

Africa

Central Africa

➔ **Burundi** **Govt continued diplomatic offensive as part of effort to alleviate country's isolation; clampdown on opposition and civil society persisted.** Authorities 2 April lifted June 2019 ban on independent NGO PARCEM in apparent move to respond to EU's demands for improvements in human rights and media freedom. Govt and EU 9 April held second round of negotiations on normalising relations, including lifting EU sanctions and resuming direct financial support; EU invited Burundian FM Albert Shingiro for European tour, which started 26 April. Amid rapprochement with Rwanda, govt 2 April welcomed Kigali's late March decision to suspend three Burundian radio stations, which had been operating from Kigali since 2015 political crisis in Burundi, said move showed "dialogue [with country] was not in vain". AU Peace and Security Council 27 April met to discuss possible shutdown of Human Rights Observers and Military Experts Mission in Burundi; decision expected early May. Meanwhile, authorities continued to harass opposition and civil society. In Rumonge province, authorities 11 April arrested opposition party Union for National Progress youth leader over accusations of hosting unauthorised gathering and 14 April arrested civilian for allegedly cooperating with rebel group. Authorities 13 April decried as biased U.S. State Dept's annual report on human rights, published late March, which recorded at least 205 extrajudicial killings in Burundi in 2020 and highlighted "widespread impunity for govt and ruling party officials and for their supporters and proxies". Main opposition party National Congress for Freedom (CNL) next day called on govt to release 15 CNL members who have been imprisoned for almost a year on accusations of threatening security around May 2020 general elections. Former Defence Minister Maj. Gen. Cyrille Ndayirukiye 24 April died in Gitega prison, where he was serving life sentence for allegedly playing central role in 2015 coup attempt. Authorities 26 April released first 3,000 of over 5,000 detainees who were granted presidential amnesty in March in bid to alleviate prison overcrowding.

➔ **Cameroon** **Sporadic fighting continued between govt forces and separatist militias in Anglophone regions, while jihadists continued attacks in Far North.** Anglophone separatists staged several improvised explosive devices (IED) attacks in west, notably injuring three elite army unit officials on Kumbo-Ndop axis in North West region (NW) 10 April, and killing unspecified number of soldiers in Ikiliwindi village in South West region (SW) 17 April, Bafut and Kumbo towns (both NW) 24-25 April. Govt forces killed separatist commanders, including General "Blink" in Bambelle village (SW) 11 April and General "Idi Amin Dada" in Guneku village (NW) 16 April; govt forces 19 April arrested General "Cobra" and four other separatists in NW capital Bamenda. Anglophone conflict continued to take high toll on civilians. Notably, separatists 4 April kidnapped 12 civilians in Ikiliwindi village (SW), and govt forces 18 April killed five individuals believed to be civilians in Mile 90 area along Bamenda-Bali road (NW). In francophone West region, Anglophone separatists 29 April reportedly entered Galim village and killed four soldiers. Leaders of Anglophone

separatist group Ambazonia Governing Council and Nigerian separatist group Indigenous People of Biafra 9 April announced alliance. U.S.-based civil society organisations 6 April called on U.S. Sec State Antony Blinken to name special envoy for Anglophone regions. UN Sec-Gen Guterres 12 April said sexual violence has been used “as a cruel tactic of war” in Anglophone regions, citing alleged rape of 24 women during military operation in Feb 2020. Meanwhile, Boko Haram (BH) launched attacks in Far North region. Notably, soldiers 16 April repelled BH attack on army camp in Soueram village, Logone-et-Chari division near Lake Chad, killing at least four. In Mayo-Sava division, BH 3 April killed two civilians in Godjimdele village and 13 April killed three others near Kolofata town. 55 ex-BH members – 11 women, 12 men and 32 children – 8 April joined Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration centre in regional capital Maroua.

➔ **Central African Republic** Govt forces continued to gain ground against rebels, prompting major armed group to announce withdrawal from coalition. Army, with support from Rwanda and Russia, continued military operation against rebel Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC), notably regaining control of Niem town in Nana-Mambéré prefecture 7 April, strategic commercial hub Kaga-Bandoro in Nana-Gribizi prefecture 10 April, and Kabo town in Ouham prefecture 15 April; some towns had been under rebel control for several years. CPC rebels throughout month continued to ambush security forces, notably killing three soldiers near Birao town, Vakaga prefecture, 16 April; Arab Missiria militia reportedly involved in ambush. In ongoing violence against humanitarian workers, CPC 7 April briefly detained NGO World Vision staff in Bocaranga area, Ouham-Pendé prefecture. UN refugee agency 20 April said violence had displaced over 2,000 people into neighbouring Chad over previous week. CPC member Return, Reclamation, Rehabilitation 2 April said its leader Sidiki Abbas had died 25 March from injuries sustained in Nov 2020; govt had previously claimed to have killed him in Dec 2020. Ali Darassa, leader of armed group Union for Peace in Central Africa, 5 April announced withdrawal from CPC, renewed commitment to Feb 2019 peace deal; govt 7 April excluded resuming negotiations with Darassa. Meanwhile, govt 8 April requested National Assembly lift parliamentary immunity of four opposition MPs over alleged links to CPC. Ahead of national dialogue expected first half of May, govt 19 April launched consultation process with opposition in capital Bangui; main opposition coalition COD-2020 25 April said it would boycott consultations and dialogue, called for inclusive process involving armed groups. Head of UN peacekeeping mission (MINUSCA) Mankeur Ndiaye 5 April discussed situation in CAR with Russian Deputy FM Mikhail Bogdanov, after UN experts late March alleged “grave human rights abuses” by Russian paramilitaries, raising questions over MINUSCA’s failure to prevent abuses. Thousands, mostly ruling-party supporters, 15 April protested in Bangui after Ndiaye 9 April said solution to conflict was not military and called for dialogue.

