

# Africa

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## Central Africa

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➔ **Burundi** Authorities and ruling party's youth wing continued to repress opposition and relations between Burundi and Rwanda frayed further. Authorities in Mabayi, Cibitoke province in north west near Rwandan border night of 1-2 Dec arrested five members of main opposition party National Congress for Freedom (CNL) for collaborating with Rwandan army in alleged attack on military outposts in Mabayi mid-Nov. Youth wing of ruling party CNDD-FDD Imbonerakure 1-3 Dec assaulted five CNL members in Makamba and Mwaro provinces. Authorities 2-11 Dec arrested eighteen CNL members. Suspected Imbonerakure 12 Dec shot dead CNL member in Nyabiraba, Bujumbura province. Authorities 12-27 Dec arrested at least 26 CNL members including several who denounced irregularities in voter registration. National Intelligence Service (SNR) agents in Cibitoke province 22 Dec abducted two people and later reportedly executed both. At parliamentary meeting of regional bloc International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) in Bujumbura, Nkurunziza 6 Dec accused Rwanda of mid-Nov attack in Mabayi. At Burundi's request, ICGLR deployed fact-finding mission to Burundi and Rwanda to verify attack, findings not yet released. Coalition of opposition parties in exile CNARED announced it would take part in May 2020 elections; sixteen opposition politicians who have lived in exile since 2015 poll returned to country 11 Dec. President Nkurunziza 20 Dec reiterated he would not stand for re-election. Govt mid-Dec temporarily blocked access to online video platform YouTube. Public prosecutor 30 Dec asked for fifteen-year sentence for four journalists and their driver arrested in Oct en route to report on clashes between military and rebels.

⚡ **Cameroon** Boko Haram (BH) stepped up attacks in Far North and conflict between Anglophone separatists and military continued in west. In Far North, BH launched attacks on several villages and clashed with security forces leaving dozens dead. Notably, BH 22 Dec reportedly killed tens of civilians on islands in Lake Chad, including on Chadian side of border, including at least nineteen Cameroonians. In Anglophone North West region, suspected separatists 1 Dec abducted and killed aid worker in Donga Mantung – first humanitarian to die in conflict. Clashes between separatists and security forces 11-13 Dec left at least three soldiers and two civilians dead in Widikum. Separatists 9 and 12 Dec abducted at least 21 local officials belonging to opposition party Social Democratic Front (SDF) and running for re-election in Feb polls; after receiving ransom, separatists 18 Dec released all 21 SDF hostages. Separatists and ethnic Fulani mid-Dec reportedly clashed in Bua Bua and Kimbi, death toll unknown. Military raid 28 Dec left seven civilians dead in Donga Matung. In Anglophone South West region, clashes between suspected separatists and security forces 11-16 Dec left soldier and at least one civilian dead in Muyuka and Mamfe. Separatists night of 16-17 Dec set fire to home of local SDF official in Kumbo. Twenty separatists 17 Dec surrendered in Kumba. Suspected separatists 19 Dec opened fire on bus killing three civilians in Ekona. Clashes between security forces and separatists left at least three civilians dead in Meme. Pirates 31 Dec kidnapped eight sailors from Greek tanker off Limbe. In North region, security forces 5 Dec killed six men accused of abductions. Parliament 10 Dec passed revised language bill after lawyers and Anglophone MPs protested clause that judges could use English or French when administering justice in Anglophone areas. Parliament 19 Dec passed

decentralisation bill that includes granting Anglophone regions special status allowing them to have some say in their own education and justice policies.

