe7-439b-b814-c4e142f69b5c&pinned_post_asset_id=628b66d8b622de4ef91223e4&pinned_post_type=share

involved in illegal activities who are planning and working to create havoc and chaos, also on those wearing a cloak of media outlets and journalists."⁷²

In SNNPR, fighting started in late April between Derashe militias, SNNPR regional forces and the ENDF.⁷³ Between 27 April and 20 May, six clashes were recorded in the region. Local authorities struggled to contain violence. During the third week of May, about 330 people, accused of being involved in the fighting, were arrested.⁷⁴

In Benshangul/Gumuz region, two attacks against civilians were recorded during the third week of May, the ENDF was responsible for both.⁷⁵

Humanitarian access has improved, but remains problematic. Since 1 April, 875 trucks have arrived in Mekelle through 11 humanitarian convoys, under 20% of the amount needed, plus 23.5 MT of supplies have been airlifted. Although some fuel has been delivered, the amount is insufficient to mobilise humanitarian supplies.⁷⁶

Efforts are also ongoing to reduce conflict. There were unconfirmed reports that Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed met with TPLF leaders in Nigeria during the last week in May.⁷⁷ In Afar, the regional government met with the Somali regional government and agreed to withdraw forces from the disputed area and take on measures that provide lasting solutions to the conflict.⁷⁸

The Ethiopian National Dialogue is set to begin in November 2022. To carry out its tasks, the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) has divided its activities into four chapters, an initial pre-preparation phase to design its strategies and techniques to achieve its goals, which was presented on 20 May.⁷⁹ In the second chapter, the ENDC will provide training and identify participants and agendas for the national dialogue. In the third chapter the dialogue will take place. In a fourth chapter the ENDC will implement the outcomes of the national dialogue.⁸⁰

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

⁷² Reuters, "Ethiopian rights body seeks release of 16 detained journalists," 27 May 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/ethiopian-rights-body-seeks-release-16-detained-journalists-2022-05-27/>

⁷³ Ethiopia Peace Observatory, Epo weekly: 23 April - 6 May 2022, 11 May 2022, <https://epo.acleddata.com/2022/05/11/epo-weekly-23-april-6-may-2022/>

⁷⁴ Ethiopia Peace Observatory, Epo weekly: 14 - 20 May 2022, 25 May 2022, <https://epo.acleddata.com/2022/05/25/epo-weekly-14-20-may-2022/>

⁷⁵ Ethiopia Peace Observatory, Epo weekly: 14 - 20 May 2022, 25 May 2022, <https://epo.acleddata.com/2022/05/25/epo-weekly-14-20-may-2022/>

⁷⁶ OCHA, Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian update, situation report updated 27 May 2022, <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/ethiopia/>

⁷⁷ Borkena, "Alert : unconfirmed report that PM Abiy met with TPLF leaders in Nigeria," 29 May 2022, <https://borkena.com/2022/05/29/nigeria-ethiopian-pm-abiy-tplf-leaders-met-for-negotiation/>

⁷⁸ Ethiopia Peace Observatory, Epo weekly: 14 - 20 May 2022, 25 May 2022, <https://epo.acleddata.com/2022/05/25/epo-weekly-14-20-may-2022/>

⁷⁹ Ethiopia Peace Observatory, Epo weekly: 14 - 20 May 2022, 25 May 2022, <https://epo.acleddata.com/2022/05/25/epo-weekly-14-20-may-2022/>

⁸⁰ Ethiopia Peace Observatory, Epo weekly: 7 - 13 May 2022, 18 May 2022, <https://epo.acleddata.com/2022/05/18/epo-weekly-7-13-may-2022/>

humanitarian abuses. Following the expansion of the conflict to Amhara and other Ethiopian 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. In March 2022, the federal government declared a humanitarian truce to ease aid into the Tigray region.

In Oromia there is an ongoing conflict between the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF),⁸¹ who wants to establish an independent state of Oromia, and the federal government. The conflict has been going on since 1973, in 2018 they reached a peace agreement,⁸² yet a faction of the group who opposed formed the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) also known as OLF-Shane continues to fight.⁸³

International response:

A group of African civil society organisations called on the UNSC to take action on the ongoing situation requesting Ethiopia be put on the Council's formal agenda. Other key asks included pressing the parties for immediate and unimpeded humanitarian access, an arms embargo and verification measures to ensure the withdrawal of Eritrean troops.⁸⁴

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, condemned the recent clashes between the Muslim and Christian population and called for thorough, independent and transparent investigations and for broader action to be taken to reconcile the communities.⁸⁵

A group of US senators introduced a bipartisan resolution "condemning the use of hunger as a weapon of war, and recognizing the effect of conflicts on global food security and famine."⁸⁶

The AU Special Envoy, Olusegun Obasanjo, indicated that progress between the TPLF and the Ethiopian government was being made "slowly but steadily," that the situation has improved and that steps are being taken for confidence building among the parties.⁸⁷

⁸¹ Oromo Liberation Front, <http://oromoliberationfront.org/english/>

⁸² France 24, "Ethiopian government signs peace deal with Oromo rebels," 7 August 2018, <https://www.france24.com/en/20180807-ethiopia-government-abiy-ahmed-signs-peace-deal-omoro-rebels>

⁸³ Tesfa News, "OLF Military and Political Wings Split," 6 April 2019, <https://www.tesfanews.net/olf-military-wing-political-leaders-splits/>

⁸⁴ Atrocities Watch Africa, "African civil society's letter to the United Nations Security Council on the ongoing situation in Ethiopia," 18 May 2022, <http://atrocitieswatch.org/african-civil-societys-letter- united-nations-security-council-ongoing-situation-ethiopia/>

⁸⁵ The East African, "Ethiopia: Tigray forces released captive civilians, not soldiers," 24 May 2022, <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/rest-of-africa/ethiopia-denies-release-of-war-captives-by-tigray-forces-3825608>

