

# Africa

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## Central Africa

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➔ **Burundi President Ndayishimiye continued to take steps to consolidate his rule and turned hostile toward neighbouring Rwanda.** In session boycotted by main opposition party National Congress for Freedom (CNL), National Assembly 7 Aug elected new bureau: ruling party CNDD-FDD hardliner Daniel Gélase Ndadirakore appointed as president. Crackdown on opposition and civil society continued. CNDD-FDD youth wing Imbonerakure 11 Aug arrested two CNL members in Mabayi commune, Cibitoke province, for allegedly vandalising CNDD-FDD property, and next day detained CNL member in Kanyosha commune, Bujumbura Rural province, on grounds of “insult to the head of state”. Suspected Imbonerakure 15 Aug threw grenade at house in Bukemba commune, Rutana province, killing four; CNL representatives said attack was targeted at party member. Police 25 Aug detained two CNL members in Kanyosha commune for allegedly belonging to armed group. Kayanza High Court 9 Aug sentenced three young individuals to 30 years in prison on charges of “attack and conspiracy against the head of state” after they allegedly threw rocks at president’s convoy in Kayanza province 5 Aug; civil society immediately denounced “politically motivated” decision in run-up to 24 Aug communal elections. Suspected members of Burundian rebel group Red-Tabara crossing from neighbouring DR Congo 23 Aug reportedly killed 11 civilians in Bugarama commune, Rumonge province; security forces killed five assailants. After Rwandan President Kagame in recent months stated willingness to improve relations with Burundi, Ndayishimiye 6 Aug said Burundi does not want relations with “hypocrite state” holding Burundian refugees hostage; statement follows late-July claim by five Burundian refugees that Rwanda is preventing their repatriation. Rwandan govt 12 Aug said it is ready to facilitate refugee returns but Burundi unwilling to mend ties. First group of 500 refugees returned to Burundi 27 Aug. Military intelligence chiefs from Rwanda and Burundi 26 Aug met at Nemba border post in Rwanda, agreed to cooperate on border security; first high-level meeting between neighbours since 2015.

➔ **Cameroon Violence continued unabated in Anglophone South West and North West regions, while jihadists inflicted heavy toll on civilians in Far North.** Amid persistent conflict between separatists and military in North West, unidentified assailants 7 Aug killed local aid worker in Batibo town. Separatists same day beheaded woman they accused of collaborating with military in regional capital Bamenda and 10 Aug killed member of vigilante group in Bamunka village. Security forces 13 Aug killed suspected separatist and unidentified individual in Kumbo area. In South West, suspected Anglophone separatists 11 Aug beheaded woman they accused of collaborating with military in Muyuka locality; amid wide circulation of beheading video on social media, NGO Human Rights Watch 14 Aug called on UN Security Council to impose targeted sanctions on separatists. In following days, soldiers reportedly retaliated by killing about seven individuals and arresting about 200 in Muyuka area. Unidentified gunmen 27 Aug reportedly abducted 15 in Ekok town. Authorities mid-Aug acknowledged about 130 former separatist combatants recently escaped from Disarmament, Demobilisation

and Rehabilitation centres in Bamenda and South West capital Buea due to poor living conditions and unmet promises. Anglophone detainee in pre-trial detention since 2017 died 5 Aug in capital Yaoundé, sparking outcry from human rights activists and separatist leaders, with NGO Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa same day calling on govt “not to subject inmates to any form of inhumane and degrading treatment”. In Far North, jihadist attacks inflicted heavy toll on civilians. Suspected Boko Haram (BH) combatants night of 1-2 Aug attacked Nguetchéwé IDP camp, Mayo-Tsanaga division, killing at least 17 and forcing 1,500 to flee. UN High Commissioner for Refugees 4 Aug warned of “significant increase in violent incidents” in Far North. BH attacks continued 5-23 Aug, reportedly killing at least nine civilians. Army 9-10 Aug repelled BH attacks on three IDP camps in Mayo-Sava division, killing one militant. After security forces 11 Aug left their position in Kordo village, also Mayo-Sava, following opening of new military base in nearby Grea village 6 Aug, up to 6,000 civilians fearing rise in insecurity fled Kordo in following days.

➔ **Central African Republic Armed groups maintained attacks in several areas in attempt to disrupt preparations for general elections scheduled for Dec.** Armed group Union for Peace in Central Africa (UPC) leader Ali Darassa 1 Aug disengaged from agreement reached with govt in July, in which he committed to facilitate electoral preparations in areas under his control and initiate disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation and reintegration program, and renounce alliance reached in June with other Fulani-dominated armed group Restitution, Reclamation and Rehabilitation (3R). In following days, UPC launched attacks against electoral officials. In Ouaka prefecture in centre, UPC 12 Aug assaulted election registration officers in Ippy town. In Haut-Mbomou prefecture in south east, UPC 16 Aug abducted two election registration officers and seven members of medical team in Mboki town; govt 18 Aug said all hostages had been released; UPC mid-Aug reportedly ambushed and killed trader on Obo-Bambouti axis. 3R also continued to target civilians in charge of electoral preparations. In Ouham-Pendé prefecture in north west, suspected 3R elements 2 Aug ambushed electoral registration officials on Bozoum-Bouar axis; 3R leader Sidiki Abbas 16 Aug ordered cessation of electoral enrolment and departure of electoral officers from Bouar city and Kouï area; UN mission (MINUSCA) and armed forces next day reportedly ousted 3R from Kouï town. UN Security Council 5 Aug imposed sanctions, including travel ban and asset freeze on Abbas, citing involvement in killing civilians and arms trafficking. In Haute-Kotto prefecture in east, armed group Popular Front for the Central African Renaissance 24-28 Aug reportedly expelled electoral officers from Nzacko and Yalinga towns. Meanwhile, clashes between anti-balaka Ayoloma group and armed forces 2 Aug left six anti-balaka dead in Grimari city, Ouaka prefecture. Armed group Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) carried out wave of kidnappings in Haut-Mbomou prefecture, reportedly killing two hostages and kidnapping seven locals in Birho village 1-2 Aug, and several others in following days; LRA reportedly freed all hostages 10 Aug after 8 Aug meeting with MINUSCA.

