



CrisisWatch 2024 – July Trends and August Alerts

Africa

Central Africa

➔ **Cameroon** Govt forces continued to clash with Anglophone separatist rebels, while Boko Haram attacks in Far North persisted; political climate remained tense ahead of 2025 presidential vote.

Govt-separatist clashes continued in Anglophone regions. Ambazonia Peoples Liberation Council militias 1 July ambushed and killed two soldiers in Munyenge area, Fako division (South West, SW). Local sources alleged at least two civilians killed 4-8 July in North West (NW) during participation in bomb searches as part of military operations to dislodge separatist rebels. Rebels 6, 11 and 25 July attacked army convoys in Boyo (NW), Lebialem and Fako divisions (both SW) respectively, with unknown casualties. Locals in Francophone community in Bangourain town in West region mid-July expressed anger following 10 July kidnapping for ransom of two Francophones; some local figures blamed abduction on Anglophone separatists in neighbouring NW and threatened retaliation, raising threat of intercommunal violence.

Boko Haram attacks in Far North persisted amid security operations. Jihadists 1-14 July made half dozen incursions into Mayo-Tsanaga, Logone-et-Chari and Mayo-Sava divisions, looting food and goods; militants 14 July surrounded police post in Tourou town, burning vehicles and killing one gendarme, and next day killed four civilians in Sandawajiri town. Meanwhile, Multinational Joint Task Force continued Operation Lake Sanity to reclaim territory; 9 July said dozens of insurgents and their families had surrendered.

Ruling party tightened grip ahead of 2025 presidential elections. Authorities 4 July suggested main opposition figure Maurice Kamto might be barred from 2025 presidential race as his party lacks parliamentary representation. President Biya 24 July signed into law govt proposal to extend mandate of parliamentarians and councillors and postpone 2025 parliamentary and local elections until 2026; opposition heavily criticised bill. Pre-empting protests, official in capital Yaoundé 16 July threatened to temporarily ban from city govt critics or those calling for demonstrations. Meanwhile, authorities 31 July released on bail social media activist detained week earlier after encouraging voter registration in videos.

In another important development. Relations between Cameroon and Nigeria continued to improve over border demarcation after bilateral commission 27 June agreed to not refer three outstanding issues of disagreement to International Court of Justice to rule on.

➔ **Central African Republic Clashes between army and rebels continued as more militias disarmed; tensions around Oct local polls remained high and govt discussed budgetary aid with France.**

Military and rebels continued to fight in northern regions. Clashes between Russian paramilitary-supported army and rebels persisted; fighters from Return, Reclamation, Rehabilitation (3R) rebel group 2 July attacked army position in Ngoutéré village (Ouham-Pendé prefecture) and ambushed military convoy bringing reinforcements, in total killing three soldiers and three civilians. Military same day attacked position of Unity for Peace in the Central African Republic (UPC) rebels in Ouadda town (Haute-Kotto prefecture), reportedly killing at least seven UPC fighters. 3R fighters 8 July ambushed convoy of Chinese mining companies near Baboua town (Nana-Manbéré prefecture), taking two Chinese nationals hostage. Army and Russian paramilitaries 23 July killed self-proclaimed anti-Balaka general and deputy in Bouca town (Ouham-Fafa prefecture); photos that circulated of the two decapitated bodies caused widespread indignation. Meanwhile, more militias continued to follow example of ethnic Azandé self-defence group in south east and voluntarily disarmed to integrate into army. Near Bossangoa town (Ouham prefecture), self-proclaimed anti-Balaka General Jabra 9 July disarmed with some 250 fighters, allegedly members of Coalition of Patriots for Change. But govt continued to lack financial resources to support further inclusion into army, which could lead to discontent.

Political tensions continued ahead of Oct local elections. President Touadéra 2 July promulgated new electoral code but opposition denounced provisions including definition of “indigenous Central Africans” and requirement to update electoral lists one year before each election. Head of opposition party Movement for Liberation of Central African People 5 July said composition of electoral commission favours Touadéra. While others suggested election postponement, main opposition platform Republican Bloc for the Defence of the Constitution continued to call for boycott.