📌🌟 **Central African Republic** Violence erupted in capital Bangui leaving at least 51 dead and fighting between armed groups intensified in provinces especially in north east, where looming fight for provincial capital Birao could see worse violence in Jan. In Bangui's PK5 neighbourhood, traders 24-28 Dec clashed with militia over latter's demand for informal taxes, leaving at least 51 dead and several dozen injured. In far north east, armed group Popular Front for the Central African Renaissance (FPRC) 16 Dec launched attack against armed group Movement of Central African Liberators for Justice (MLCJ) capturing Am-Dafock on border with Sudan; fighting reportedly left several dozen combatants dead. FPRC 18 Dec ambushed MLCJ reinforcements en route from Birao, capital of Vakaga prefecture leaving at least 59 dead in Bihera. FPRC continued to prepare offensive to recapture Birao. In centre, unidentified assailants 3 Dec killed a Fulani near Bambari, Ouaka prefecture; Fulani-dominated armed group Union for Peace in the Central African Republic (UPC) held anti-balaka militia and security forces responsible. UPC 15 Dec attacked security forces in Ippy. In east, clashes between anti-balaka and FPRC in Bria, Haute-Kotto prefecture 5-10 Dec caused unknown number of casualties. In west, tensions rose in Bouar after soldier 1 Dec stabbed to death civilian; in Baboua communal skirmishes killed two people 28 and 31 Dec. Despite govt ban, party of former President Bozizé, Kwa Na Kwa (KNK), held rally in Bangui. KNK 16 Dec announced that Bozizé, in exile since his 2013 ouster, had returned to Bangui. EU 9 Dec formally established EU Advisory Mission in the Central African Republic (EUAM RCA) to support reform of internal security forces including police and gendarmerie; mission set to launch in mid-2020. International Criminal Court 11 Dec confirmed charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity against former anti-balaka leaders Alfred Yekatom and Patrice-Edouard Ngaïssona.

📌 **Chad** Boko Haram (BH) increased rate and deadliness of attacks in west and authorities detained high-ranking officials over corruption. In Lake Chad province in west, BH attack night of 1-2 Dec on army post reportedly left at least four soldiers and thirteen militants dead. BH raid on fishermen's camp near Kaiga 17 Dec left at least fourteen dead and thirteen missing. On Lake Chad 22 Dec, BH reportedly killed tens of civilians including Chadians, Cameroonians and Nigerians. In Batha region in centre, farmers clashed 10 Dec leaving at least two dead in Fitri. Authorities 1 Dec arrested presidency sec gen and former PM Kalzeubet Pahimi Deubet over corruption allegations; public prosecutor 23 Dec ordered his temporary release on medical grounds. Police 16 and 17 Dec questioned economy minister Issa Doubragne and director-general of economy ministry Houlé Djonkamla on similar charges; Doubragne left detention 17 Dec, but Djonkamla remained in custody end Dec for further investigation. President Déby 26 Dec replaced Djonkamla as director-general. After NGO Chadian Convention for the Defence of Human Rights (CTDDH) in Nov accused President Déby's nephew of torture, police 3 Dec arrested CTDDH's head Mahamat Nour Ibedou for defamation and later charged him with complicity to murder.

📌 **DR Congo** In east armed group Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) continued to attack civilians in response to army offensive, killing about 100, violence persisted in Ituri province in north east, and tensions continued between coalitions of President Tshisekedi and former President Kabila. In Beni territory, North Kivu province, in response to army offensive launched late Oct, ADF continued to attack civilians

leaving at least 97 dead. Notably, during night of 29-30 Dec militants killed eighteen people in Apetina-Sana, west of Oïcha, Beni territory. Civilians continued to protest insecurity, directing anger at UN mission (MONUSCO); security forces 2 Dec prevented hundreds of protesters from reaching UN compound in Beni and attempted to disperse crowds with live fire, killing at least three. U.S. 10 Dec placed sanctions on six ADF rebels including group's leader. In Ituri province in north east, armed group Cooperative for Development of Congo (CODECO) 6 Dec abducted twelve in Djugu territory. MONUSCO soldiers night of 7-8 Dec repelled attack by unidentified assailants. CODECO raid in Mutanga 11 Dec left nine dead. Clashes between security forces and CODECO 14 Dec in Djugu territory left four militants and two soldiers dead. CODECO raids and clashes between CODECO and military in Mutanga and Djugu 11-20 Dec left at least nineteen dead. In Mambasa, clashes between Mai-Mai militants and armed forces 27 Dec left eight dead. In Rutshuru territory, North Kivu, security forces 4 Dec killed commander of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR). In South Kivu, army late Nov launched operation against FDLR splinter group National Council for Renewal and Democracy (CNRD) capturing around 2,000 combatants and dependents; army 16 and 21 Dec repatriated 361 combatants to Rwanda. Members of Kabila's coalition Common Front for Congo (FCC) denounced 4 Dec decision by FM Nzeza, member of Tshisekedi's party, to recall three ambassadors, including two reportedly close to Kabila, for "serious breaches". UN Security Council 19 Dec renewed MONUSCO's mandate for one year.