➔ **Chad Jihadist threat in Lake Chad region and violence in neighbouring Sudan fuelled population displacement.** International Organization for Migration reported about 20,000 people 8-20 Aug fled their villages in Lake Chad region in west amid fears of renewed Boko Haram (BH) attacks and as a result of floods, totalling 360,000 persons currently displaced in region.

President Déby 8 Aug said BH will long remain threat in Lake Chad basin and acknowledged Multinational Joint Task Force – which includes troops from Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Benin, and Nigeria – is struggling to retain control of area, citing coordination challenges. UN High Commissioner for Refugees 11 Aug said late-July spate of violence in neighbouring Sudan's Darfur province brought over 2,500 refugees to eastern Chad; Déby 20 Aug met Sudan's Sovereign Council Chair Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan in Chadian city of Am-Djarass to discuss reinforcement of security cooperation along mutual border. Meanwhile, herder-farmer clashes 12 Aug left four dead and 24 wounded in Banga-Dormon village, Tandjilé region in south west. In alleged effort to improve relations with key ethnic communities ahead of 2021 general elections, Déby 7 Aug reintegrated former Defence Minister Mahamat Nour Abdelkerim into army, 10 Aug pardoned three imprisoned former rebel leaders. In ceremony 11 Aug, Déby was granted title of Marshal following National Assembly June decision to honour him for his leadership in recent operation against jihadist groups in Lake Chad basin; opposition and civil society immediately denounced move amid persistent jihadist threat, COVID-19 and economic challenges. Govt 17 Aug announced two-week extension of COVID-19-related curfew in N'Djamena and several other provinces.

➔ **DR Congo Armed groups continued to carry out deadly attacks in eastern provinces.** Armed group Cooperative for the Development of Congo (CODECO) 1 Aug signed unilateral commitment to end hostilities in Walendu-Pitsi sector, Djugu territory in Ituri province. However, attacks continued in Ituri. Armed group Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) 5 Aug killed three civilians and took several hostages in Kyamata locality, Irumu territory. Suspected CODECO 9 Aug killed 19 civilians in simultaneous attacks on three villages in Djugu territory, 16 Aug killed three civilians in ambush on Mungwalu-Dala axis, Irumu territory, and next day killed at least three civilians in Penge village, Djugu territory. In neighbouring North Kivu province's Beni territory, ADF reportedly killed at least 40, mostly civilians, in several attacks 13-28 Aug. Also in North Kivu, clashes between factions of armed group Nduma Defence of Congo-Renovated (NDC-R) 1 Aug left 16 dead in Kaseke village, Walikale territory; NDC-R faction commander 17 Aug surrendered to army in Kashuga village, Masisi territory, along with 485 combatants. UN Joint Human Rights Office 5 Aug noted threefold increase in killings by armed groups in DRC in first six months of 2020 compared with same period last year. Amid persistent tensions within ruling coalition between President Tshisekedi and his predecessor Joseph Kabila's Common Front for Congo (FCC), both sides mid-Aug removed some members deemed "too radical" in coalition agreement monitoring committee, resulting in sidelining of Tshisekedi's former ally Vital Kamerhe's Union for the Congolese Nation. Situation remained tense in border areas. Ugandan sailors 5-6 Aug reportedly briefly captured 39 Congolese fishermen on Lake Edward on common border. Following mediation from regional bloc Southern African Development Community, Congolese govt 6 Aug announced retreat of Zambian troops from Tanganyika province; clashes between armies had erupted in March after Zambian troops reportedly occupied two Congolese villages. Burundian rebel group Red-Tabara based in DRC 23 Aug reportedly killed 11 civilians in Burundi's Rumonge province (see Burundi).

➔ **Rwanda** **President Kagame's recent efforts to improve relations with neighbouring Burundi continued despite setback.** After five Burundian refugees in Rwanda late July sent letter to Burundian President Ndayishimiye claiming Rwanda was preventing them from returning to their home country, Ndayishimiye 6 Aug said Burundi does not want relations with "hypocrite state" holding Burundian refugees hostage. Rwandan FM Vincent Biruta 12 Aug said govt is ready to facilitate refugee returns but Burundi is unwilling to mend ties. First group of 500 refugees 27 Aug returned to Burundi. Military intelligence chiefs from Rwanda and Burundi 26 Aug met at Nemba border post in Rwanda, agreed to cooperate on border security; first high-level meeting between neighbours since 2015.