France looked to resume budget support in sign of normalisation. French delegation 11 July met PM Moloua in capital Bangui to discuss new terms of budgetary aid, three years after suspending direct support amid anti-French propaganda fuelled by Russia.

In another important development. UN Security Council 30 July lifted arms embargo imposed in 2013 at start of civil war.

➔ **Chad Social discontent continued in capital N’Djamena while diplomatic row broke out with France; army conducted operation against Boko Haram in west while farmer-herder violence persisted.**

Authorities faced public criticism in capital. Police 17 July arrested members of Sabarna, platform of unemployed graduates, after they staged sit-in outside PM’s offices to demand integration into civil service; arrests came after late-June crackdown on peaceful protest by same group outside U.S. embassy. Meanwhile, frustration grew in N’Djamena over local govt’s measures to tackle traffic congestion, including among those whose makeshift stalls were demolished; traders at “Champ de fil”, country’s largest informal market for car parts, 11 July protested against forced evictions.

Govt conducted anti-militant offensive near Lake Chad. Army chief of staff 2 July said elite Rapid Intervention Force neutralised 70 Boko Haram militants in counter-insurgency operation; insurgents had taken refuge in Chad after campaign by Multinational Joint Task Force in Lake Chad region beginning May.

Herder-farmer violence persisted in south. Notably, herders and farmers 2 July clashed near Goré town, Nya Pendé department (Logone Oriental region), leaving four people dead; Logone Oriental provincial governor 4 July dismissed prefect of Nya Pendé who accused farmers of being rebels. Also, violent clash 2 July near Pala town (Mayo-Kebbi Ouest region) after cattle crossed maize fields wounded three.

President Déby postponed Paris visit amid diplomatic quarrel with France. Media 2 July reported French authorities in Jan had opened investigation against Déby for embezzlement of public funds. Amid reports French financial crime investigators may extend inquiries to include assets of president and close associates in France, Déby postponed planned 15 July visit to Paris to discuss future of French presence in Chad. Case provoked mixed reactions in N'Djamena. National coordinator of anti-corruption organisation Jacques Saham Ngarassal 3 July called for continuation of investigation to establish responsibility; but civil society organisation Chad Wahid Platform 6 July denounced investigation as tactic to put pressure on Chad after Déby's rapprochement with Russia, while magistrates' union 10 July described charges as violation of country's sovereignty. Neither Paris nor N'Djamena mentioned case publicly.

Great Lakes

➔ **Burundi Efforts to sideline opposition ahead of 2025 legislative elections continued amid further attacks on journalists, while economic situation remained dire.**

Opposition parties faced increased harassment. Local rights groups reported ruling-party youth wing Imbonerakure 2 July killed National Congress for Freedom (CNL) opposition party member in Isare commune and 4 July arrested and beat four people, including local CNL head, in Rubirizi area (both Bujumbura Rural province). Imbonerakure also blamed for harassment of other opposition parties including 7 July disruption to Patriots' Council party meeting in Vugizo commune (Makamba province) and 6-7 July damage to Sahwanya-Frodebu party premises in Mitakataka area (Bubanza province). Unknown assailants 7 July kidnapped Sahwanya-Frodebu youth leader in Rumonge town (Rumonge province).

Media freedom came under renewed attack. Imbonerakure 6 July attacked two journalists in Rumonge reporting on youth wing's violence against suspected thief; police 13 July briefly detained another journalist in Bweru commune (Ruyigi province). Rights organisations at UN Human Rights Council meeting 4 July expressed concern over increasing threats ahead of 2025 elections including "hostile" environment for journalists and "harassment, intimidation, and reprisals against civil society actors"; UN rapporteur on human rights in Burundi, Fortuné Gaetan Zongo, same day said Imbonerakure have "free rein to terrorise the population, carry out arbitrary arrests, forcibly disappear people".