⚔️🇸🇩 **Chad** President Déby killed amid rebel advance toward capital N’Djamena; fighting could escalate in coming weeks. On presidential election day, Libya-based Chadian rebel group Front for Change and Concord in Chad (FACT) 11 April attacked Zouarké border post, Tibesti region (north), in bid to advance toward N’Djamena and depose Déby. Armed forces 15 April launched airstrikes against rebels in Zouarké area, but FACT next day said it had seized garrison town of Gouri in north. Armed forces 17 April clashed with FACT in Mao

area, Kanem region (centre), allegedly killing 300 rebels and detaining 150 more, and later claimed to have halted rebels' advance. Military 20 April said Déby had died same day from wounds sustained during clashes with rebels near Mao town; Déby's death came day after provisional election results projected his re-election with 79% of vote. Military immediately suspended constitution, formed Transitional Military Council (CMT) and named Déby's son, Mahamat Idriss Déby, as CMT president. CMT 21 April published Transitional Charter providing that parliament and govt will remain in place until national transitional council and transitional govt are formed. Most international actors called for return to constitutional order, with AU 22 April urging military to "hand over political power to civilian authorities", but French FM Jean-Yves le Drian same day recognised military council, citing "exceptional security reasons". FACT 25 April said it was ready to observe ceasefire and discuss political settlement; CMT same day rejected talks. Renewed fighting reported in Kanem region 27-28 April, with FACT reportedly entering Nokou town 29 April; military 30 April said it had repelled attack. CMT 26 April appointed presidential runner-up in 11 April election, Albert Pahimi Padacké, as civilian interim PM. Protest in N'Djamena calling for return to civilian rule next day turned violent, leaving at least six killed and over 700 arrested. Meanwhile in Lake Chad region, suspected Boko Haram combatants 27 April attacked military camp in Litri locality; clashes reportedly killed at least ten soldiers, 64 jihadists and five civilians. Intercommunal violence continued to rage, notably in Salamat region where herder-farmer clashes 14-15 April left over 100 killed around Ambarit village.

↓ **DR Congo Amid rising insecurity and deadly violence, President Tshisekedi declared "state of siege" in eastern provinces; new coalition govt formed.** Tshisekedi 30 April declared "state of siege" in North Kivu and Ituri provinces in east, vowed to "swiftly end insecurity" as move could pave way for military operation in coming weeks. Earlier in month, demonstrations against govt and UN mission (MONUSCO) turned into intercommunal clashes in North Kivu. Notably, protesters 11 April killed two ethnic Kumu in provincial capital Goma; clashes between Kumu and Nande communities 12-13 April left at least 15 dead in Goma and Nyiragongo territory. Elsewhere in North Kivu, armed group Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) 23-24 April killed 11 civilians in Beni territory; security forces 30 April used tear gas to disperse protesters who had been camping outside Beni's town hall for several days, demanding MONUSCO's departure. In Ituri, armed group Cooperative for the Development of Congo (CODECO) 6-16 April killed at least 29 people and kidnapped 36 in Djugu territory. In neighbouring Irumu territory, suspected ADF 4 April kidnapped at least 20 in Mungwanga village and 11-13 April killed 23 across several villages in Bayali-Tchabi chiefdom; coalition of CODECO and Patriotic and Integrationist Front of Congo (FPIC) 20 April killed at least ten in Nyara village. Ituri's interior minister 18 April warned about possible return of proxy wars between regional actors in Ituri, blaming "rebels from Uganda" for rise in violence. UN Children's Fund 26 April recorded over 1.6mn displaced and 2.8mn in need of emergency assistance in Ituri, warned about "recent surge in armed and inter-community violence". Following two months of negotiations, PM Sama Lukonde 12 April presented new cabinet of 57 members; cabinet includes political forces who supported Tshisekedi in forming new Sacred Union coalition after end of his coalition with former President Kabila's Common Front for Congo (FCC). 138 MPs – all FCC defectors – 14 April denounced

Tshisekedi's control of all key ministries and underrepresentation of certain provinces, and threatened to block new govt's inauguration; National Assembly 26 April however endorsed new govt.

Horn of Africa

➔ **Djibouti President Guelleh re-elected for fifth term in landslide vote amid opposition boycott.** Electoral authorities 10 April announced incumbent President Guelleh won previous day's presidential election with 98% of vote; main opposition parties boycotted vote, and sole other candidate, Zakaria Ismael Farah, reportedly garnered less than 5,000 votes. Guelleh 15 April discussed Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam with Egyptian President Sisi, said dispute threatens region's security and stability (see Nile Waters). Somalia 22 April accused Djibouti of "sinister campaigns aimed at derailing political process in Somalia" by allegedly trying to influence outcome of same day AU Peace and Security Council meeting on Somalia's political crisis (see Somalia).