➡ **Rwanda** Rwanda's relations with both Uganda and Burundi remained fraught. Rwandan and Ugandan officials 13 Dec met in Ugandan capital Kampala to hasten implementation of agreement govts signed in Aug aimed at normalising relations, but they failed to reach breakthrough over mutual allegations of destabilising actions, protection of rights and freedoms of each other's citizens and resumption of cross-border trade. Ugandan President Museveni 29 Dec sent Uganda's ambassador to UN to President Kagame as his special envoy in attempt to ease tensions. Burundian President Nkurunziza 6 Dec accused Rwanda of responsibility for mid-Nov attack on military post in Burundi. At Burundi's request, regional bloc International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) deployed verification mission to Burundi and Rwanda to investigate attack. Congolese army 16 and 21 Dec repatriated to Rwanda 361 members of rebel group National Council for Renewal and Democracy (CNRD).

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## Horn of Africa

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➡ **Ethiopia** Ethnic violence continued especially at universities and Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan reported progress in talks to resolve dispute over Ethiopia's construction of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on Blue Nile River. Students clashed at Arsi University in Oromia region 3 Dec and at Gondar University 8 Dec, one student reportedly killed. UN expert on freedom of speech 10 Dec warned that draft legislation against use of hate speech and disinformation could threaten freedom of expression and exacerbate ethnic tensions. Police in Gojam region in west 7 Dec seized 57 Kalashnikovs being transported from Dejen to Bahir Dar in Amhara region. Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan continued talks on Ethiopia's construction of dam on Blue Nile River. Ministers held technical meetings in Cairo 2-3 Dec and Khartoum 21-22 Dec registering progress; FMs 9 Dec agreed to reconvene in Washington 13

Jan to review outcome of talks. In Somalia's Gedo region, Somali opposition coalition Forum for National Parties 1 Dec accused Ethiopia of violating Somalia's territorial sovereignty and demanded immediate withdrawal of all non-AMISOM Ethiopian troops.

➡ **Kenya** Al-Shabaab attacks continued. Al-Shabaab militants 6 Dec attacked bus travelling from Wajir to Mandera in north east, killing at least ten including seven police officers. Authorities 6 Dec arrested Nairobi governor Mike Sonko in Voi in south on at least seven charges including abuse of power, money laundering and fraud; Sonko pleaded non-guilty 9 Dec.

➡ **Somalia** Al-Shabaab continued to launch attacks in capital Mogadishu and in south and centre leaving over 100 dead and inter-clan violence flared in centre and Mogadishu leaving some 60 dead. In Mogadishu, Al-Shabaab raid on hotel near presidential palace 10 Dec left ten dead. Truck bombing at Ex-Control checkpoint north west of Mogadishu 28 Dec killed at least 90 including two Turks; Al-Shabaab 30 Dec claimed responsibility, authorities said foreign govt helped plan attack without identifying which one. In south, Al-Shabaab attacks and security operations killed at least 51 insurgents, eight soldiers and five civilians. In Galmudug region in centre, Ethiopian security forces 19 Dec clashed with nomads leaving some twenty dead along border. Al-Shabaab suicide bomb 20 Dec killed at least eight in Galkayo. Militias clashed with Al-Shabaab in Hiraan region 29 Dec reportedly leaving at least ten militants dead. U.S. airstrikes 9-29 Dec killed six Al-Shabaab militants. Al-Shabaab 12 Dec claimed it had destroyed U.S. drone in Hiraan region. In Mudug region in centre, rival clan militias clashed over land dispute 5 and 9 Dec leaving around 50 dead; following mediation by elders and security officials, clans agreed to ceasefire. In Bosaso, Puntland in north, unidentified men killed security official 13 Dec. In Galmudug federal member state, federal govt and local Sufi militia Ahlu Sunnah Waa-Jama'a (ASWJ) 11 Dec reached agreement that ASWJ would be allocated twenty of 89 seats in new state parliament, but tensions over forthcoming elections persisted. After federal govt committee published criteria for candidates, ASWJ 24 Dec said it did not recognise committee and called on federal govt to honour agreement. ASWJ 30 Dec clashed with security forces in Galmudug capital Dhusamareb. Federal parliament's lower house 28 Dec approved electoral law despite outcry over clause that allows delay of elections and govt to remain in power until elections.