Cross-border dynamics continued to strain perilous economic situation. FM Shingiro 1 July stated border with Rwanda will remain closed until Kigali extradites those responsible for 2015 coup attempt, heightening concerns among locals about worsening economic hardship. In response to severe fuel shortages in Burundi, authorities in Uvira city in neighbouring DR Congo 11 July lifted restrictions on trade of fuel trade via Rusizi River.

➡ 🇨🇩 **DR Congo** **Amid insecurity and tensions over conflict with M23 rebels, Kinshasa and Kigali agreed to ceasefire, raising hopes for greater calm in east in coming weeks.**

Rwandan and Congolese FMs signed ceasefire over situation in eastern DRC. Congolese FM Wagner and Rwandan counterpart Nduhungirehe 30 July agreed to ceasefire between “parties to conflict in east” during high-level meeting in Angolan-capital Luanda; ceasefire due to start on 4 Aug. While EU, UN and U.S. welcomed deal, which offers chance to halt fighting, much remained unclear about agreement including position of Rwandan-backed M23 who were not signatories to accord. Earlier, Washington 4 July brokered two-week humanitarian truce between govt and M23, 17 July announced extension until 3 Aug; sporadic fighting between M23 and pro-govt Wazalendo militias, however, continued in Masisi and Lubero territories.

Authorities wrestled with political, security ramifications of M23 crisis. Recent M23/Rwandan northwards advance fuelled fears of social and ethnic tensions in North Kivu province after local youth 30 June killed two NGO staff in Lubero territory, identified as speakers of Kinyarwanda language dominant in Rwanda. Military tribunal in Butembo city 8 July sentenced 22 soldiers to death for fleeing during Kanyabayonga town’s fall to M23 in June. Military court in capital Kinshasa 24 July opened trial against Corneille Nangaa, head of pro-M23 politico-military group Congo River Alliance (AFC), and 24 others for “high treason”. Meanwhile, authorities 23 July arrested Jean-Bosco Bahala, govt disarmament program coordinator, after he led delegation that reportedly met M23 and AFC members in Uganda previous day.

Other armed groups remained prominent. In Ituri in east, ethnic Lendu militia CODECO 13 July clashed with rival “Zaire” group in Djugu territory, leaving 26 dead. In North Kivu, Islamic State-affiliated Allied Democratic Forces militants 16-18 July attacked Babila-Bakaiko locality, Beni territory, killing at least 37 civilians. In western Mai-Ndombe province near capital Kinshasa, intercommunal violence 13-14 July caused at least 72 deaths in Kinsele village.

In important international developments. UN Security Council 8 July discussed situation in east amid high DRC-Rwanda tensions (see Rwanda). Meanwhile, UN and Kinshasa mid-July indicated UN mission MONUSCO would slow withdrawal from North Kivu and Ituri provinces given insecurity.

➡ 🇷🇼 **Rwanda** **Kinshasa and Kigali agreed to ceasefire under Angolan mediation, raising hopes for greater calm in eastern DR Congo (DRC) in coming weeks; President Kagame re-elected.**

Rwandan and Congolese FMs signed ceasefire over situation in eastern DRC. Congolese FM Wagner and Rwandan counterpart Nduhungirehe 30 July agreed to ceasefire between “parties to conflict in east” during high-level meeting in Angolan-

capital Luanda; ceasefire due to start on 4 Aug. While EU, UN and U.S. welcomed deal, which offers chance to halt fighting, much remained unclear about agreement including position of Rwandan-backed M23 who were not signatories to accord. Earlier, international involvement in crisis saw continued polarisation; during UN Security Council 8 July meeting on situation in DRC's North Kivu province (see DRC), some, including France and U.S., openly criticised Rwanda for its role but others, including UK, avoided direct blame; Congolese representative called for sanctions on Kigali and withdrawal of Rwandan peacekeepers from UN missions, while Rwandan representative alleged Kinshasa's persecution of Tutsis.

Rwanda vowed to defend against threats from DRC. Without confirming or denying presence of 3,000-4,000 Rwandan soldiers on Congolese soil reported in UN report made public early July, govt spokesperson Yolande Makolo 8 July argued Rwanda "will continue to defend itself"; Makolo also accused Congolese President Tshisekedi of publicly declaring Rwanda and Kagame as enemies and seeking to support Rwandans to oppose govt in Kigali; spokesperson cited UN report's allegations that DRC army is collaborating with anti-Rwandan forces near Rwandan border including Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda militia, saying govt "takes these threats very seriously".