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## **Horn of Africa**

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➔ **Eritrea** **Concerns persisted over food insecurity amid COVID-19 pandemic.** UK-based human rights group Eritrea Focus 3 Aug accused govt of using COVID-19 to increase hardship for population by imposing prolonged lockdown and rejecting international medical aid, called on UN to intervene to stop "deliberate starvation and death of Eritrean people". Govt 13 Aug reportedly began releasing prisoners in bid to limit spread of virus in overcrowded prisons, excluding political prisoners.

➔ **Ethiopia Security forces violently suppressed protests in Oromia region and Southern Nations region, while tensions persisted between federal govt and Tigray region over Tigray's planned elections.** In Oromia region in centre, unrest sparked by June killing of popular Oromo musician continued. Demonstrations 17 Aug broke out against detention since late June of two prominent Oromo opposition leaders; security forces violently suppressed protests reportedly killing at least 40 people 17-24 Aug. Amid major cracks in Oromia's ruling establishment, Oromia branch of ruling Prosperity Party 9 Aug suspended party membership of Defence Minister Lemma Megersa and two other senior officials; as part of cabinet shake-up, PM Abiy 18 Aug replaced Lemma as defence minister. In Southern Nations region, protests 9 Aug erupted in Wolayta zone's capital Sodo following same day arrest of local officials and activists seeking regional statehood for Wolayta ethnic group; security forces 9-12 Aug killed at least 21 protesters in Sodo and other towns in Wolayta; Southern Nations branch of Prosperity Party 28 Aug replaced Wolayta zone administrator. Also in Southern Nations, clashes between ethnic Konso and Ale late Aug reportedly left at least a dozen dead. In Somali region in east, protests 17 Aug broke out in Degehabur city following police killing of youth previous week; police reportedly arrested "scores" of protesters. Political tensions persisted as Tigray region pressed ahead with preparations for regional elections scheduled for 9 Sept in defiance of federal govt's COVID-19-related postponement of polls. Despite PM Abiy ruling out military intervention in July, Tigray in apparent show of force early Aug staged several military parades in regional capital Mekelle and other towns. Speaker of federal parliament's upper house early Aug said govt will be forced to take "necessary and proportional measures" if Tigray's ruling Tigray People's Liberation Front fails to halt electoral preparations. Tigray authorities reportedly detained throughout month at least 300 ethnic Amhara who refused to register for polls, and thousands of Amhara reportedly fled region. Talks continued between Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan on Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (see Nile Waters).

➔ **Kenya Disputed revenue-sharing bill laid bare political fissures while anti-govt protests erupted following corruption allegations.** In senate, President Kenyatta failed to push through revision of formula to determine share of national revenues received by counties; proposed revision, which would have benefited his ethnic Kikuyu base, voted against on several occasions by group of 25 senators including allies of Deputy President William Ruto. Ahead of 17 Aug vote, police briefly arrested three senators opposed to revised formula, prompting outcry and sparking small-scale protests 17-18 Aug in Samburu and Kakamega counties; senate speaker refused to call vote and appointed 12-member committee to break stalemate. Media reports mid-Aug alleged misappropriation by govt officials and business leaders of up to \$400mn earmarked for COVID-19 response, sparking public outrage; hundreds of anti-corruption protesters gathered 21-25 Aug in capital Nairobi and Mombasa, Nakuru and Kisumu cities, police used teargas to disperse them and arrested at least a dozen. Kenyatta 26 Aug extended COVID-19-related curfew for another 30 days. In border area between Isiolo and Garissa counties in centre, clashes between ethnic Borana and Somali herders 4 Aug left two dead and four others seriously injured. Police 31 Aug shot dead suspected Al-Shabaab militant in southern Kwale county, amid significant decrease of Al-Shabaab activity, with no deadly attack reported in Aug.

➔ **Nile Waters Comprehensive agreement on filling and operation of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on Blue Nile River remained elusive despite stop-start negotiations between Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan.** Following 3 Aug resumption of tripartite negotiations between water ministers under African Union auspices, Sudan and Egypt next day suspended participation in protest at Ethiopia's proposal to negotiate agreement only on filling of dam, instead of comprehensive agreement on filling and operation, and later to negotiate separate treaty on Blue Nile water allocation. Negotiations 10 Aug resumed but Sudan immediately requested talks be further postponed for a week to conduct internal consultations. Egyptian PM Mostafa Madbouly and senior Sudanese officials in Khartoum 15 Aug renewed calls for legally binding agreement on filling and operation of GERD including dispute resolution mechanism. All three water ministers resumed negotiations few days later. Ethiopia and Sudan 25 Aug vowed to make "all efforts" to reach deal but latter 28 Aug said talks had again stalled. U.S. Sec State Pompeo late Aug approved plan to halt some U.S. aid to Ethiopia, reportedly in effort to mediate agreement.