⬆ **Somaliland** Ruling and opposition parties resolved long-running dispute over composition of electoral commission, opening way to organisation of delayed parliamentary and local elections. Following consultations, mediation committee of businessmen and elders 16 Dec released recommendations to end electoral dispute, including dissolving recently appointed electoral commission and reinstating former one. Ruling Kulmiye party and opposition parties Waddani and Justice and Welfare Party (UCID) accepted committee's recommendations. After meeting with President Bihi, UCID and Waddani leaders agreed to give govt until 10 Jan to implement committee's recommendations and announce new election date. Ethiopian security forces 19 Dec crossed into Somaliland and opened fire on civilians killing three in Allay Baday. In Sanaag region, two warring clans 22 Dec signed agreement to end conflict in El Afweyn district.

➔ **South Sudan** Negotiations between President Kiir and main rebel leader Riek Machar, notably to resolve dispute over number and borders of states, failed to achieve consensus, but both reiterated pledge to form transitional unity govt in Feb, and intercommunal violence continued. Kiir and Machar 4 Dec adjourned negotiations facilitated by regional bloc Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) and South Africa's Deputy President David Mabuza: govt insisted on increasing number of states to no less than 32, while Machar's rebel group Sudan People's Liberation Army-In Opposition (SPLA-IO) stated preference for ten. Govt proposed referendum to resolve impasse. After further talks between Kiir and Machar in capital Juba 10-17 Dec, both reiterated commitment to form unity govt by mid-Feb even if political disputes remain unresolved. Unification of country's 83,000 security personnel remained stalled, undermined by lack of funds and shortages of food, water and medical supplies, which force fighters to abandon cantonment sites. After U.S. temporarily recalled its ambassador to South Sudan in Nov, it placed sanctions 11 Dec on five security officials it says are responsible for abduction and murder of two activists in 2017; 12 Dec implemented visa restrictions on individuals impeding peace process. Intercommunal violence continued early Dec. In Western Lakes state, following clashes between Manuer and Gak communities that left some 80 people dead 27-29 Nov, UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) 3 Dec said it had deployed 75 Nepalese peacekeepers to area. Unidentified gunmen 1 Dec stormed compound of international NGO Relief International in Maban county, Upper Nile state, severely assaulting staff; no casualties.