⁸⁶ US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Risch, Merkley, Young, Booker, Thune, Mendez announce bipartisan senate resolution condemning starvation as an act of war, 26 May 2022, <https://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/ranking/release/risch-merkley-young-booker-thune-menendez-announce-bipartisan-senate-resolution-condemning-starvation-as-an-act-of-war>

⁸⁷ BBC Sounds, Focus on Africa: Ethiopia unrest: 'Very slow but steady' progress, 1 June 2022, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/w172ydvhtqcy6t0>

Libya

The security situation remains fragile.⁸⁸ Tensions escalated mid-May when Bashagha entered Tripoli accompanied by armed groups, after a two month stand-off between his administration and that of Dbeibah. He withdrew hours later after clashes broke out between fighters allied to both representatives.⁸⁹ Bashagha's government officially started working from the city of Sirte in order to "avoid bloodshed."⁹⁰ The House of Representatives (HoR) held its first meeting in Sirte on 31 May.⁹¹ Dbeibah, who has consistently stated that he will only hand over power to a newly elected government, has suggested holding parliamentary polls at the end of 2022.⁹²



The 5+5 Libyan Joint Military Commission met on 23 and 24 May for the first time since February and expressed their interest in resuming the implementation of the October 2020 ceasefire agreement.⁹³

Oil production has not returned to normal, revenue has dropped by at least 35% since several production facilities across the country were forced to halt production in mid-April.⁹⁴

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.⁹⁵ Dbeibah had proposed elections in June,⁹⁶ but is now suggesting the end of 2022.⁹⁷

⁸⁸ UN News, "Protracted political impasse' further polarizing Libya," 26 May 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/05/1119152>

⁸⁹ Reuters, "Clashes force Libya's Bashagha from Tripoli after brief attempt to enter," 17 May 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/libyas-bashagha-arrives-tripoli-al-arabiya-2022-05-17/>

⁹⁰ Andolou Agency, "Libyan Parliament-appointed government starts working from Sirte," 31 May 2022, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/libyan-parliament-appointed-government-starts-working-from-sirte/2602372>

⁹¹ The Libya Update, "HoR Spox: Sirte meeting discussed draft budget and its amendment," 31 May 2022, <https://libyaupdate.com/hor-spox-sirte-meeting-discussed-draft-budget-and-its-amendment/>

⁹² Daily Sabah, "Libya's PM Dbeibah proposes holding polls at end of 2022," 26 May 2022, <https://www.dailysabah.com/world/africa/libyas-pm-dbeibah-proposes-holding-polls-at-end-of-2022>

⁹³ UN News, "UN salutes new Libya ceasefire agreement that points to 'a better, safer, and more peaceful future'," 23 October 2020, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/10/1076012>

⁹⁴ The New Arab. "Libyan oil production drops by 35% during month-long blockade," 21 May 2022, <https://english.alaraby.co.uk/news/libyan-oil-production-drops-35-during-blockade>

⁹⁵ 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>

⁹⁶ 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>

⁹⁷ Daily Sabah, "Libya's PM Dbeibah proposes holding polls at end of 2022," 26 May 2022, <https://www.dailysabah.com/world/africa/libyas-pm-dbeibah-proposes-holding-polls-at-end-of-2022>

International response:

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres urged parties to resume the electoral process and ensure free, fair, inclusive, and credible presidential and parliamentary elections as soon as possible.⁹⁸

Led by the UN Special Advisor Stephanie Williams, the second round of consultations between the Joint Committee of the House of Representatives and High State Council took place in Cairo. Agreements were made in several areas, including the structure and powers of a two-tier new parliament as well as the prerogatives of the President and Prime Minister. The next round will take place on 11 June when they expect to finalise the arrangements to hold national elections.⁹⁹

The UNSC held a meeting on the situation in Libya on 26 May, where Under-Secretary General, Rosemary DiCarlo, briefed the Council. She indicated that due to the fragility of the situation it's of great importance the ceasefire is respected and the continuation of the Cairo talks to ensure national elections. She also expressed concern over the grave human rights violations that continue to occur: there are currently 1,717 persons detained in centres run by the Directorate for Combating Illegal Migration, plus 5,000 migrants and refugees kept in inhumane conditions in both regular and unofficial detention centres.¹⁰⁰

The Libya mission for the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) declared on 24 May that there has been “no progress in years” complaining that not enough is being done to stop smuggling and trafficking of migrants or to stop detention of migrants or improve conditions of detention.¹⁰¹

According to Associated Press, a UN report indicates Libya faces a serious security threat from foreign fighters and private military companies, including the Wagner Group, which have violated international law.¹⁰² Information shows the Russian Wagner group backed by Khalifa Hiftar’s Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF) used banned landmines and booby traps in the country during the 2019 and 2020 conflict.¹⁰³

The G7 called for the complete resumption of oil production in the country and requested the 2020 ceasefire be respected and to refrain from using it as a tool for political confrontation.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ The Libya Observer, “Guterres urges Libyans to resume electoral process as soon as possible,” 24 May 2022, <https://www.libyaobserver.ly/news/guterres-urges-libyans-resume-electoral-process-soon-possible>

⁹⁹ UN News, “‘Protracted political impasse’ further polarizing Libya,” 26 May 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/05/1119152>

¹⁰⁰ UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Statement by USG Rosemary DiCarlo - Security Council meeting on the situation in Libya, 26 May 2022, <https://dppa.un.org/en/statement-usg-rosemary-dicarlo-security-council-meeting-situation-libya-26-may-2022>

¹⁰¹ Libya Tribune, “‘No progress in years’ in Libya, says UN migration body,” 27 May 2022, <https://en.minbarlibya.org/2022/05/27/no-progress-in-years-in-libya-says-un-migration-body/>