➔ **Somalia Al-Shabaab launched deadly attacks in capital Mogadishu and rural areas, while frictions heightened between federal govt and member states Jubaland and Puntland over organisation of elections.** In Mogadishu, Al-Shabaab suicide bombings 3 Aug killed at least three including two security guards and 8 Aug killed eight soldiers. Inside Mogadishu's central prison, Al-Shabaab inmates 10 Aug attempted to break free using smuggled weapons; shoot-out between inmates and prison guards backed up by security forces killed 15 inmates and four prison guards; one Al-Shabaab inmate reportedly managed to escape and killed two civilians outside prison. Al-Shabaab attack on Mogadishu hotel 16 Aug left at least 16 dead, mostly civilians. In south and centre, suspected Al-Shabaab attacks 2-23 Aug killed at least 42 security personnel, officials and civilians in Lower Shabelle, Middle Shabelle, Bay, Gedo, Hiraaan and Mudug regions. Security forces 2-29 Aug reported over 80 suspected Al-Shabaab militants killed in Lower Juba, Lower Shabelle, Middle Shabelle, Gedo and Bay regions. Security forces 14 Aug rescued 33 children from Al-Shabaab camp in Lower Shabelle region. U.S. Africa Command said three U.S. airstrikes 20-25 Aug killed eight Al-Shabaab militants in Lower Shabelle and Middle Juba regions. In Puntland in north, security operation 20-21 Aug left at least ten Al-Shabaab militants and two soldiers dead in Bari region. President Farmajo and heads of federal member states Galmudug, Hirshabelle and South West mid-Aug signed agreement reiterating July commitment to hold Nov 2020 parliamentary and Feb 2021 presidential elections on time and settling on indirect electoral model instead of "one person, one vote" polls; presidents of Puntland and Jubaland states boycotted meeting, accusing Farmajo of failing to deliver on previous commitments on elections, and 21 Aug jointly distanced themselves from agreement; 27 Aug however said they would soon attend meeting with Farmajo in Mogadishu to discuss 2020-2021 polls.

➔ **Somaliland Electoral commission ruled out holding elections this year while Somaliland's nascent relationship with Taiwan prompted opposition from Somalia and China.** Electoral commission (NEC) 15 Aug said legislative and local elections – last held in 2005 and 2012 respectively – could not be held in 2020 as agreed in July by ruling Kulmiye and opposition parties Justice and Welfare Party and Waddani; NEC, ruling and opposition parties 23 Aug then agreed to hold polls in May 2021. In Awdal region in west, Gadabursi clan mid-Aug threatened to boycott parliamentary polls if their representation in House of Representatives is not increased; after Supreme Court 26 July ruled out revising seat allocation ratio, and authorities next day reportedly denied Gadabursi clan leader entry from Ethiopia into Somaliland, hundreds same day took to streets in Awdal's capital Borama; security forces reportedly opened fire on protesters, leaving at least one injured. After Taiwan and Somaliland – both of which seek international recognition – in July agreed to establish diplomatic relations, high-level Chinese delegation early Aug met President Bihi in capital Hargeisa; Bihi reportedly rejected Chinese offer to cut ties with Taipei in exchange for development package and Chinese liaison office. Taiwan 17 Aug opened representation office in Hargeisa; Mogadishu next day condemned Taiwan's "reckless attempts to infringe on the sovereignty" of Somalia "and violate its territorial integrity"; Hargeisa next day warned Mogadishu to refrain from "groundless and uninformed statements". Meanwhile, talks with Somalia over Somaliland's claim to sovereignty continued to experience delays.

➔ **South Sudan Govt and former rebel opposition groups reached wider agreement on local power-sharing while disarmament campaign sparked deadly violence in centre.**

Following months-long deadlock, President Kiir, former rebel leader turned VP Riek Machar's Sudan People's Liberation Army-In Opposition (SPLA-IO), South Sudan Opposition Alliance (SSOA) and Other Political Parties (OPP) 10 Aug signed agreement on power sharing at state and county levels; deal, which complements June agreement on appointment of state governors, allocates seats on state cabinets, state legislatures, county commissions, and county councils. Kiir and Machar however remain at loggerheads over latter's pick for governor of contested Upper Nile state. In centre, govt-led disarmament campaign in Kiir's stronghold Warrap state 8-9 Aug triggered clashes between security forces and ethnic Dinka militias refusing to disarm, leaving at least 148 dead on both sides in Tonj East County; UN mission 11 Aug dispatched peacekeeping patrol to area, next day said it had set up temporary base in Tonj town to deter further violence. In south, rebel group National Salvation Front (NAS), which refused to be part of Sept 2018 peace agreement, 5 Aug reportedly attacked army base in Gorom Payam, 15km outside capital Juba; NAS claimed eleven soldiers killed. NAS 13 Aug said it had repelled same day attack by Kiir-aligned South Sudan People's Defense Forces (SSPDF) and Machar's SPLA-IO on its positions outside Kajo Keji town, Central Equatoria state; four reportedly killed on both sides. NAS 19 Aug killed six bodyguards of VP James Wani in Lobonok County, also Central Equatoria. Intercommunal violence persisted. In Lakes state in centre, intercommunal clash between Nyang and Amothnhom youth 5 Aug left at least six dead in Rumbek Central County. Kiir 13 Aug declared state of emergency in Jonglei state and Greater Pibor Administrative Area in east, citing recent violence between local ethnic Dinka and Nuer on one side, and ethnic Murle on the other, and rainy season-related floods. Govt and Sudan 26 Aug vowed to settle dispute over contested Abyei region.