➔ **Eritrea Authorities acknowledged troops' presence in Ethiopia's Tigray region amid mounting international pressure for military withdrawal.** As fighting continued between forces of Ethiopia's federal govt and Tigray (see Ethiopia), Ethiopian FM Demeke Mekonnen 3 April said Eritrean troops had "started to evacuate" from Tigray. NGO Amnesty International 14 April reported Eritrean troops 12 April had deliberately opened fire on civilians in Tigray's Adwa town, killing at least three and injuring at least 19. In statement to UN Security Council, UN humanitarian chief Mark Lowcock 15 April said UN had seen no proof of Eritrean withdrawal from Tigray more than two weeks after Addis Ababa made that commitment; U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield same day mentioned "credible reports" that Eritrean troops were "re-uniforming as Ethiopian military". In first acknowledgment by Eritrean official since conflict started, Eritrean Ambassador to UN Sophia Tesfamariam 16 April acknowledged troops' presence in Tigray and pledged to withdraw, however repeated Addis Ababa's narrative that Eritrean troops have only been active in Ethiopia-Eritrea border area. U.S. State Dept 21 April confirmed there was no evidence of Eritrean troops' withdrawal, reiterated calls for immediate military departure. Meanwhile, pro-Tigray forces Tigray Media House 5 April published interview with 16-year-old Eritrean prisoner of war who said Eritrean troops were sent to Tigray in late 2020 to recapture historic border town of Badme, at centre of 20-year Eritrean-Ethiopian conflict, and other territories.

↓ **Ethiopia Intercommunal clashes escalated in several regions, leaving hundreds dead; govt faced mounting international scrutiny over war in Tigray.** In Amhara regional state in north, intercommunal clashes between ethnic Oromo and ethnic Amhara resumed, reportedly leaving up to 200 people dead in Oromia Zone, including Ataye town, 16 April; violence prompted protests across region demanding end to mass killings. In disputed area between Afar and Somali regional states in east, clashes between ethnic Afar on one side and ethnic Somali-Issa paramilitaries and militias on the other 2-6 April killed at least 100 people; after initially trading blame for violence, both regional govts 8 April reportedly reached "agreement to immediately resolve" conflict and allow federal

govt to investigate clashes. In Oromia regional state in centre, security forces early April reportedly killed 119 suspected Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) insurgents in western Oromia area; suspected OLA fighters late April reportedly killed at least 20 ethnic Amhara in Jimma Zone and another 15 in Horo-Guduru Wollega Zone. In Benishangul-Gumuz regional state in north west, govt-appointed Human Rights Commission 21 April said unidentified armed group had by 19 April established “near-full control” over Sedal district in Kamashi Zone; earlier in month, unidentified gunmen 1 April reportedly killed seven civilians in Mandura district. Amid continued fighting between Tigray’s and federal govt’s forces in Tigray regional state in north, authorities 3 April said Eritrean troops had started withdrawing; UN humanitarian chief Mark Lowcock 15 April however said UN had seen no proof of Eritrean withdrawal. NGO Amnesty International 14 April said Eritrean soldiers 12 April had opened fire on civilians in Adwa town, killing at least three. NGO World Peace Foundation 6 April accused govt, Eritrean and Amhara regional forces in Tigray of “committing starvation crimes on large scale”, warning of risk of famine; UN Security Council 22 April expressed “deep concern” over reported rights abuses and sexual violence in Tigray, urged “unfettered humanitarian access” to region. New round of talks with Sudan and Egypt over filling and operation of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on Blue Nile river faltered 6 June, prompting further regional tensions (see Nile Waters).

➔ **Kenya Political jockeying continued ahead of 2022 general elections.** Deputy President William Ruto, locked in power struggle with President Kenyatta, late March-early April reportedly met at least 23 governors in bid to garner support for his 2022 presidential run; mid-April reportedly met some 48 MPs from 11 counties in Mount Kenya area, Rift Valley province and Nairobi, who laid out conditions for supporting him. In rare public comment on his relationship with Kenyatta, Ruto 15 April said he had been subjected to “humiliation” while working as deputy president. Meanwhile, Kenyatta continued to strengthen coalition One Kenya Alliance (OKA) formed late March with four opposition parties, casting doubt on Kenyatta’s support for presidential bid of opposition leader and de facto ally Raila Odinga; OKA members 20 April agreed to take steps to widen coalition. Amid concerns electoral commission may not be ready in time for 2022 election, Kenyatta 14 April declared available four commissioner posts left vacant since 2018; 26 April appointed seven-member panel in charge of selecting commissioners. High Court 8 April suspended for 30 days govt’s late March order to close Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps, host to over 400,000 refugees mostly from South Sudan and Somalia, within four months; govt 29 April announced it would shut down both camps by June 2022; govt and UN refugee agency to form joint team to finalise and implement roadmap toward camps’ closure. Khartoum 22 April accused Kenya of “sinister campaigns aimed at derailing political process in Somalia” by allegedly trying to influence outcome of same day AU Peace and Security Council meeting on Somalia’s political crisis (see Somalia).