➔ **Sudan** Transitional govt pursued efforts to hold former regime to account, pursue peace with rebel groups and normalise relations with U.S.. Court 14 Dec sentenced former President Bashir to two years in "social reform facility" for corruption. Sovereign Council 10 Dec ordered creation of committee to remove from power remnants of Bashir's regime, fight corruption and recover embezzled money. Court 30 Dec sentenced 27 police and intelligence officers to death over killing of teacher in Feb. Third round of peace talks opened in South Sudanese capital Juba 10 Dec. Govt and rebel coalition Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF) failed to reach deal by self-imposed deadline, but expressed confidence in process and agreed to extend talks by two months until 14 Feb. Govt and Darfuri SRF groups 18 Dec agreed to involve local stakeholders in "Darfur track"; 28 Dec agreed on roadmap to end Darfur conflict. Govt and representatives from central Sudan 28 Dec reached peace agreement. Rebel group Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) led by Abdelaziz al-Hilu 26 Dec postponed resuming talks with govt by two weeks to consult with leadership and grassroots. Violence continued in peripheries. In Darfur, herders 10-11 Dec clashed with farmers in Dubo El Omda and Kabkabiya, 10 Dec reportedly killed one farmer and one soldier near Tawila. In Al Qadarif state near Ethiopian border, suspected Ethiopian gang 10 Dec killed civilian in Barka Nurein. During PM Hamdok's visit to Washington early Dec, Sudan and U.S. agreed to appoint ambassadors for first time in 23 years. U.S. 20 Dec removed Sudan from religious freedom blacklist. "Friends of Sudan" nations, which met in Khartoum 11 Dec, made no financial commitments to support transition, but agreed to convene donor conference in April. Sudan, Ethiopia and Egypt continued talks to resolve dispute over Ethiopia's construction of dam on River Nile. Irrigation ministers held technical meetings in Cairo 2-3 Dec and Khartoum 21-22 Dec registering progress; FMs 9 Dec agreed to reconvene in Washington 13 Jan to review outcome of talks.

➡ **Tanzania** Govt withdrew from African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights 2 Dec; decision will prevent individuals and NGOs filing rights cases directly against govt. NGO Human Rights Watch 12 Dec reported that authorities were putting increasing pressure on Burundian refugees to leave country, including by intimidation; Home Affairs minister 3 Dec denied govt was forcibly expelling refugees. Police 20 Dec arrested prominent human rights lawyer Tito Magoti; authorities 24 Dec charged him with economic crimes including non-bailable offence of money laundering.

➡ **Uganda** Talks with Rwanda failed to ease tensions, and govt continued to repress opposition. Following agreement to normalise relations with Rwanda late Aug, high-level govt officials 13 Dec reached deadlock in second meeting with Rwandan counterparts in capital Kampala to discuss deal's implementation. President Museveni 4 Dec led anti-corruption march in Kampala, drawing criticism from opposition who denounced Museveni's record. Police same day prevented former president of opposition party Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) Kizza Besigye from holding his own anti-corruption march. Tensions rose between refugees and local communities in Adjumani district; host community 10 Dec blamed South Sudanese refugees for death of local man, 12 Dec killed one South Sudanese refugee in attack near Nyumanzi settlement. Refugees same day raided nearby villages of Linga, Jurumini, Maiciki, Ege, and Maiaiciki in retaliation, leaving one local man dead. Musician-turned-opposition leader Bobi Wine 11 Dec said he would run for president in 2021 general elections.

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## Southern Africa

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➡ **Angola** Authorities forcibly broke up separatist demonstration. Security forces 10 Dec violently dispersed peaceful pro-independence march in Cabinda exclave in west; police arrested dozens including president and sec gen of Cabinda Independence Movement (MIC), which seeks independence for exclave. In protest, armed separatist movement Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC) mid-Dec called for large-scale demonstrations. Supreme Court 9 Dec opened trial of former President dos Santos's son Jose Filomeno de Sousa dos Santos, charged with embezzling \$500mn from Angola's sovereign wealth fund. Court 23 Dec froze bank accounts and holdings of Isobel Dos Santos, daughter of former President dos Santos, and her Congolese husband Sindika Dokolo over state losses of more than a billion dollars.

➡ **Malawi** Constitutional court 6 Dec concluded hearings relating to disputed May election results; court to release ruling within 45 days, by end of Jan 2020.

⚠️ **Mozambique** Suspected Islamist militants intensified attacks on civilians and security forces in far north; deadly attacks rose in centre and dissident faction of opposition party Renamo threatened strikes there on day of President Nyusi's inauguration for second term 15 Jan. In Cabo Delgado province in far north, militants carried out over a dozen attacks on civilians and security forces, leaving over 50 civilians and combatants dead. Notably, militants 4 Dec ambushed three vehicles 25km south of Palma, reportedly killing two; 12 Dec attacked Litapata and Malangonha villages in Muidumbe district, killing three. Islamic State (ISIS) claimed