↑ **Sudan Govt and some rebel groups struck landmark peace agreement; intercommunal violence in urban and rural areas continued.**

Following year-long negotiations in South Sudanese capital Juba, rebel coalition Sudanese Revolutionary Front and Sudan Liberation Movement/Army faction led by Minni Minnawi 31 Aug signed peace agreement with govt. Agreement provides for redistribution of economic and political powers in Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan states and integration of rebel fighters into military. Faction of rebel group Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North led by Abdelaziz al-Hilu withdrew from peace talks 20 Aug, and holdout armed opposition Sudan Liberation Movement/Army faction led by Abdel Wahid al-Nur refused to take part. Intercommunal clashes persisted in south, west and east. In South Darfur state, unidentified gunmen 1-2 Aug attacked several villages in Kass locality and clashed with Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Boronga village, killing unknown number and displacing some 3,000. In Kassala state, clashes between Zaghawas and Halfawis 1 Aug left two dead in New Halfa area. In Red Sea state's capital Port Sudan, clashes between Nuba and Beni Amer tribes 9-12 Aug left at least 34 dead; authorities imposed curfew 9-17 Aug and govt 13 Aug deployed over 100 RSF paramilitary to stamp out violence, at least 85 arrested. On first anniversary of constitutional declaration establishing three-year transitional period, hundreds of thousands 17 Aug took to streets in capital Khartoum and other urban areas to protest delayed implementation of transitional agenda; police fired tear gas to disperse protesters



and detained dozens. Sudan continued start-stop negotiations with Egypt and Ethiopia over filling and operation of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (see Nile Waters). Sovereign Council Chair Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and Chadian President Déby 20 Aug met in Chad to discuss reinforcement of security cooperation along mutual border. U.S. Sec State Mike Pompeo 25 Aug visited Sudan, met with PM Hamdok and Sovereign Council chair to discuss normalisation of Sudan's ties with Israel and support to Sudan's transition, including removal of country from U.S. State Sponsor of Terrorism list. Govt and South Sudan 26 Aug vowed to settle dispute over Abyei region in south.

➔ **Tanzania Authorities continued to restrict press freedom and civil rights and harass opposition ahead of general elections scheduled for Oct.** Authorities 10 Aug banned local media from publishing or broadcasting foreign outlets' contents without govt permission, prompting criticism from press freedom organisations. Prominent rights organisation Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) 18 Aug suspended its operations, citing incessant intimidation and meddling in its activities by security forces, after police previous day reportedly briefly detained its national coordinator and THRDC's bank accounts were reportedly frozen mid-Aug after organisation failed to submit to authorities contracts signed with foreign donors. National anti-corruption body 11 Aug questioned main opposition party Chadema chairperson Freeman Mbowe over alleged misuse of party funds. After Chadema 4 Aug nominated vice-chairperson and former MP Tundu Lissu as party's presidential candidate, unidentified assailants 13 Aug set Chadema's offices on fire in Arusha city in north ahead of Lissu's arrival. Chadema and opposition party Alliance for Change and Transparency (ACT) 28 Aug alleged widespread irregularities and "unfair" disqualifications in enrolment of their candidates for parliamentary and local council elections and asked electoral commission to reinstate them.

➔ **Uganda Ahead of 2021 general elections, President Museveni continued to use legal means to harass key challengers.** In Hoima town, police 14 Aug detained Joseph Kabuleta, who previously said he would run for president in 2021, and charged him with flouting COVID-19 restrictions; Kabuleta same day released on police bond. Police 15 Aug arrested 17 officials of presidential hopeful and former Security Minister Henry Tumukunde's Renew Uganda platform in Wakiso district, 18 Aug briefly detained Tumukunde in Buikwe district for allegedly flouting COVID-19 restrictions, and same day summoned him for questioning over allegations he held political meetings with army veterans. Former president of opposition party Forum for Democratic Change Kizza Besigye 19 Aug said he would not run for president in 2021 elections and instead pursue "plan B" to remove Museveni from office "through fighting", hinting at possibility of military coup. Army 28 Aug said there is "no chance" for coup or fighting in Uganda.

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## **Southern Africa**

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➔ **Malawi Authorities pursued efforts to remove from power remnants of former President Mutharika's rule.** Amid corruption investigations into Mutharika and several prominent figures linked to his presidency, police 6 Aug arrested former Local Govt and Rural Development

Minister Ben Phiri over allegations of fraud and money laundering. Authorities mid-Aug froze bank accounts belonging to Mutharika, his wife, former presidential security aide Norman Chisale and another of Mutharika's close collaborators. Supreme Court of Appeal 20 Aug dismissed Chisale's 9 Aug application for injunction against further arrests, which he filed after police in July arrested him three times on different charges; Chisale, suspected of involvement in 2015 killing of national anti-corruption body's former Director of Corporate Affairs Issa Njauju, remained on remand in capital Lilongwe prison after High Court 28 Aug denied him bail. In national address 8 Aug, President Chakwera vowed to introduce legislation to scale back presidential powers, notably that of appointing senior officials across executive, legislative and judicial branches. Amid surge in COVID-19 cases, authorities 9 Aug ordered bars and churches to close and banned most public gatherings; opposition leader in parliament Kondwani Nankhumwa 11 Aug condemned "harsh and unrealistic" measures; police in Chikwawa town in Southern region 13 Aug arrested 145 for allegedly failing to wear masks in public places; Chakwera 14 Aug pardoned 499 prisoners to reduce risk of COVID-19 spreading in congested prisons; authorities 27 Aug said Lilongwe airport would reopen 1 Sept and schools would start reopening 7 Sept.