➔ **Nile Waters Tensions continued to mount among Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt ahead of Addis Ababa’s planned second unilateral filling of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam in coming months.** In apparent warning to Addis Ababa and preparation for possible escalation of inter-state tensions, Sudan and Egypt 31 March-5 April held second joint military exercise

since Nov 2020. New round of talks among Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan on filling and operation of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on Blue Nile river broke down 6 April. Cairo same day denounced Ethiopia's "lack of political will to negotiate in good faith", while Khartoum vowed to "consider all possible options to protect its security", denouncing Addis Ababa's rejection of its proposal for quadripartite mediation by AU, EU, UN and U.S. to break deadlock in AU-led negotiations. Ethiopia's water minister Seleshi Bekele 7 April said Addis Ababa would proceed with second filling of dam during forthcoming rainy season between June and Sept. Sudan and Egypt 10 April declined Ethiopia's offer to share data about second filling, reiterating need for legally binding agreement on dam's operation. Sudan 12 April and Egypt next day called on UN Security Council to encourage Ethiopia to refrain from filling GERD unilaterally before parties reach agreement. Sudanese PM Abdallah Hamdok 13 April called for closed-door meeting with Egyptian and Ethiopian counterparts in bid to break deadlock; Ethiopia 21 April declined Hamdok's proposal, same day proposed AU-sponsored meeting to end stalemate. Following Hamdok's 5 April meeting with U.S. Sec State Antony Blinken and Egyptian FM Sameh Shoukry's 12 April meeting with Russian FM Sergey Lavrov, Ethiopian FM Demeke Mekonnen 15 April denounced "politicising and internationalising" of dispute. Sudanese Irrigation Minister Yasir Abbas 23 April said Sudan may sue Ethiopia in international courts if it goes ahead with plan to fill GERD unilaterally.

↓ 🇸🇴 **Somalia** **Amid stalled electoral process, extension of president's term triggered deadly clashes in capital Mogadishu, and violence could escalate in May; Al-Shabaab attacks continued.** Following constitutional expiration of President Farmajo's mandate in Feb, new round of national consultative council (NCC) talks on electoral framework between federal govt and member states collapsed 7 April. Parliament's lower house 12 April passed controversial resolution to extend Farmajo's term by two years. Speaker of Parliament's upper house immediately said vote was unconstitutional, called on international community to intervene "before it gets out of hand". Farmajo next day signed measure into law, drawing widespread criticism. Notably, in joint statement, UN Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), AU and others 14 April expressed "deep concern" over term extension and rising tensions, and UN Security Council 23 April urged all parties "to reject violence and resume dialogue". Pro-opposition soldiers 25 April mutinied and entered Mogadishu, clashed with forces loyal to Farmajo, leaving at least two dozen dead; 60,000 to 100,000 people reportedly displaced. UNSOM and international partners 27 April "strongly condemned outbreak of violence", said army's fragmentation along clan lines could distract it from combating Al-Shabaab. After key allies came out against term extension, Farmajo 28 April announced he would ask Parliament to reverse it and pledged to renew dialogue with member states over elections; Puntland state immediately said it would not attend new talks unless invited by international community. Meanwhile, Al-Shabaab attacks continued mainly in Lower Shabelle, Middle Shabelle, Lower Juba and Bay regions, and Mogadishu. Notably, Al-Shabaab 3 April claimed it had killed 67 govt troops in same day twin attacks on Awdhigle and Bariire army bases, Lower Shabelle; army said attacks left 76 militants and nine soldiers dead. In Middle Shabelle, army 13 April said it had killed 25 militants in Gamboole village. In Mogadishu, suspected Al-Shabaab suicide bombings killed five civilians 3 April and at least seven 28 April; mortar attack targeting

presidential palace 21 April reportedly killed another three. Minibus 14 April triggered suspected Al-Shabaab landmine on Mogadishu-Balcad axis, leaving at least 14 civilians dead.

➔ **Somaliland Intercommunal clashes left over a dozen dead in Sool region in east, and authorities arrested opposition candidates ahead of parliamentary and local elections scheduled for May.** In Sool region, clan fighting in Dhabar-Dalol area 16-18 April left up to 17 dead; violence follows late March deadly clan fighting over disputed territory near Shidan town, Sanaag region along border with Somalia's Puntland state. Ahead of 31 May parliamentary and local elections, authorities 24 April arrested several opposition candidates from Justice and Welfare Party and Waddani party on undisclosed charges. Electoral commission 26 April said candidates enjoy immunity during election period and cannot be arrested. Govt 15 April expressed "concerns" over political crisis in Somalia, labelled President Farmajo's leadership as "dictatorship"; same day urged UN to engage more directly with Somaliland as distinct national entity. President Bihi 28 April blamed Somalia's govt for Mogadishu clashes (see Somalia).