President won fourth term in presidential poll. Following 15 July general elections, final results 23 July confirmed incumbent Kagame's re-election with 99.18% of vote; ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front coalition party, however, saw slightly reduced representation in parliament, as it won 37 of 53 legislative seats, down from 40.

➔ **Uganda Despite series of arrests of officials for financial misconduct, protesters took to street to denounce corruption among lawmakers; military denied support toward M23 rebel group in DR Congo.**

Anti-corruption demonstrations erupted despite govt's moves against graft. Authorities 18 July arrested Trade Ministry official Geraldine Ssali over allegations of financial mismanagement and of conspiring with MPs to steal compensation funds; various local officials also arrested during month. Eager to appear uncompromising, President Museveni 11 July requested courts deny bail to corrupt officials. Public remained largely unimpressed, however, and civil society activists 23 July marched to parliament in capital Kampala to denounce corruption among lawmakers, defying ban on protest. Police reportedly arrested three organisers and dozens of protesters. Protests 25 July resumed in Kampala; police next day said they had arrested 104 demonstrators during week, charging 100 with public order offences as U.S. urged govt to investigate allegations that some detainees had been assaulted. Meanwhile, court 29 July charged 36 opposition supporters with terrorism-related offences after they were detained when attending training course in Kenya; opposition activists alleged detainees physically abused.

Govt's alleged support for M23 rebels in DR Congo continued to stir uproar. After UN report made public early July alleged Kampala's support for M23 rebel group in DR Congo, military 10 July called claim "laughable" and "baseless"; however Congolese govt 19 July summoned Uganda's chargé d'affaires over issue, while M23 5 July confirmed presence of some M23 commanders and representatives in Uganda, but denied they were using country as base. Meanwhile, Kampala 22 July

reportedly hosted meeting between M23 and coordinator of Congolese govt disarmament program (see DR Congo).

In important international developments. Ugandan army 2 July handed over Bariire base to Somali army as part of AU mission drawdown but Ugandan troops remained target of Al-Shabaab as roadside bomb 8 July killed officer and wounded six others in Somalia's Lower Shabelle region.

East and Southern Africa

➔ **Kenya Unrest over finance bill morphed into wider, anti-govt protest movement, shaking President Ruto's administration, as security forces violently repressed demonstrations.**

Protests led to firing of govt and further domestic turmoil. After public-led, spontaneous demonstrations against controversial finance bill erupted nationwide in June, movement continued into July with biweekly protests across country to air grievances against, and often demand end to, Ruto's govt. Ruto 11 July fired all but one minister from cabinet and vowed to set up "broad-based" govt. Numbers protesting decreased in following weeks but hundreds continued to take to streets. Security forces persisted with violently repressing protests and clashed with demonstrators, while press also remained vulnerable. Notably, journalist Catherine Wanjeri wa Kariuki shot three times by rubber bullets 16 July while covering protests in Nakuru county. National Commission on Human Rights same day said at least 50 people killed since protests began – including around ten in July – with over 400 injured, some 700 arbitrarily detained and dozens abducted. Police 23 July fired tear gas to prevent scuffles between protesters and govt supporters in capital Nairobi. Ruto next day gave four posts in new cabinet to opposition Orange Democratic Movement led by former PM Odinga, while reappointing around half of previous cabinet; protest movement figures criticised new govt as co-opting opposition instead of serving population's needs and 25 July held march to commemorate those killed in demonstrations; police again detained several people.

Kenyan-led international security force continued to deploy to Haiti. 200 Kenyan police officers 16 July arrived in Haiti following first contingent's landing in June; Kenyan and Haitian police next day patrolled in areas of capital Port-au-Prince abandoned by police for months. Doubts remained, however, over sustainability of mission.

Al-Shabaab-related insecurity persisted. Clash between Al-Shabaab insurgents and security forces 11 July left at least five militants and four police officers dead in El Wak area, Mandera county.