responsibility for 6 Dec ambush of military convoy in Narere village that left at least nine soldiers dead, bringing total number of ISIS-claimed attacks to at least 23. Residents in Chitunda and Namacande villages in Muidumba district 15 Dec chased away security forces in anger at their failure to protect civilians; suspected militants attacked Chitunda next day. Navy 14 Dec intercepted vessel smuggling over one tonne of heroin 50km off Cabo Delgado. Authorities 23 Dec seized over 430kg of heroin and arrested thirteen Pakistanis in Bay of Pemba. In central Mozambique, following attack on civilian vehicle late Nov, unidentified gunmen attacked bus in Manica province 2 Dec and three vehicles in Chibabava district, Sofala province 24 Dec, killing at least ten people. Renamo dissident faction, which calls itself Renamo Military Junta, denied attacks, but 27 Dec said attacks would stop if govt denied that Renamo leader Ossufo Momade represented party and threatened attacks on day of Nyusi's swearing-in 15 Jan. Defence minister 12 Dec said Renamo was responsible for splinter group's actions; Renamo accused govt of sponsoring dissident faction. Govt 26 Dec vowed to increase patrols and provide military escorts for vehicles travelling through centre. Constitutional council 23 Dec validated disputed results of Oct presidential election in favour of ruling party Frelimo; Renamo said it would not recognise council's decision.

➡ **Zimbabwe** Authorities continued to clamp down on opposition and public-sector strike continued. Police 1 Dec fired tear gas and live ammunition to disperse gathering of opposition party Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in Marondera, east of capital Harare, reportedly targeting party leader Nelson Chamisa; Chamisa was unhurt and police denied shooting. Medical workers continued strike over wages which they began early Sept. At its eighteenth National People's Conference in Goromonzi, Mashonaland Central 12-15 Dec, ruling party ZANU-PF passed resolutions signalling intent to consolidate power, entrench party and crack down on dissent. Former South African President Mbeki in capital Harare 18-19 Dec held separate talks with President Mnangagwa, Chamisa and civil society leaders in effort to mediate solution to political crisis. Police 14 Dec arrested Mary Mubaiwa, estranged wife of VP Constantino Chiwenga, on charges of money laundering and attempted murder of Chiwenga.

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## Sahel

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↓ **Burkina Faso** Suspected jihadist attacks and intercommunal violence surged in east and north. In East region, suspected jihadists late Nov-early Dec killed at least 30 people in string of attacks reportedly in retaliation for late Nov attacks by Koglweogo community defence group that killed twenty Fulani in Gourma province: suspected jihadists 1 Dec killed five Koglweogo in Nagare, Gnagna province and fourteen Protestant worshippers in Hantoukoura church in Komonjdjari province. Security forces 11 Dec killed fifteen suspected jihadists in Pama, Kompienga province. Unidentified assailants 14 Dec killed seven civilians including five Koglweogo in Kantari, Tapoa province. In north, jihadist attacks targeted security forces and civilians. Suspected members of jihadist Group to Support Islam and Muslims (JNIM) 3 Dec attacked military positions, killing three soldiers in Toeni, Boucle du Mouhoun region, and wounding four in Banh, North region; army said it killed twenty assailants. In retaliation, army killed 28 suspected militants in three airstrikes in Yatenga province, North region 4 Dec. Suspected jihadists 24 Dec



attacked Arbinda town, Soum province in northern Sahel region, killing 35 civilians and seven military; security forces reportedly also killed 80 assailants. Suspected jihadists 26 Dec ambushed military patrol in Hallele, 60km from Arbinda, killing eleven soldiers. Parliament 5 Dec approved 16% increase in defence spending in 2020. Relations with France grew strained after latter 18 Nov raised its assessment of insecurity in country and French President Macron early Dec invited G5 Sahel leaders to Pau in south west France “to clarify their expectations of France” amid growing anti-French sentiment in region. President Kaboré 12 Dec said “the tone and the form” of Macron’s invitation were “problematic”. Meeting initially planned for 16 Dec postponed to 13 Jan. France late Dec designated area in south west running along border with Côte d’Ivoire as red zone, highest level of security risk.