➔ **South Sudan President Kiir took steps to consolidate his power and sideline potential rivals, and intercommunal violence persisted in centre.** Amid calls for Kiir to step down, latter 10 and 16 April reshuffled key political and security positions, notably replacing Presidential Affairs Minister Nhial Deng Nhial, army chief Gen Johnson Juma Okot, external intelligence chief Gen Thomas Duoth and Deputy Defence Minister Gen Malek Reuben Riak with perceived hardliners and loyalists. Presidential Press Secretary Ateny Wek Ateny 14 April announced general elections initially scheduled for 2022 would be postponed to June 2023 due to delays in implementation of transitional agenda, drawing immediate criticism from VP Riek Machar's Sudan People's Liberation Army-In Opposition. Meanwhile, clashes erupted between Dinka sub-ethnic groups in Lakes state (centre), leaving at least 14 dead in Rumbek North county 7-9 April; 23 killed in Rumbek East county 17-18 April; eight dead in Cueibet county 21 April; and at least 13 more in Yirol West county next day. In Unity state (also centre), suspected armed youths from neighbouring Warrap state 4 April killed at least 18 people in cattle raid in Mayom county. UN Panel of Experts 26 April warned of risk of renewed war amid widening political, military and ethnic divisions. Following late March-early April spate of deadly attacks against commercial truck drivers on South Sudan's main trade routes with Kenya and Uganda, truckers from two neighbouring countries 3 April went on strike over insecurity, temporarily halting imports and triggering brief trade crisis. Uganda drivers 10 April resumed work after govt deployed military forces along roads to provide additional security. Holdout rebel group National Salvation Front (NAS), which govt accused of carrying out ambushes on trucks, 1 April denied responsibility, blaming govt-affiliated forces. Unidentified assailants 20 April reportedly assaulted Gen Abraham Wana Yoane, military chief of holdout splinter rebel group South Sudan National Movement for Change/Army (SSNMC/A), allied to NAS leader Thomas Cirillo, in Ugandan capital Kampala; Yoane 22 April died from his injuries and SSNMC/A same day claimed govt was responsible.

↓ **Sudan Intercommunal violence flared up in West Darfur, leaving over 100 dead and tens of thousands displaced; tensions persisted with**

Ethiopia. Arab and Masalit tribes 3-8 April clashed in and around West Darfur state capital el-Geneina, leaving at least 125 dead and reportedly displacing tens of thousands; fighting reportedly drawing in militia fighters from both sides arriving from other parts of Darfur and neighbouring Chad. High-level delegation led by Sovereign Council head Abdel Fattah al-Burhan 12 April arrived in el-Geneina for two-day visit in attempt to mediate between two sides; Masalit tribe representatives 15 April rejected mediation outcome, accused members of paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) of supporting recurrent attacks on Masalit tribespeople by Chadian gunmen. West Darfur governor 20 April declared el-Geneina disaster zone, requested humanitarian support from govt. In South Kordofan state, intercommunal clashes late April reportedly left “large number” dead in el-Hamid district. Meanwhile, tensions persisted with Ethiopia over disputed Al-Fashqa border zone. Authorities 3 April temporarily closed Gallabat-Metema border crossing after Ethiopian militia 1 April reportedly attacked Sudanese customs officers, and army 9 April said it had taken control of 95% of Al-Fashqa. Authorities 12 April reportedly handed over to Addis Ababa 61 Ethiopian troops taken prisoner in disputed area since conflict started in Dec 2020; Addis Ababa 21 April denied released prisoners were soldiers. After latest round of talks on Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on Blue Nile river faltered 6 April, govt 23 April said it may sue Ethiopia before international courts if Addis Ababa fills GERD unilaterally in coming months (see Nile Waters). In apparent warning to Addis Ababa and preparation for possible escalation, Sudan 31 March-5 April had held second joint military exercise with Egypt since Nov 2020. UN Security Council 26 April discussed Sudan’s request to replace Ethiopian peacekeepers deployed as part of UN peacekeeping mission in disputed Abyei area at border with South Sudan; Khartoum cited security concerns in light of growing bilateral tensions. Authorities 19 April officially repealed Israel boycott law, paving way for normalisation of relations, which Sudan agreed to in Jan as part of U.S.-brokered deal.

↑ **Tanzania Newly-inaugurated President Suluhu Hassan distanced herself from predecessor Magufuli’s policies, signalling possible willingness to open up political space going forward.** In stark departure from late President Magufuli, Hassan 6 April said it was “not proper to ignore” COVID-19 and vowed to establish task force to advise govt on measures to curb pandemic. After Hassan 6 April said media banned under Magufuli should be allowed to operate, govt next day said only online television channels would benefit from measure. Hassan took steps to improve relationship and trade with regional partners, notably hosting Kenyan delegation in largest city Dar es Salaam 10 April and committing to strengthening relationship with neighbouring country. In first visit abroad since taking office, Hassan next day travelled to Uganda, signed agreements with President Museveni paving way for construction of pipeline between two countries. Meanwhile, chairperson of main opposition Chadema party Freeman Mbowe 11 April called on Hassan and govt to revise constitution to limit presidential terms and powers, saying current constitution gives “someone the chance to be dictator or king”. Chadema’s vice chairperson and 2020 presidential candidate Tundu Lissu – who fled country after 2020 general elections – 24 April listed six conditions for his return, including assurances from govt on his safety and pardoning of political prisoners.

➔ **Uganda Govt faced mounting international pressure to end crackdown on dissent and improve democratic credentials.** UN human rights expert panel 13 April urged govt to “immediately stop the brutal crackdown on its political opponents”, called for investigation into “allegations of extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrest and detention, enforced disappearance, torture and ill treatment” in lead-up to and after general elections held in Jan. FM Sam Kutesa same day denied security forces’ involvement in abductions, said authorities would launch investigations and prosecute anyone suspected of wrongdoings. Meanwhile, U.S. Sec State Antony Blinken 16 April announced visa restrictions on Ugandans “believed to be responsible for, or complicit in, undermining the democratic process” during recent electoral process. Govt immediately decried move as “unfortunate”, while opposition leader Bobi Wine 19 April welcomed sanctions and called on other countries to follow suit. In north, ethnic Karimojong cattle raiders 2 April attacked Nalemupal village, Moroto district, killing seven-year-old and injuring two other persons.