¹⁰² Associated Press, “UN experts: Libya’s security threatened by foreign fighters,” 28 May 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-politics-africa-middle-east-13eeca3f53926040275ae406edece88f>

¹⁰³ Human Rights Watch, “Libya: Russia’s Wagner Group Set Landmines Near Tripoli,” 31 May 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/05/31/libya-russias-wagner-group-set-landmines-near-tripoli>

¹⁰⁴ Libyan News Agency, “The G7 calls for the complete resumption of oil production and the establishment of a constitutional basis for elections in Libya,” 14 May 2022, <https://lana.gov.ly/post.php?id=242269&lang=en>

Mali

Violence in Mali increased. ACLED reported a slight increase in violent events against civilians and over 200% increase in battles throughout the country when compared to April 2022, however, levels of violence were significantly less than those of March. In Mopti, violence against civilians continues to increase, violent events in May were almost 70% higher than the monthly average of 2022, civilian fatalities have decreased. Violence was heavily concentrated in Mopti, where JNIM militants attacked two army positions in Tenenkou circle and clashed with the military in the Djenne circle during the second week of May.¹⁰⁵



During the third week of May, the military claimed to have killed militants.¹⁰⁶ During the last week of the month, JNIM attacked civilians and clashed with other militias. The military launched an anti-militant operation in the region and claimed over a dozen fatalities.¹⁰⁷

Mali renounced its defence agreements with France which had been operating since 2014, arguing that “as of this moment, there is no legal basis for France to operate on Malian soil.”¹⁰⁸ French President, Emanuel Macron, had already announced in February that French troops would withdraw within six months.¹⁰⁹ In mid-May the government announced it would also be leaving the G5 Sahel, which includes the termination of the joint anti-jihadist military force, after it was blocked from assuming the presidency of the group. This further isolates the country further in a context where relations with western allies have also deteriorated, especially over its recent rapprochement with Russia.¹¹⁰

An attempted coup against the military junta took place on the night of 11 to 12 May, by soldiers supported by a Western state according to Colonel Assimi Goïta.¹¹¹ Over a dozen officers, including General Moussa Bemba Keita, the former chief of staff and former minister of security, have been arrested.¹¹²

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.¹¹³ 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

¹⁰⁵ ACLED, Regional overview Africa: 7-13 May 2022, 19 May 2022, <https://acleddata.com/2022/05/19/regional-overview-africa-7-13-may-2022/>

¹⁰⁶ ACLED, Regional overview Africa: 14-20 May 2022, 26 May 2022, <https://acleddata.com/2022/05/26/regional-overview-africa-14-20-may-2022/>

¹⁰⁷ ACLED, Regional overview Africa: 21-27 May 2022, 1 June 2022, <https://acleddata.com/2022/06/01/regional-overview-africa-21-27-may-2022/>

¹⁰⁸ Africa News, “Mali: France has lost 'legal basis' for military operations,” 4 May 2022, <https://www.africanews.com/2022/05/04/mali-france-has-lost-legal-basis-for-military-operations/>

¹⁰⁹ Crisis Group, “France’s Troop Withdrawal from Mali,” 16 March 2022, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/sahel/mali/frances-troop-withdrawal-mali>

¹¹⁰ Nation, “Mali withdraws from regional anti-jihadist force,” 16 May 2022, <https://nation.africa/africa/news/mali-withdraws-from-regional-anti-jihadist-force-3816960>

¹¹¹ All Africa, “Mali: Junta Says it Foiled Coup Attempt,” 17 May 2021, <https://allafrica.com/stories/202205170298.html>

¹¹² All Africa, “Mali: Army Officials Arrested for Attempted Coup,” 18 May 2022, <https://allafrica.com/stories/202205180459.html>

¹¹³ 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

and extremist violence and Islamist armed groups are taking control of villages and imposing sharia law.¹¹⁴

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”.¹¹⁵ The move came after the announcement of a cabinet reshuffle, where leaders of the coup were removed.

International response:

Togo’s President Faure Gnassingbe agreed to act as a mediator in Mali’s political crisis resolving disputes among regional actors as well as the international community.¹¹⁶

The UN Secretary General, Guterres, urged the military junta in Mali as well as those in Burkina Faso and Guinea, to hand power back to civilian rule as soon as possible.¹¹⁷ He also expressed concern that the Mali and Burkina Faso governments were undermining the anti-extremist Sahel force.¹¹⁸

France regretted Mali’s departure from the G5¹¹⁹ and Chad’s interim president Deby urged Mali’s military leader to reconsider its withdrawal.¹²⁰

Mozambique

ACLED recorded an increase in violence in May after a calm in April with all violent incidents taking place in the Cabo Delgado province. Attacks by the Islamic State (IS) continued throughout the month.¹²¹ May started with a surge in violent incidents concentrated mostly in Nangade, Mueda, and Macomia districts. The scale of IS attacks has declined with many concentrated on searching for provisions, mainly food, suggesting a diminished organisational capacity to sustain an offensive. An insurgent attack in a village in Palma on 6 May, was quickly contained by the Mozambican and Rwandan forces. According to a statement from the Ministry of Defence, insurgents were driven out of Palma district at the



¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ The Conversation, “Inside Mali’s coup within a coup,” 26 May 2021, <https://theconversation.com/inside-malis-coup-within-a-coup-161621>

¹¹⁶ Al Jazeera, “Togo agrees to mediate in Mali political crisis,” 5 May 2022,

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/5/togo-leader-agrees-to-mali-crisis-mediator-role-officials>

¹¹⁷ All Africa, “West Africa: UN Chief Guterres Urges West African Juntas to Return to Civilian Rule,” 2 May 2022, <https://allafrica.com/stories/202205020222.html>