↓ **Mozambique Islamist militants seized major port town in far north after intense fighting.** In Cabo Delgado province in far north, Islamist militants 5-11 Aug launched series of coordinated attacks in and around port town and district capital of Mocímboa da Praia in third such offensive since March, forcing security forces to withdraw and seizing town 11 Aug. Offensive left dozens dead on both sides: Islamic State (ISIS) said twin attacks against two army barracks in Mocímboa da Praia city 6 Aug left some 50 soldiers dead or injured; govt same day said it had repelled both attacks, killing 16 militants; insurgents 10 Aug killed at least 55 soldiers in ambush in Awasse area near Mocímboa da Praia city. Elsewhere in Mocímboa da Praia district, suspected militants late Aug beheaded seven and kidnapped several others on Nhongue island. In neighbouring Macomia district, suspected Islamist militants 8 Aug killed five civilians in Litamanda village. Security forces continued to face accusations of excessive use of force and unlawful killings; in one incident on 13 Aug, they reportedly sank boat carrying displaced persons from Nkomangano village to Nhongue island, killing 40. Regional bloc Southern African Development Community 17 Aug committed to providing support to Mozambique against jihadist insurgency in Cabo Delgado. Govt and French oil and gas company Total 24 Aug reached agreement over security of latter's natural gas projects in Cabo Delgado. Suspected members of Renamo Military Junta, dissident faction of opposition party Renamo, 30 Aug attacked civilian bus on Muxunguè-Rio Save axis in Sofala province in centre; no casualties reported. Unidentified assailants 23 Aug threw Molotov cocktails at offices of two local independent newspapers in capital Maputo.

➔ **Zimbabwe President Mnangagwa stepped up hostile rhetoric against opposition and civil society as crackdown on dissent continued unabated.** After security forces forcefully thwarted planned anti-govt protest in capital Harare 31 July, Mnangagwa in national address 4 Aug condemned "machinations" of "terrorist opposition groupings" backed by "foreign detractors", and threatened to "flush out ... bad apples". South African President Ramaphosa 6 Aug appointed two special envoys to Zimbabwe to "engage" parties and "identify possible ways in which South Africa can assist Zimbabwe"; special envoys 10 Aug

met Mnangagwa in Harare, same day cancelled meeting with Nelson Chamisa's faction of main opposition party Movement for Democratic Change (MDC-A), reportedly at govt's request. MDC-A 10 Aug said at least 30 senior party figures had fled their homes since thwarted protest, citing "fears of being abducted, tortured or detained" by police. Zimbabwe's Catholic bishops 16 Aug condemned govt's corruption and human rights abuses; govt immediately denounced "evil message" intended to stoke "genocide". MDC-A next day called on regional bloc Southern African Development Community to "urgently intervene" to resolve "governance and legitimacy crisis". Courts denied bail to prominent investigative journalist Hopewell Chin'ono 6 and 24 Aug, and to opposition leader Jacob Ngarivhume 21 Aug, both arrested ahead of protest on charges of inciting violence; court 18 Aug barred prominent human rights lawyer Beatrice Mtetwa from further representing Chin'ono and called for lawyer to be charged with contempt of court over accusations that she commented on court case. Police 21 Aug arrested MDC-A vice-chairman and MP Job Sikhala, who went into hiding late July, on accusations of inciting violence. In joint statement, seven countries including U.S., UK and Germany 28 Aug warned govt against using COVID-19 to crack down on dissent, expressed concern over deteriorating political, economic and health situation. U.S. 5 Aug imposed financial sanctions on prominent businessman and Mnangagwa ally Kudakwashe Regimond Tagwirei and his energy company over corruption allegations.

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## Sahel

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➔ **Burkina Faso** **Jihadist groups carried out several attacks mainly against civilians in east and north, in apparent strategic shift away from usual targeting of govt forces.** Security situation remained precarious in East region, with several deadly attacks on civilians following late-July raids on schools in Tapoa province. Notably, in Gourma province, unidentified gunmen 1 Aug killed four and abducted two in Ougarou village, and 7 Aug stormed cattle market in Namoungou village, killing around 20 civilians; amid counter-insurgency operation in Namoungou area, army convoy 12 Aug detonated explosive device, four soldiers wounded. In north, explosive device 1 Aug killed six children and wounded four others in Bembela village, Yatenga province in North region; IED likely planted by Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM) or Islamic State (ISIS) militants. Grand Imam of Djibo, Souaibou Cissé, was found dead 15 Aug after unidentified gunmen 11 Aug kidnapped him near Gaskindé town, Soum province in Sahel region. Unidentified assailants 22 Aug ambushed security forces convoy in Barsalogho area, Sanmatenga province in Centre-North region, killing at least three. In Boucle du Mouhoun region in west, unidentified assailants night of 11-12 Aug stormed camp hosting volunteers fighting alongside security forces in Barani commune, Kossi province, killing civilian. France 15 Aug designated area along southern border with Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire as "red zone", highest level of security risk, which now covers entirety of country's border areas. UN Humanitarian Agency (OCHA) 18 Aug said country now registers over 1mn displaced persons, fourfold increase in one year, and 2.9mn people need humanitarian assistance, twice as many as same period last year. Food and Agriculture Organization and World Food Programme 20 Aug said more than 3.2mn people in Burkina Faso are facing acute food shortage, 50% rise since March COVID-19 outbreak.