Southern Africa

➔ **Mozambique Govt forces claimed they had regained Cabo Delgado’s Palma town from Islamist insurgents.** In far north Cabo Delgado province, govt forces supported by South African private military company early April clashed with insurgents in and around Palma district capital, under insurgent control since late March. Military 4 April said town was now “safe” after armed forces cleared last neighbourhood. Authorities mid-April said 41 insurgents and dozens of civilians, including up to 12 foreigners, killed since attack started 24 March, amid widespread destruction and looting of nearly \$1mn from Palma banks, while International Organization for Migration late April said violence in Palma had displaced over 30,000 people. Renewed clashes in and around Palma town 20-23 April left at least nine civilians dead. Also in Palma district, insurgents 2 April launched attack outside site of French oil and gas company Total liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant on Afungi peninsula, clashed with govt forces; attack came amid Total’s full staff withdrawal from Afungi; Total 26 April said it was declaring “force majeure” allowing it to suspend LNG project without fulfilling contractual obligations. In Macomia district near border with Muidumbe district, insurgents 8 April looted Novo Cabo Delgado village, clashed with local militia; three insurgents and one militia member killed. Southern Africa regional bloc SADC extraordinary double troika summit of heads of state and govt 8 April agreed to send technical mission to Cabo Delgado to draw up plan for security support package; mission deployed 15-21 April reportedly recommended to send 3,000-strong regional force to far north; extraordinary troika summit of SADC Organ, due to take place on 29 April to discuss proposal, postponed sine die. Meanwhile, leader of Renamo Military Junta (JMR), armed dissident faction of opposition Renamo party, 8 April threatened to make governance of six northern and central provinces “impossible” if govt continued to ignore JMR’s demands for reintegration of fighters. General Commander of police force Bernadino Rafael 14 April ordered police to “relentlessly and professionally” pursue JMR members who did not join demobilisation process.

➔ **Zimbabwe Authorities continued to clamp down on opposition and civil society and parliament voted on controversial constitutional amendments consolidating President Mnangagwa's hold on power.**

Magistrate Court in capital Harare 6 April sentenced Makomborero Haruzivishe, member of Nelson Chamisa-led faction (MDC-A) of main opposition party Movement for Democratic Change, to 14 months in prison for allegedly “inciting violence” and “resisting arrest” during anti-govt protest in Feb 2020; police same day reportedly disrupted MDC-A press conference and lashed out at people gathered outside court, leaving one journalist injured and five people arrested. Harare Magistrate Court 13 April denied MDC-A MP Joana Mamombe and MDC-A youth leader Cecilia Chimhiri bail for third time since they were detained in early March on charges of violating COVID-19 regulations; trial set for 5 May. Authorities 26 April arrested MDC-A Youth Assembly Chairperson Obey Sithole on allegations of “criminal nuisance” for allegedly participating in demonstration earlier in month. High Court 28 April quashed charges of “communicating false information prejudicial to the state” levelled against investigative journalist Hopewell Chin’ono, saying law used to arrest him in Jan no longer existed. Meanwhile, High Court 14 April nullified March expulsion of six MDC-A MPs from Parliament, ruling that competing MDC faction MP who initiated procedure did not have authority to do so. Mnangagwa throughout month pushed through Parliament raft of constitutional amendments paving way for him to handpick his vice presidents and senior judges including chief justice, deputy chief justice and judge president of the High Court; move comes as position of second VP currently left vacant following resignation of VP Kembo Mohadi last month. Chamisa 21 April denounced “dictatorial amendment to the constitution”. U.S. Sec State Antony Blinken 15 April urged Mnangagwa to implement reforms to advance constitutional rights and freedoms, and to “embrace inclusive national dialogue” to resolve country’s socio-economic and political crises.

Sahel

➔ **Burkina Faso Jihadist violence persisted in several regions, with clashes between competing jihadist groups reported in north and spike in attacks against security forces in north and east.** In Sahel region (north), al-Qaeda-affiliated Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM) and JNIM-affiliated Katiba Macina 3-5 April clashed with Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) militants in Déou village, Oudalan province, leaving at least four ISGS killed; incidents followed similar confrontations which significantly weakened ISGS’s positions in Sahel in recent months. Also in Oudalan province, suspected ISGS combatants 8 April ambushed two vehicles on Markoye-Tokabango road, killing two civilians; raid likely motivated by group’s need for supplies. In Seno province, unidentified gunmen 26 April killed at least 18 civilians in several villages of Seytenga department, and ISGS militants 14 April killed at least ten volunteers fighting alongside security forces (VDPs) in Bouloye Siguidi village, Gorgadji department. VDPs also targeted in Centre-North region. Notably, suspected ISGS militants 1 April killed six VDPs in Dou village, Sanmatenga province, and suspected JNIM militants 6 April killed another in Koulwoko village, Namentenga province. Violence resumed in North region in late March-early April, including 7 April abduction of two miners by suspected Katiba Macina militants in

Boussourdou area, Yatenga province. In East region, violence increased in Gourma province. After series of JNIM attacks on VPDs and civilians in Tanwalbougou area late March, suspected JNIM militants 5 April killed three gendarmes and four VDPs in ambush in Lopiengou village. In neighbouring Tapoa province, JNIM 27 April claimed previous day ambush of anti-poaching patrol in Arly National Park, which left three foreigners dead. Meanwhile, Ouagadougou military court 13 April indicted former President Compaoré, who has been living in exile in Côte d'Ivoire since 2014, for complicity in 1987 assassination of former President Sankara; national reconciliation minister, Zéphirin Diabré, had in March called for justice in Sankara case as step toward national reconciliation.