¹¹⁸ Al Arabiya News, “Coups undermining Sahel anti-extremist force: UN chief,” 11 May 2022, <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/world/2022/05/11/Coups-undermining-Sahel-anti-extremist-force-UN-chief>

¹¹⁹ Africa News, “France “regrets” Mali’s departure from the G5 Sahel,” 18 May 2022,

<https://www.africanews.com/2022/05/18/france-regrets-mali-s-departure-from-the-g5-sahel/>

¹²⁰ Reuters, “Chad urges Mali junta to reconsider withdrawal from anti-militant force,” 20 May 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/chad-urges-mali-junta-reconsider-withdrawal-anti-militant-force-2022-05-20/>

¹²¹ Cabo Ligado, Cabo Ligado Weekly: 23-29 May 2022, 31 May 2022, <https://www.cabologado.com/reports/cabo-ligado-weekly-23-29-may-2022>

beginning of February.¹²² During the second week of May, insurgents continued to appear in search of food, hostages were released and security forces mobilised to take advantage of these weaknesses.¹²³ This led to a wave of surrenders. IS claimed responsibility for three attacks during the third week of May. Security forces indicated over 100 insurgents surrendered in the districts of Nangade and Macomia.¹²⁴

Between 27 April and 17 May 2022, over 7,800 IDPs returned to their areas of origin, mostly to Muidumbe, Palma, and Macomia districts, and around 70% of those displaced reported an intention to return.¹²⁵

Information recently provided by Save the Children recorded a worrisome increase in child marriages in Cabo Delgado, between January and March 2022, the agency recorded 108 cases, compared to 65 cases between October and December 2021. Between January and March, the numbers increased, from 6 children in January, 32 in February and 70 in March.¹²⁶

Health authorities declared a public emergency after a first case of polio was detected in Tete province on 18 May, marking the second case in southern Africa this year and the first in the country in the last 30 years.¹²⁷

The parliament approved a new anti-terror law, which imposes up to 24 year prison sentences for those convicted of terrorism offences and up to eight years for anyone spreading false information about the country's insurgency. Opposition parties fear it could be used to target the media.¹²⁸

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 killed¹²⁹ and UNHCR lists over 891,216 persons of concern in the country,¹³⁰ including 735,000 in Cabo Delgado.¹³¹

¹²² Cabo Ligado, Cabo Ligado Weekly: 25 April-8 May 2022, 10 May 2022, <https://www.caboligado.com/reports/cabo-ligado-weekly-25-apri-8-may-2022>

¹²³ Cabo Ligado, Cabo Ligado Weekly: 9-15 May 2022, 17 May 2022, <https://www.caboligado.com/reports/cabo-ligado-weekly-9-15-may-2022>

¹²⁴ Cabo Ligado, Cabo Ligado Weekly: 16-21 May 2022, 24 May 2022, <https://www.caboligado.com/reports/cabo-ligado-weekly-16-22-may-2022>

¹²⁵ FEWS Net, Mozambique Key Message Update: IDPs begin returning to their areas of origin, but needs remain high, May 2022, 1 June 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/report/mozambique/mozambique-key-message-update-idps-begin-returning-their-areas-origin-needs-remain-high-may-2022>

¹²⁶ Save the Children, Rates of child marriage double amongst thousands of children displaced by conflict in Cabo Delgado, 17 May 2022, <https://www.savethechildren.net/news/rates-child-marriage-double-amongst-thousands-children-displaced-conflict-cabo-delgado>

¹²⁷ All Africa, "Mozambique: Public Health Emergency Declared Over Polio," 19 May 2022, <https://allafrica.com/stories/202205190708.html>

¹²⁸ The Defense Post, "Mozambique Approves Tough Anti-Terror Bill," 19 May 2022, <https://www.thedefensepost.com/2022/05/19/mozambique-anti-terror-bill/>

¹²⁹ 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>

¹³⁰ UNHCR data portal, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/moz>

¹³¹ UNHCR, "Northern Mozambique Situation," January 2022.

International response:

UNHCR expressed concern over the increase in people in need of protection in the country, mostly due to violence combined with extreme weather events. 6,000 people have been recorded as newly displaced in 2022, after the resurgence of conflict in Cabo Delgado and Niassa provinces.¹³²

Nigeria

Violence continued in Nigeria, in May, there has been a slight decrease in reported events, and an over 26% decrease in fatalities throughout the country when compared to the monthly average of the past year. Despite this, in the north-eastern region, violent events have gone up over 10% compared to the monthly average of the previous year. Bandits continue to terrorise the country. On 6 May, at least 48 people were killed in simultaneous attacks on three villages in northwest Nigeria's Zamfara state, local officials say more than 700,000 people have been displaced.¹³³ On 10 May, at least seven soldiers were killed in the state of Taraba when they were ambushed while on patrol. In April, Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) claimed responsibility for two bombings.¹³⁴ The group also killed at least 30¹³⁵ after their commanders Bako Gorgore and Abu Ibrahim were killed in a military operation in Borno state mid-May.¹³⁶ There was a more than 150% increase in violent incidents during the third week of May in the states of Anambra, Kogi and Niger when compared to the last month, flagged by the ACLED Subnational Threat & Surge Trackers.¹³⁷ In Kala Balge, Borno state, at least 45 farmers were killed during an attack by suspected ISWAP militants.¹³⁸



Gubernatorial elections are set to take place in Ekiti and Osun states this month (June 2022) and national presidential elections in February 2023. Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari requested all members of his cabinet who plan on running in the 2023 elections to resign their current appointments, except for current Vice President Yemi Osinbajo.¹³⁹ At least ten have

¹³² UNHCR, "UNHCR raises alarm over Mozambique's "invisible" crisis as climate shocks worsen displacement," 10 May 2022, <https://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2022/5/627a6c404/unhcr-raises-alarm-mozambiques-invisible-crisis-climate-shocks-worsen-displacement.html>