↓ **Mali** **Following mass anti-govt protests since June, military coup forced President Keïta to resign; violence continued at lower intensity in centre and north.** After reports emerged 18 Aug of early morning shots in Kati and N'Tominkorobougou military bases near capital Bamako, army convoys moved from Kati to Bamako, and soldiers arrested several senior govt officials, including Keïta and PM Boubou Cissé. Keïta stepped down in televised address following night. Group of senior military officers calling themselves National Committee for the Salute of the People (CNSP), led by army colonel Assimi Goïta, next day claimed responsibility. Coalition of opposition and civil society groups M5-RFP, which has been at forefront of anti-Keïta protests since June under leadership of prominent Imam Mahmoud Dicko 20 Aug said they were ready to work with CNSP. Thousands of opposition supporters next day celebrated Keïta's removal in Bamako. Amid widespread international condemnation of coup, delegation of regional body Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) 22-24 Aug met CNSP, Keïta and Cissé in Bamako to mediate transition back to civilian rule; talks failed to yield agreement after CNSP reportedly pushed for three-year military-led transition. CNSP 27 Aug released Keïta. ECOWAS next day demanded immediate civilian-led transition and elections within one year; France 30 Aug said CNSP's three-year transition proposal was "out of question", calling for quick return to civilian rule; discussions on format of transition still ongoing late Aug amid tensions between CNSP and M5-RFP. Prior to coup, thousands protested against Keïta in Bamako 11 Aug, and again on day of coup 18 Aug. Meanwhile, violence persisted at lower intensity in centre and north. In Ségou region in centre, suspected jihadists 2 Aug killed at least five soldiers in simultaneous attacks on army base and convoy in Niono circle. In neighbouring Mopti region, explosive devices 21-22 Aug killed two gendarmes and four soldiers in Bandiagara and Koro areas; suspected jihadists 27 Aug ambushed soldiers on Konna-Douentza axis, killing four. In town of Gao in north, clashes between ethnic Songhaï and Arab communities 17 Aug left two dead; unidentified assailant 30 Aug reportedly killed Arab trader.

➔ **Niger** **Suspected jihadists targeted foreign humanitarian workers near capital Niamey, while counter-insurgency operations continued in south east.** In first jihadist attack in Tillabery region's Kollo department, suspected Islamic State militants 9 Aug killed eight including six French humanitarian workers and two Nigeriens in Kouré National Park, 60km east of Niamey; French prosecutors 10 Aug opened investigation into attack and France 12 Aug designated whole country except Niamey as red zone, highest level of security risk; Niger's national security council same day extended state of emergency to entire Tillabery region except Niamey, and govt 18 Aug said security forces had arrested one suspect amid ongoing security operations in area. In Diffa region in south east, security forces 17 Aug carried out cross-border operation into Nigeria and freed eleven civilians, whom Boko Haram combatants had kidnapped 11-12 Aug in two villages of Gueskerou commune. Misappropriation of defence funds involving senior state officials, first revealed in Feb, continued to spark controversy. Confidential govt audit of defence spending leaked early Aug alleged over \$137mn of public money have been lost to corruption in govt procurement of defence material since 2011.

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## West Africa

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📌\* Côte d'Ivoire **Deadly protests erupted across country after President Ouattara announced his candidacy in presidential election scheduled for Oct, raising risk of all-out violence in coming weeks.** In reversal of previous commitment to leave power, Ouattara 6 Aug said he will run for third term in presidential election scheduled for 31 Oct, citing “duty” and “case of force majeure” after his designated successor and ruling-party candidate Amadou Gon Coulibaly died last month. Opposition unanimously denounced move, with prominent opponent in exile Guillaume Soro 8 Aug accusing Ouattara of violating two-term constitutional limit; Ouattara argues his first two mandates do not count under new constitution adopted in 2016. Move sparked small-scale protests 7-10 Aug in economic capital Abidjan; despite govt 12 Aug ban on demonstrations, protests 12-13 Aug intensified in Abidjan and elsewhere, leaving at least six dead and over 100 wounded across country; notably, clashes between ethnic Malinké supporters of Ouattara and Baoulé supporters of former President Bédié’s Democratic Party of Côte d’Ivoire (PDCI) killed four and injured at least 90 in Daoukro city in centre east. Govt 14 Aug said security forces in past few days arrested 68 on charges of “disrupting public order, incitement to revolt and violence against law enforcement”, and vowed to take protest instigators to court. NGO Amnesty International 18 Aug denounced “alarming resurgence of the use of unofficial ‘law enforcement’ agents” in protests. UN Sec-Gen Guterres same day urged all parties “to resolve their differences through dialogue” before elections. Govt 19 Aug banned all demonstrations until 15 Sept, but Ouattara’s nomination ceremony 22 Aug sparked renewed protests in Abidjan, Gagnoa city and Bonoua town. Several politicians late Aug submitted presidential candidacies to electoral commission, including Bédié, former PM Affi N’Guessan, and ex-Ouattara Ministers Marcel Amon-Tanoh and Albert Mabri Toikeusse; supporters of former President Gbagbo, in Belgium following his 2019 acquittal of crimes against humanity by ICC, and Soro also submitted their candidacies despite electoral commission earlier in Aug barring both of them from entering presidential race.