➡ **Mali** **Jihadist violence continued unabated in centre and north, and interim authorities announced electoral calendar.** In Mopti region (centre), suspected al-Qaeda-linked Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM) militants 2 and 6 April raided military positions in Diafarabé and Konna towns, leaving at least four soldiers dead and 21 injured; armed forces reportedly killed 22 militants. JNIM-affiliated Katiba Macina and Bambara communal “Donso” militiamen clashed throughout month in Mopti’s Djenné district, leaving dozens dead on both sides. In Ségou region (also centre), Katiba Macina and Donso militia 16 April announced permanent ceasefire in Niono district; deal builds on March temporary ceasefire that ended five-month jihadist siege on Farabougou village and has significantly reduced tensions in Niono. Also in Niono, Malian and French armed forces 26 April launched airstrikes in Alatona area, reportedly killing 26 suspected jihadists. In Kidal region (north), JNIM 2 April launched sophisticated attack on UN mission (MINUSMA) base in Aguelhok town, Tessalit district, killing four peacekeepers and wounding 16; over 40 assailants also killed; suspected jihadists 25 April launched rocket attack on military base in Tessalit town, wounding three MINUSMA peacekeepers. Meanwhile, Chadian troops deployed since March as part of G5 Sahel force started to engage insurgents in Gao region (also north), killing at least 20 Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) militants in Fitili and Tin Ajer areas (both Ansongo district) 3-4 April. NGO Human Rights Watch 20 April said Malian soldiers had killed 34 civilians and disappeared at least 16 people during counter-insurgency operations in Mopti region between Oct and March. Unidentified gunmen 13 April shot dead Sidi Brahim Ould Sidati, leader of ex-rebel Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA) – signatory to 2015 Algiers peace agreement – in capital Bamako. Interim govt 15 April disclosed electoral agenda in line with transition timeline, scheduling constitutional referendum for Oct, and presidential and parliamentary elections for Feb 2022.

➡ **Niger** **Jihadists continued to target civilians in south west, fuelling intercommunal tensions, and stepped up attacks on security forces in south east; President Bazoum took office and formed cabinet.** In Tillabery region (south west), Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) 4 April set several schools on fire in Torodi commune and 17 April killed 19 ethnic Zarma civilians in Gaigorou village near Ayorou town. In Diffa region (south east), Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) 1 April claimed same day IED attack on army vehicle near Mainé-Soroa town. Suspected ISWAP combatants 3 April attacked army camp near Ngagam displacement site killing four soldiers, and 15 April stormed Mainé-Soroa gendarmerie station, killing two. ISWAP attacks on Nigerian Damasak town at border with Niger 14-16 April displaced up to 65,000 people,

including hundreds across border into Niger; jihadist threat could intensify in Diffa in coming months as ISWAP's activity in Nigeria's Borno state spreads toward Komadougou Yobé River, which marks border with Niger (see Nigeria). National Human Rights Commission 2 April called for independent inquiry into allegations that Chadian soldiers recently deployed as part of G5 Sahel force sexually abused two women and one child in Tera department, Tillabery region; govt next day said it had arrested suspected soldiers. President Bazoum took office 2 April, next day appointed former President Issoufou's chief of staff, Ouhoumoudou Mahamadou, as PM; Mahamadou's considerable influence within ruling Nigerien Party for Democracy and Socialism could help Bazoum broaden his support base within party. Mahamadou 7 April formed govt of 33 ministers including five women, with two opposition parties that supported Bazoum's candidacy securing nine ministries; most strategic portfolios handed to Issoufou-era heavyweights. Meanwhile, lack of information on late-March heavy gunfire near presidential palace in capital Niamey sparked rumours of fake news. Notably, supporters of runner-up in presidential election Mahamane Ousmane, who still refuses to acknowledge Bazoum's victory, 1 April accused govt of having fabricated coup attempt to divert attention from opposition demonstrations.

West Africa

↓ **Benin** **Protests against President Talon's re-election bid turned deadly.** Ahead of 11 April presidential election, opposition supporters 5-11 April took to streets in country's centre, set up roadblocks on main axes in alleged attempt to prevent election material from reaching polling stations; protesters denounced Talon's re-election bid despite earlier pledge to serve only one term, and accused him of sidelining opponents after most opposition candidates were barred from running. Amid reports of vandalism and looting, security forces 8 April opened fire on protesters, reportedly killing two in Savè town and one in Bantè town. Main coalition of opposition parties 10 April called on their supporters to boycott poll. Vote 11 April reportedly saw low turnout at around 25%, and electoral commission 13 April announced Talon's re-election with over 86% of votes. Protests immediately broke out, with clashes between security forces and protesters reportedly leaving one dead in capital Cotonou and one in Kandi town (north) 14 April. U.S. embassy same day urged govt to "respect fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression and peaceful assembly", citing "allegations of politically motivated arrests"; also called on govt "to consult with all stakeholders [...] to ensure that future elections are competitive and inclusive". Authorities 15 April detained constitutional expert Joël Aïvo, who had been barred from running in presidential election, near Cotonou for allegedly instigating election-related violence. NGO ODHP late April said authorities had arrested over 100 people since protests started; U.S. State Dept 23 April expressed "concern" over "numerous arrests of opposition political leaders".