¹³³ AL Jazeera, "Bandits' kill 48 in northwest Nigeria attacks: Local officials," 8 May 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/8/gunmen-kill-48-in-northwest-nigeria-attacks-local-official>

¹³⁴ Al Jazeera, "Attackers kill seven soldiers in ambush in northern Nigeria," 11 May 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/11/gunmen-kill-seven-nigerian-soldiers-in-ambush-on-army-patrol-sources>

¹³⁵ The Guardian Nigeria, "Jihadists kill 30 in northeast Nigeria," 24 May 2022, <https://guardian.ng/news/jihadists-kill-30-in-northeast-nigeria/>

¹³⁶ Daily Post, "ISWAP commanders, Bako Gorgore, Abu Ibrahim killed in airstrike in Borno," 14 May 2022, <https://dailypost.ng/2022/05/14/iswap-commanders-bako-gorgore-abu-ibrahim-killed-in-airstrike-in-borno/>

¹³⁷ ACLED Subnational Threat & Surge Trackers, (accessed 30 May 2022) <https://acleddata.com/early-warning-research-hub/subnational-threat-surge-tracker/>

¹³⁸ Humangle, "ISWAP Terrorists Kill 45 Farmers In Fresh Attack On Northeast Nigeria Village," 24 May 2022, <https://humanglemedia.com/boko-haram-terrorists-kill-45-farmers-in-fresh-attack-on-northeast-nigeria-village/>

¹³⁹ Al Jazeera, "Nigeria's Buhari asks ministers with political ambition to resign," 11 May 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/11/nigerias-buhari-asks-ministers-with-political-ambition-to-resign>

resigned so far.¹⁴⁰ On 23 May, ISWAP fighters opened fire on a convoy transporting a presidential aspirant from the ruling All Progressives Congress when travelling from Abuja to Maiduguri. Three policemen were killed.¹⁴¹ On that same day, an Anambra state legislator, Okechukwu Okoye, was found dead after having gone missing on 15 May.¹⁴² In Bayelsa, Gombe, and Oyo clashes erupted among People's Democratic Party (PDP) opposition party members.¹⁴³ On 29 May, the opposition People's Democratic Party chose Atiku Abubakar, former vice president, as its candidate for the 2023 presidential elections.¹⁴⁴

Violence over charges of blasphemy were also highlighted during the last month. Deborah Samuel, a teenage student was brutally murdered in Sokoto state,¹⁴⁵ by individuals who accused her of blasphemy allegedly in connection with social media posts about the prophet Mohammed. Two suspects were arrested and this led to Muslim youth taking the streets in protest demanding their release.¹⁴⁶ This brought repercussions elsewhere, in Borno State a young woman, Naomi Goni, was threatened after allegedly insulting the Prophet on a social media platform.¹⁴⁷ In Bauchi State, a pastor was injured, some houses and a church were burnt down.¹⁴⁸ Although the Nigerian constitution guarantees the right to freedom of expression, thought, and conscience, national law makes it a criminal offence to insult religion. In the predominantly Muslim northern states, blasphemy may also be criminalised.¹⁴⁹ Concerns and questions regarding the place of religion are being raised,¹⁵⁰ combined with the ongoing bandit and Islamist extremist violence as well as the fragile economic situation, continue to add on to the risk of mass atrocities in the country.

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.

¹⁴⁰ Reuters, "Ten Nigerian cabinet ministers resign to run in next year's election," 13 May 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/ten-nigerian-cabinet-ministers-resign-run-next-years-election-2022-05-13/>

¹⁴¹ Sahara Reporters, "Boko Haram Terrorists Ambush Convoy Of Ruling APC Presidential Aspirant, Kill Three Policemen, Injure Four Others," 23 May 2022, <http://saharareporters.com/2022/05/23/boko-haram-terrorists-ambush-convoy-ruling-apc-presidential-aspirant-kill-three-policemen>

¹⁴² Al Jazeera, "Nigeria: Police discover severed head of missing legislator," 23 May 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/23/nigeria-police-discover-severed-head-of-missing-legislator>

¹⁴³ ACLED, Regional overview Africa: 21-27 May, 1 June 2022, <https://acleddata.com/2022/06/01/regional-overview-africa-21-27-may-2022/>

¹⁴⁴ All Africa, "Nigeria's Atiku Abubakar Is Main Opposition's Presidential Choice," undated, <https://allafrica.com/view/group/main/main/id/00082300.html>

¹⁴⁵ Human Rights Watch, "Student in Nigeria Murdered Over Blasphemy Allegation," 16 May 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/05/16/student-nigeria-murdered-over-blasphemy-allegation>

¹⁴⁶ DW, "Protests erupt in Nigerian city after blasphemy killing," 15 May 2022, <https://www.dw.com/en/protests-erupt-in-nigerian-city-after-blasphemy-killing/a-61802804>

¹⁴⁷ Sahara Reporters, "BREAKING: Jihadists In Borno Plot To Kill Another Young Woman For Alleged Blasphemy, Post Death Threats On Facebook," 14 May 2022, <http://saharareporters.com/2022/05/14/breaking-jihadists-borno-plot-kill-another-young-woman-alleged-blasphemy-post-death>

¹⁴⁸ Punch Nigeria, "Tension over alleged blasphemy in Bauchi, pastor injured, houses burnt," 21 May 2022, <https://punchng.com/breaking-tension-over-alleged-blasphemy-in-bauchi-pastor-injured-houses-burnt/>

¹⁴⁹ Human Rights Watch, "Student in Nigeria Murdered Over Blasphemy Allegation," 16 May 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/05/16/student-nigeria-murdered-over-blasphemy-allegation>

¹⁵⁰ The Africa Report, "Nigeria: Killing of student for blasphemy raises question on place of religion," 24 May 2022, <https://www.theafricareport.com/206665/nigeria-killing-of-student-for-blasphemy-raises-question-on-place-of-religion/>

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 2021.¹⁵¹ In January 2022, under the Terrorism Prevention Act, the government of Nigeria designated bandit groups as “terrorists.”¹⁵²

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).