➡ **Mali** Violence continued in Mopti region in centre albeit at lower level and major opposition parties boycotted final phase of national inclusive dialogue. In centre, suspected Fulani militiamen and jihadists and ethnic Dogon continued to attack each other in Bandiagara and Koro districts, causing deaths of at least eight people 5-12 Dec. After President Keïta urged security forces in Nov to adopt offensive strategy, army and French forces stepped up operations against jihadists in Mopti region, especially Bandiagara district. Notably, army 5 Dec destroyed jihadist base near Ouo and Mandoli villages and 6 Dec killed five jihadists near Bara Sara. French forces 21 Dec killed 40 suspected members of jihadist group Katiba Macina in Ouagadou forest, Mopti region. In Bamako, final phase of national inclusive dialogue that started in Oct took place 14-22 Dec; delegates from country’s ten regions drew up four key resolutions including organising legislative elections before May 2020 and holding referendum on constitutional revision. But Anw Ko Mali Dron, coalition of major opposition parties and civil society groups, 10 Dec reiterated its refusal to take part, denouncing govt’s ban on discussion of certain topics, notably Algiers peace agreement. In north, leaders of ex-rebel Coalition of Azawad Movements (CMA) continued to strengthen group’s cohesion by holding popular congresses. By contrast, divisions deepened within Platform coalition of pro-govt armed groups: one faction boycotted congress of coalition member Self-Defence Group of Imrad Tuareg and Allies (GATIA) in Aguelhoc early Dec and instead attended congress of ex-separatist National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) in Kidal 30 Nov-3 Dec where it called for merger with CMA.

↓ **Niger** Jihadists continued to launch attacks in west – including deadliest single attack against security forces in country’s history – and south east. In west near Malian border, suspected members of Islamic State’s Sahel affiliate 9 Dec launched suicide attack against army base in Agando, Tahoua region, killing three soldiers. Two days later, militants from same group attacked military base in Inates, Tillabery region, killing 71 soldiers, prompting President Issoufou to hold emergency meeting of National Security Council 12 Dec and emergency G5 Sahel heads of state meeting 15 Dec in capital Niamey. Suspected jihadist militants 25 Dec ambushed army convoy in Sanam, Tillabery region, killing fourteen soldiers. Jihadist violence also continued in Diffa region in south east near Nigeria. Suspected Boko Haram (BH) militants 1 Dec reportedly killed three in Riari village near Bosso. Suspected jihadists 7 Dec reportedly abducted ten women and girls in Gueskerou commune. Also in Diffa region, 125 former BH militants completed deradicalisation program at facility in Goundamaria 7 Dec; govt said they would start going back to their villages 9 Dec.



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## West Africa

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➔ **Côte d'Ivoire** Ahead of presidential election scheduled for Oct 2020, President Ouattara and opposition leaders continued efforts to strengthen positions. Ouattara held rally in capital Yamoussoukro 6-7 Dec gathering some 300,000 supporters. Authorities 2 Dec expelled from country adviser of opposition party Freedom and Democracy for the Republic, Swiss-Cameroonian Nathalie Yamb. Following imprisonment in Sept of VP of main opposition party Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI), party leader former President Bédié 1 Dec appointed as VPs retired general and former pro-Ouattara politician Michel Gueu and former minister and ambassador Gilbert Bleu-Lainé. PDCI youth wing leader Bertin Kouadio Konan 6 Dec met former youth minister Charles Blé Goudé in The Hague. Guillaume Soro, former rebel leader and former national assembly speaker and now presidential candidate, planned to return to country 23 Dec after six months abroad, but cancelled his trip after prosecutors same day issued international warrant for his arrest, accusing him of attempting to undermine state authority and misappropriating public funds.

➔ **Gambia** Thousands demonstrated in capital Banjul 16 Dec in protest against President Barrow's decision to rule for five years, renegeing on his 2016 commitment to serve for three-year transitional period only. Barrow 31 Dec launched new party National People's Party in move that could allow him to contest 2021 presidential elections without need for other parties to back him.