➔ **Côte d'Ivoire** **President Ouattara formed new govt without opposition and gave green light for former President Gbagbo's return.** PM Patrick Achi 6 April formed new cabinet comprising 41 members and no opposition representative; members of Ouattara's inner circle appointed to strategic portfolios, including his brother Téné Birahima Ouattara as defence

minister. MPs 14 April elected executive secretary of ruling party Rally of Houphouëtists for Democracy and Peace, Adama Bictogo, as National Assembly VP; Bictogo to lead Assembly until Speaker Amadou Soumahoro returns from sick leave. After International Criminal Court late March confirmed acquittal of former President Gbagbo and former Youth Minister Charles Blé Goudé on charges of crimes against humanity, govt and Gbagbo's party reportedly started negotiating conditions of their return. President Ouattara 7 April said both of them were "free to return home whenever they wish", remained silent on possible amnesty for Gbagbo and Blé Goudé, who remain under prison sentences in Côte d'Ivoire. Govt spokesperson Amadou Coulibaly same day said govt had no intention of jailing Gbagbo upon his return. Six supporters of Gbagbo, including former party officials, 30 April returned to Côte d'Ivoire after ten years in exile in Ghana; return reportedly follows agreement between UN refugee agency and govt. In further appeasement measure, Abidjan prosecutor Richard Adou same day said judge 28-29 April had ordered release of 100 individuals incarcerated for their alleged role in violence around 2020 presidential election. Meanwhile, court in Abidjan 15 April sentenced former warlord Amadé Ouérémi to life imprisonment for having allegedly supervised massacre of hundreds of people in Duékoué city (west) during 2011 post-electoral violence; during trial, Ouérémi accused two current senior army officers of responsibility for killings.

➔ **Guinea Govt continued to face international scrutiny over human rights record and deadly clashes erupted between gold miners and security forces.** Human rights concerns over treatment of opponents continued to emerge. In its annual report, NGO Amnesty International 7 April denounced "human rights violations" in Guinea during previous year, including unlawful killings and arbitrary arrests of opponents, in context of 2020 constitutional referendum and presidential election. AU body African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights mid-April said country's "legislations restricting fundamental freedoms [...] are used against political opponents and human rights defenders", denounced systematic crackdown on protests. In trial of members of civil society platform National Front for the Defence of the Constitution for alleged involvement in March 2020 deadly electoral violence in N'Zérékoré town (south east), court 9 April sentenced two defendants to ten years in prison, notably on charges of "complicity in murder" and "criminal conspiracy"; all other defendants sentenced to one-year imprisonment on charges of "incitation and participation in illegal protests". Gold miners and security forces 17 April clashed in Kouroussa town (east), reportedly leaving two dead. Ebola outbreak sparked tensions in east. In sign of growing distrust toward authorities, elderly women early April blocked entrance of medical personnel into Gbakalaye village after cases were detected in area, increasing risk of contaminations.

↓ **Nigeria Country's multiple violent conflicts further escalated, notably in Borno and Zamfara states, leaving hundreds killed and tens of thousands displaced.** In North East, jihadists stepped up attacks as Ramadan started 12 April. Notably, Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP) 10-14 April launched three attacks on Damasak town, Borno state, killing at least 20 civilians and displacing about 65,000. Boko Haram combatants from Abubakar Shekau-led faction (JAS) 9 April killed at least 11 civilians in Hong area, Adamawa

state, with 5,000 more displaced. ISWAP 23-28 April seized strategic Geidam town, Yobe state, 26 April overran army camp in Mainok town, Borno state, killing about 33 soldiers. Herder-farmer and intercommunal violence rose in several states. Notably, gunmen killed at least 17 farmers in Guma area, Benue state, 23-24 April; 14 farmers in Doma and Keana areas, Nasarawa state, 24-27 April; 19 herders in Awkuzu town, Anambra state, 26 April. Violence involving Fulani traders and vigilantes, followed by armed attacks on villages 19-22 April left at least 83 killed in Maru, Bakura and Maradun areas of Zamfara state. Local militia 8 April killed 11 soldiers amid intercommunal violence in Konshisha area, Benue state. In North West and North Centre, kidnappings for ransom and other violence ran high. In Niger state, gunmen 31 March-1 April killed at least 14, including six soldiers, in Shiroro area, 21 April attacked military camp in Munya area, and 24 April kidnapped 35 in Shiroro and Munya areas. In Kaduna state, gunmen 20-22 April abducted 100 in Chikun and Kajuru areas, later killing at least five of them. In South East and South South, gunmen stepped up attacks on security personnel and facilities, but also ethnic Hausa and Fulani northerners, killing 13 northerners in Enugu and Imo states 29 March-3 April, and freeing over 1,800 inmates at Owerri prison in Imo state 5 April. Authorities blamed Eastern Security Network (ESN), armed wing of outlawed separatist group Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), and security forces 24 April raided ESN headquarters in Awomama town, Imo state, killing 11 including senior commanders. IPOB immediately promised “hell” to those involved.