The Indigenous People of Biafra (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 Eastern Security Network (ESN) in December 2020.¹⁵³

International response:

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres visited the country on 3 and 4 of May, expressing the UN’s solidarity in the country’s fight against terrorism. He called on the international community to support “not only a state of hope, but a state of reality, in which there is no room for terrorism.”¹⁵⁴

Somalia

In May, Somalia saw an increase in violence, particularly in the run up to the 15 May presidential election. According to ACLED, there was about a 25% increase in the number of incidents, compared with the monthly average over the previous year. However, the level of casualties was actually slightly lower than it had been in previous months.¹⁵⁵ Violence was concentrated in the Lower Shabelle region, which surrounds the capital of Mogadishu, which saw a 73% percent increase in incidents over the course of the month as compared to the prior year and a 120% increase when compared to the prior month.^{156, 157}



On 3 May al-Shabaab attacked an African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATIMS) base in Al Baraf in Middle Shabelle. Burundian authorities claimed that 30 soldiers were killed in the

¹⁵¹ 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/>

¹⁵² The Guardian, “FG declares bandits as terrorists,” 5 January 2022, <https://guardian.ng/news/fg-declares-bandits-as-terrorists/>

¹⁵³ Al Jazeera, “Nigeria: Separatist leader to appear in court for treason trial,” 9 November 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/9/nigeria-ipob-leader-nnamdi-kanu-appear-court>

¹⁵⁴ UN News, “Recognize ‘enormous challenges’ facing northern Nigeria to forge new hope, Guterres urges,” 4 May 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/05/1117472>

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

¹⁵⁶ ACLED, Regional overview Africa: 14-20 May 2022, 26 May 2022, <https://acleddata.com/2022/05/26/regional-overview-africa-14-20-may-2022/>

¹⁵⁷ ACLED, Regional overview Africa: 21-27 May, 1 June 2022, <https://acleddata.com/2022/06/01/regional-overview-africa-21-27-may-2022/>

attack, whereas Al Shabaab claimed to have killed 173 soldiers.¹⁵⁸ Al Shabaab also continued attacks on ATIMS and government forces in the second and third weeks of the month.¹⁵⁹ Six mortar rounds, suspected to have been launched by Al Shabaab, landed near the election venue but did not cause casualties.¹⁶⁰

Following a 16 month delay, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud was elected and sworn in as president (he had served as president prior to Farmaajo) in mid-May. The president has long-standing ties with the rulers of Ethiopia's Tigray region,¹⁶¹ but also with Prime Minister Abiy.¹⁶²

The new president will face serious challenges. The electoral discord empowered a resurgent Al Shabaab and a record drought is affecting over six million Somalis and has displaced over 700,000, six districts are facing famine like conditions.¹⁶³ Situations of economic crisis can increase the likelihood of atrocity crimes.

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 was undermined by the electoral crisis.

International response:

The United States authorised the re-deployment of troops to the country, with the purpose to "enable a more effective fight against al-Shabaab by local forces."¹⁶⁴

The African Union, the Somali and Burundian governments as well as the United States Embassy in Mogadishu strongly condemned the al-Shabab attack on ATIMS that took place at the start of May.¹⁶⁵ The UN Security Council also condemned the attacks and expressed its full support for ATIMS and Somali government efforts to counter Al Shabaab.¹⁶⁶

¹⁵⁸ All Africa, "Somalia: At Least 30 Burundian AU Soldiers Killed in Al-Shabab Attack, Official Says," 4 May 2022, <https://allafrica.com/stories/202205060029.html>

¹⁵⁹ ACLED, Regional Overview: Africa," 14-20 May 2022, <https://acleddata.com/2022/05/26/regional-overview-africa-14-20-may-2022/>

¹⁶⁰ Omar Mahmoud, "A Welcome Chance for a Reset in Somalia," 31 May 2022, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somalia/welcome-chance-reset-somalia>

¹⁶¹ Bloomberg, "Power Play Shifts in Horn of Africa as Somalia Elects New Leader," 17 May 2022, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-05-17/power-play-shifts-in-horn-of-africa-as-somalia-elects-new-leader>

¹⁶² Omar Mahmood, "A Welcome Chance for a Reset in Somalia," 31 May 2022, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somalia/welcome-chance-reset-somalia>

¹⁶³ VOA, "Drought Affects Almost Half of Somalia as Famine Looms," 31 May 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/drought-affects-almost-half-of-somalia-as-famine-looms-/6596623.html>

¹⁶⁴ Al Jazeera, "Biden approves deployment of hundreds of US troops to Somalia," 16 May 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/16/biden-approves-deployment-of-hundreds-of-us-troops-to-somalia>

¹⁶⁵ All Africa, "Somalia: At Least 30 Burundian AU Soldiers Killed in Al-Shabab Attack, Official Says," 4 May 2022, <https://allafrica.com/stories/202205060029.html>

¹⁶⁶ UNSC, Security Council Press Statement on Attack against African Union Transition Mission in Somalia, 6 May 2022, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/sc14883.doc.htm>

On 26 May, the UN Security Council met on Somalia and issued resolution 2632 which congratulated Mohamud on his election and also renewed the mandate of the UN assistance mission in Somalia (UNSOM) for another year.¹⁶⁷