📌\* Guinea **Political tensions deepened after ruling coalition nominated President Condé to run for re-election despite year-long protest movement against third term, raising risk of violent escalation ahead of vote scheduled for Oct.** Democratic Coalition for Change in Continuity, comprising ruling party Rally for the Guinean People and its allies, 6 Aug nominated Condé to run for third term in presidential election scheduled for 18 Oct. Coalition of opposition parties and civil society groups National Front for the Defence of the Constitution (FNDC), which over past year has led mobilisation against Condé’s third term, immediately condemned move. Amid rising fears of political unrest, Muslim leaders 7 Aug urged all parties to favour peace over violence; capital Conakry Archbishop Vincent Koulibaly 15 Aug reiterated plea and called for dialogue between stakeholders. U.S. embassy 17 Aug called on all sides to “refrain from violence ... and engage in dialogue” and urged authorities to investigate all protest-related deaths since 2019. UN, African Union and regional body Economic Community of West African States representatives mid-Aug reportedly met with senior officials from ruling party, FNDC and electoral commission in Conakry in attempt to mediate between parties. FNDC 24 Aug announced resumption of protests in early Sept.

Meanwhile, several opposition figures, including former allies of Condé, announced plans to run for election, while opposition party Union of Democrats for the Renaissance of Guinea 27 Aug said it will not participate, citing anomalies in voter registration. Condé 31 Aug confirmed he will seek third term. Court in Conakry 27 Aug acquitted FNDC activist Oumar Sylla alias Foniké Mengué of charges of “dissemination of false information”; Sylla was arrested in April after he called for protests and accused govt of killings, torture and arbitrary detention.

➔ **Guinea-Bissau UN condemned stifling of dissent amid persistent standoff between govt and opposition.** At UN Security Council meeting 10 Aug, Special Representative and Head of UN peacebuilding mission in Guinea-Bissau Rosine Sori-Coulibaly said “political crisis and parliamentary paralysis” since late-2019 presidential election has left country in fragile state, with “arbitrary arrests, intimidation and detention” of opponents, journalists and civil society leaders contributing to “hostile” atmosphere of mistrust; Sori-Coulibaly also warned that mandate of UN mission in Guinea-Bissau – which involves restoring political stability – will unlikely be fulfilled before it expires in Dec, and urged President Embaló to implement reforms outlined in 2016 Conakry agreement, which comprises constitutional revision aimed at establishing better checks and balances. At same meeting, UN Office on Drugs and Crime Executive Director Ghada Fathi Waly warned against resurgence of transatlantic cocaine trafficking in Guinea-Bissau, urged for coordinated response to make sure 2019 anti-trafficking achievements, including security operations which led to seizure of roughly 3 tonnes of cocaine, were not carried out in vain. Regional body Economic Community of West African States mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) 27 Aug started to withdraw its troops from country; withdrawal due to be completed by Dec 2020.

➔ **Nigeria Jihadist and criminal violence continued in north east and north west, and herder-farmer tensions persisted in many states.** In Borno state in north east, Boko Haram (BH) and BH faction Islamic State West African Province (ISWAP) attacks continued despite airstrikes by govt forces, which left dozens of insurgents killed 11-17 Aug notably on Lake Chad islands and in Sambisa forest. Suicide bomber 2 Aug killed herself and two others in Konduga town. Suspected ISWAP 10 Aug reportedly killed 13 civilians and several soldiers in Magumeri and Kukawa towns. After ISWAP 18 Aug again attacked Kukawa town, local sources reported they took hundreds hostage, while military said troops thwarted attack, killing eight insurgents and losing three soldiers. In Nasarawa state, near capital Abuja, troops 26 Aug raided camp of little-known Islamist group Darul Salam in Toto area; military reported over 400 group members surrendered, and troops seized artisanal explosive device-making factory and assault weapons. In north west, security operations against armed groups killed at least 25 and curbed attacks in some areas; but raids on villages continued, particularly in southern Kaduna state, leaving 33 killed in Zango Kataf area 6-8 Aug, and 11 others in Zango Kataf, Kajuru and Kachia areas 16-19 Aug. In Katsina state, gunmen 9 Aug abducted several women in Kurfi area. In Niger state, armed group 12 Aug killed 15 civilians in Ukuru village, Mariga area. Concerns over jihadist groups forging links with armed groups in North West continued. Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command Africa 5 Aug warned against “al-Qaeda starting to make some inroads” there. Amid persistent tensions between herders and farmers and other communal violence in many states, prominent Fulani herders’ group 13 Aug accused community vigilantes of killing 68 Fulani civilians in Kebbi state 29 April-11 Aug, warned “large conflict” was looming. In alleged fallout from long-running chieftaincy-related dispute, gunmen 10 Aug killed at least 13 in Edikwu village, Benue state.