➔ **Guinea** Despite crackdown, protests continued against President Condé's intention to change constitution allegedly so that he can run for third term in 2020. Following calls by National Front for the Defence of the Constitution (FNDC), coalition of opposition parties and civil society groups against constitutional change, protesters rallied 6, 10, 12 and 15 Dec in capital Conakry and other cities. During funeral procession in Conakry 6 Dec for eight protesters killed in recent confrontations with authorities, protesters again clashed with security forces, reportedly leaving another protester dead. Condé 19 Dec announced new draft constitution, said he would hold referendum to seek voters' approval. Opposition 20 Dec accused president of staging "constitutional coup". Nationwide protests against constitutional referendum scheduled for 26 Dec postponed to 6 Jan. Ahead of legislative elections set for 16 Feb, opposition criticised as biased voter registration process and revision of electoral roll that started late Nov. Cellou Dalein Diallo, leader of largest opposition party Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea, 1 Dec accused electoral commission of preventing opposition supporters from registering. Opposition 5 Dec said electoral commission was enrolling minors in strongholds of ruling party Rally for the Guinean People. Political dialogue led by PM's adviser Laho Bangoura resumed 5 Dec, but opposition pulled out 13 Dec to protest alleged malpractice in voter registration. Electoral commission 16 Dec said registration was complete. Opposition 23 Dec vowed to boycott legislative elections and prevent them from taking place.

➔ **Guinea-Bissau** Former PM Umaro Sissoco Embaló 30 Dec won in second round of presidential election 29 Dec with 53.55% of votes, beating former PM and candidate of ruling African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde

(PAIGC) Domingos Simões Pereira. Pereira denounced electoral fraud, and submitted appeal at Supreme Court 3 Jan.

► **Liberia** Prominent critic of President Weah and opposition figure Henry Costa returned to country ahead of anti-govt protest planned for 30 Dec. Hundreds of supporters 19 Dec welcomed Costa in capital Monrovia. In last-minute move, Costa postponed protest after govt said it would not be able to provide security and international observers recommended delay; Costa 30 Dec rejected govt proposal to move protest to 5 Jan, said protest could take place 6 Jan.

► **Nigeria** Boko Haram (BH) insurgency continued in Borno and Yobe states in north east, bandit-related violence persisted in north west, and incidents of criminal and communal violence occurred in Niger Delta. In north east, BH continued to attack communities and execute captives, as military and vigilantes continued to fight both factions – Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP) and Abubakar Shekau’s group. Notably, insurgents 12 Dec stormed security post at Mamuri about 80km north of Borno state capital Maiduguri, killing fifteen including hunters, vigilantes and policeman. ISWAP 13 Dec killed four of six humanitarian workers abducted near Damasak in July. Insurgents 14 Dec killed nineteen herders in fighting outside Fuhe village, near Ngala, Borno state; 22 Dec ambushed travellers on Maiduguri-Monguno road, Borno state, killing at least six and abducting five; 25 Dec issued video showing execution of eleven Christian men, claiming vengeance for U.S. killing of ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in Oct. ISWAP fighters 22 Dec attempted to invade Yobe state capital Damaturu, but govt forces repelled them killing about 40. Air Force said it killed scores of insurgents in 31 Dec raid on camp in Abulam area of Sambisa forest, Borno state. In north west, bandit-related violence continued, notably in Zamfara and Niger states despite state govts’ dialogues with bandit leaders. In Zamfara state, bandits raided communities in rural areas of Kaura, Maru and Gummi local govt areas. In Niger state, bandits 1 Dec attacked Koki in Shiroro local govt area killing eleven people, 3 Dec stormed village in Kagara local govt area killing thirteen people and kidnapping nine. In Kaduna state, gunmen 8 Dec killed four youths in Zunuruk, Kaura local govt area. In Niger Delta in far south, pirates 3 Dec stormed oil vessel about 143km off Bonny Island in Rivers state abducting nineteen of 26 crewmembers. Gunmen 7 Dec killed six people at Chokocho, Etche local govt area, Rivers state, possibly in intercommunal feud.