South Sudan

There has been a decrease in violence in South Sudan. May showed the lowest number of violent incidents since the start of the year and a sharp decrease in fatalities when compared to April.¹⁶⁸ However, communal violence and cattle raids continued throughout the country. In Eastern Equatoria and Jonglei, clashes between cattle raiders and cattle owners killed many and displaced hundreds, thousands of cattle stolen.¹⁶⁹ Between 7 and 13 May, gunmen attacked Bor Dinka pastoralists in Eastern Equatoria, at least 20 were killed and thousands of cattle stolen. The Bor Dinka retaliated by looting property and killing two police officers. In Warrap state, fighting between local and Bul Nuer militias resulted in over a score of fatalities. Clashes between Twic Dinka and Ngok Dinka clans recurred in the disputed Abyei area.¹⁷⁰ Violence surged in Leer County, Unity State, during the third week of May due to clashes between Haak and Jagei Nuer militias against Dok Nuer militias.¹⁷¹ During the last week of the month, gunmen attacked local authorities in Unity State.¹⁷² In Jonglei a state government official's convoy was attacked, with Ayod County commissioner blaming SPLM-IO.¹⁷³ Suspected Murle cattle raiders killed at least two civilians in Mangalla Payam of Central Equatoria State.¹⁷⁴ Three teenagers were brutally killed by South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF) soldiers in Kiri village, Central Equatoria state, at least five soldiers were arrested.¹⁷⁵ Edmund Yakani, a prominent South Sudanese activist warned events such like these may lead to genocide, and urged the government to make prevention of genocide its top priority.¹⁷⁶ President Kiir responded by ordering an investigation of the conflicts.¹⁷⁷



¹⁶⁷ UNSC Resolution 2632, 26 May 2022, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N22/362/73/PDF/N2236273.pdf?OpenElement>

¹⁶⁸ ACLED data

¹⁶⁹ ACLED, Regional overview Africa: 26 April - 6 May, 12 May 2022, <https://acleddata.com/2022/05/12/regional-overview-africa-23-april-6-may-2022/>

¹⁷⁰ ACLED, Regional overview Africa: 7-13 May 2022, 19 May 2022, <https://acleddata.com/2022/05/19/regional-overview-africa-7-13-may-2022/>

¹⁷¹ ACLED, Regional overview Africa: 14-20 May 2022, 26 May 2022, <https://acleddata.com/2022/05/26/regional-overview-africa-14-20-may-2022/>

¹⁷² ACLED, Regional overview Africa: 21-27 May 2022, 1 June 2022, <https://acleddata.com/2022/06/01/regional-overview-africa-21-27-may-2022/>

¹⁷³ Sudan's Post, "Top government official survives ambush," 28 May 2022, <https://www.sudanspost.com/top-government-official-survives-ambush/>

¹⁷⁴ Sudan's Post, "2 people killed, 3 injured in Terekeka cattle raid," 26 May 2022, <https://www.sudanspost.com/2-people-killed-3-injured-in-terekeka-cattle-raid/>

¹⁷⁵ Sudan's Post, "5 soldiers linked to killing of 3 civilians in Kajo-Keji arrested as calm returns," 29 May 2022, <https://www.sudanspost.com/5-soldiers-linked-to-killing-of-3-civilians-in-kajo-keji-arrest-as-calm-returns/>

¹⁷⁶ Sudan's Post, "South Sudan government told mitigation of genocide should be top priority," 29 May 2022, <https://www.sudanspost.com/south-sudan-government-told-mitigation-of-genocide-should-be-top-priority/>

¹⁷⁷ Sudan's Post, "Kiir tasks Council of States with resolving sub-national violence," 25 May 2022, <https://www.sudanspost.com/kiir-tasks-council-of-states-with-resolving-sub-national-violence/>

The Misseriya and Ngok Dinka signed a peace accord reiterating their commitment to achieving lasting peace in Abyei, on 19 May. Both parties called on UNISFA to fully implement its mandate and protect civilians in the area.¹⁷⁸

Recent information shows that cases of conflict related sexual violence cases have more than doubled compared to last year, despite an overall decrease in violence against civilians. Between January and March 2022, UNMISS recorded 63 cases up from 28 cases during that same period in 2021. Sexual violence constitutes 64% of cases of violence against civilians, Jonglei, Eastern Equatoria, and Warrap states are the most affected.¹⁷⁹

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:

The UNSC renewed the arms embargo against the country after the Panel of Experts recommended its renewal despite the government's request otherwise. The Council also renewed targeted sanctions, travel bans and asset freezes and the mission of the Panel of Experts for another year.¹⁸⁰ In addition, on 12 May 2022, the UN Security Council issued a resolution on Sudan and South Sudan renewing the mandate of the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) for another year and urging an immediate cessation of violence.¹⁸¹

Following the clashes in Adok Port in April, a joint delegation comprising the AU, the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (R-JMEC), the African Diplomatic Corps (ADC), the EU, the Troika and UNMISS conducted a mission to Unity State on 12 May 2022, and called on authorities to take further measures to protect civilians and to address the root causes of the conflict.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁸ UNISFA, UNISFA brokers peace accord between the two communities in Abyei, 20 May 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/unisfa-brokers-peace-accord-between-two-communities-abyei>

¹⁷⁹ UN MISS, Press release amidst a decrease in violence against civilians in South Sudan, a surge in conflict-related sexual violence, 10 May 2022, <https://unmiss.unmissions.org/press-release-amidst-decrease-violence-against-civilians-south-sudan-surge-conflict-related-sexual>

¹⁸⁰ Radio Tamazuj, "UN Security Council renews arms embargo on South Sudan," 26 May 2022, <https://radiotamazuj.org/en/news/article/un-security-council-renews-arms-embargo-on-south-sudan>

¹⁸¹ UNSC Resolution 2630, 12 May 2022, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N22/347/31/PDF/N2234731.pdf?OpenElement>

¹⁸² UNMISS, Joint statement by AU R-JMEC, ADC, EU, Troika and UNMISS on the situation in Unity State, 18 May 2022, <https://unmiss.unmissions.org/joint-statement-au-r-jmec-adc-eu-troika-and-unmiss-situation-unity-state>

Sudan



The situation in Sudan remains volatile. The UN Mission in Sudan, the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) launched, on 12 May, preliminary talks intended to set the ground rules for further negotiation. Some groups, including the Forces for Freedom and Change – Central Council and the Resistance Committees of Khartoum, refused to take part in a dialogue with the military arguing that this would legitimise the coup.¹⁸³ Many have looked at the long history of failure to implement agreements and concluded that negotiations are not useful.

Protests continued and were heavily repressed by security forces. One protester was killed on 21 May,¹⁸⁴ and two more on 28 May.¹⁸⁵ So far, 98 protesters have been killed and 4,300 wounded.¹⁸⁶ The trial against four Sudanese protesters accused of killing a police officer during an anti-military march in January 2022 started on 30 May.¹⁸⁷

On 29 May, Al-Burhan lifted the state of emergency and released about 125 political detainees in order to create the atmosphere for "a fruitful and meaningful dialogue that achieves stability during the transitional period." The measure had been in place since the October 2021 military coup. However, activists point out that many are still incarcerated.¹⁸⁸

Risk of atrocities remains high in Darfur, where violence in the regions has increased exponentially compared to April. ACLED recorded over 200% increase in violent events and an 140% increase in fatalities in the last month over the average for the last year. Violence had started again at the end of April, cost the lives of at least 200 people and displaced up to 115,000. Adam Rojal, spokesperson of Darfur's refugees and IDPs, argued that the government was responsible "massacres were carried out in a very orderly and systematic manner, using weapons and vehicles from the state's warehouses. . . . This is not a tribal war. It is the state which kills, rapes and displaces its citizens and cloaks it as a tribal conflict."¹⁸⁹ This month there have been attacks on IDP camps.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸³ Dabanga Sudan, "Tripartite mechanism: First round of indirect negotiations started in Sudan," 13 May 2022, <https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/tripartite-mechanism-first-round-of-indirect-negotiations-started-in-sudan>

¹⁸⁴ VOA, "One Killed in Renewed Anti-coup Protests in Sudan," 21 May 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/one-killed-in-renewed-anti-coup-protests-in-sudan/6583774.html>

¹⁸⁵ Reuters, "Trial begins for Sudanese protesters accused of killing police officer," 30 May 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/trial-begins-sudanese-protesters-accused-killing-police-officer-2022-05-29/>

¹⁸⁶ ABC, "Sudan's top general lifts state of emergency from coup," 29 May 2022, <https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/envoy-decries-sudan-violence-killed-protests-85049488>

¹⁸⁷ Reuters, "Trial begins for Sudanese protesters accused of killing police officer," 30 May 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/trial-begins-sudanese-protesters-accused-killing-police-officer-2022-05-29/>

¹⁸⁸ Sudan Tribune, "Sudan's military leader lifts state of emergency," 30 May 2022, <https://sudantribune.com/article259525/>

¹⁸⁹ Peoples Dispatch, "Security situation in Darfur remains very dangerous," 30 May 2022, <https://peoplesdispatch.org/2022/05/30/security-situation-in-darfur-remains-very-dangerous/>

¹⁹⁰ Sudan Tribune, "Gunmen kill three IDPs in South Darfur camp," 7 May 2022, <https://sudantribune.com/article258376/>

Dabanga Sudan, "Deadly attack on Otash camp in South Darfur," 12 May 2022, <https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/deadly-attack-on-otash-camp-in-south-darfur>

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.

International response:

On 12 May, the US Senate passed a resolution calling "to condemn the military coup in Sudan and support the Sudanese people," by requesting the US administration to impose sanctions on those responsible for the coup.¹⁹¹ International and Sudanese organisations and human rights defenders signed an open letter urging the U.S. administration to impose targeted sanctions on Burhan and "Hemeti" for their involvement in serious human rights abuses following the 25 October coup.¹⁹²

UNITAMS head Volker Perthes briefed the UNSC on 24 May, saying "Time is short for Sudan to reach a solution to its protracted political crisis." He added that the crisis can only be resolved by the Sudanese," Council members called on the military to make progress on confidence-building measures, including the release of political detainees and lifting the state of emergency.¹⁹³

The government decided not to renew the visa of senior international advisor of the UNITAMS mission, Dame Rosalind Marsden, which specialists fear could lead to repercussions from the international community.¹⁹⁴

The EU¹⁹⁵ and the trilateral mechanism comprised of the AU, IGAD and UN,¹⁹⁶ welcomed the lift of the state of emergency and release of the political detainees.

¹⁹¹ Dabanga, "USA pass resolution calling to sanction Sudan's coup leaders," 13 May 2022, <https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/usa-pass-resolution-calling-to-sanction-sudan-s-coup-leaders>

¹⁹² Dabanga, "Intl. activists call for 'targeted US sanctions on Sudan coup leaders,'" 11 May 2022, <https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/intl-activists-call-for-targeted-us-sanctions-on-sudan-coup-leaders>

¹⁹³ UNSC, SC/14901, Lack of Progress on Political Track Will Lead to Humanitarian Disaster in Sudan, Secretary-General's Special Representative Warns Security Council, 24 May 2022, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/sc14901.doc.htm>

¹⁹⁴ Dabanga, "'Unwise' denial of UNITAMS advisor's Sudan visa risks 'severe international repercussions'," 26 May 2022, <https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/unwise-denial-of-unitams-advisor-s-sudan-visa-risks-severe-international-repercussions>

¹⁹⁵ EU External Action, "Sudan: Statement by the Spokesperson on the lifting of the State of Emergency," 30 May 2022, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/sudan-statement-spokesperson-lifting-state-emergency_en

¹⁹⁶ Twitter, UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission Sudan (@UNITAMS), 30 May 2022, <https://twitter.com/UNITAMS/status/1531236655742570496>