➔ **Mozambique Islamic State militants remained active in northern Cabo Delgado province as Rwanda prepared offensive; election preparations continued.**

Jihadist threat persisted in Cabo Delgado despite fewer attacks. Islamic State Mozambique Province (ISMP) violence continued at lower level than previous months but militants remained present in province. Notably, militant activity reported in Palma district, home to multi-billion-dollar international gas project, for

first time in 18 months, while ISMP 11-13 July clashed with security forces in Nangade district, leaving at least two insurgents dead. Lull in overall attacks may be due to insurgents regrouping in preparation for expected Rwandan offensive. Rwandan troops late month began deploying to Macomia district as campaign will reportedly focus on dislodging militants from strongholds including Catupa forest and coastal villages of district. Meanwhile, series of incidents highlighted troubled relationship between Mozambique military and local communities. Notably, after soldiers 8 July killed shop owner in Nanga neighbourhood of Macomia town, residents next day violently confronted army; clashes reportedly left several soldiers dead.

Regional mission concluded, bilateral deployments to fill vacuum. Southern African Development Community (SADC) Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) 15 July concluded three-year deployment to Cabo Delgado; at official ceremony in provincial capital Pemba, Defence Minister Cristóvão Chume 4 July thanked mission but acknowledged insecurity continued in northern province. Bilateral deployments expected to fill vacuum after SAMIM's departure; Rwanda in May announced additional 2,000 troops, while President Nyusi 1 July said Tanzania – which has several hundred troops in Nangade district – would continue to support fight against ISMP. Meanwhile, EU 3 July postponed decision on €20m financial support to Rwandan troops in province amid some member states' concerns over Kigali's backing of Congolese rebel group M23.

Preparations for Oct general elections continued. Electoral body 17 July removed recently formed coalition of opposition parties Coligação Aliança Democrática (CAD) from legislative and provincial ballot over alleged irregularities in registration for vote; CAD appealed in Constitutional Court while its candidate Venâncio Mondlane – formerly of main opposition RENAMO party – remained on ballot for presidential poll.

➔ **South Africa President Ramaphosa opened parliament and outlined agenda for govt of national unity; several officials working to investigate corruption killed.**

New govt promised to deliver growth and national unity. President Ramaphosa 18 July opened parliament and presented govt of national unity – comprised of African National Congress, centre-right Democratic Alliance and eight other parties; top priorities include driving inclusive economic growth, tackling inequality and developing capable state. Opposition immediately criticised address, with uMkhonto weSizwe party (MKP) spokesperson Nhlamulo Ndhlele labelling it “lies, lies, lies, continuous lies”. Earlier, MKP 3 July dropped its court challenge against results of May elections.

Gunmen targeted lawyer and officials tackling corruption. Two gunmen 18 July tried to assassinate lawyer in Durban city working for govt on high-profile tax inquiry; police minister 19 July promised swift action against “attack on our democracy”. Earlier in Johannesburg, gunmen 11 July killed local govt investigator working on corruption in municipality.

In other important developments. U.S. 23 July announced sanctions against two South Africa-based individuals for enabling activities of Islamic State (ISIS) and its leaders in eastern, central and southern Africa; Washington accused them of

transferring funds and serving as critical links between ISIS branches in DR Congo, Mozambique and Somalia, and ISIS cells in South Africa. Security forces 25 July raided suspected military training camp run by private security company near White River town, Mpumalanga province, and arrested 95 Libyan nationals for allegedly misrepresenting their visa status.

↓ **Zimbabwe Ahead of annual regional SADC summit, authorities intensified repression against civil society and political opposition.**

Govt intensified repression of opponents and critical voices. Ahead of 17 Aug southern African regional body SADC summit in capital Harare, authorities cracked down on opposition, including with wave of arrests and detentions. High court 17 July denied bail to over 70 opposition party Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) activists including interim party leader Jameson Timba; group charged in June with intent to promote public violence. Armed police 24 July reportedly raided National Students Union meeting in Harare, taking dozens into custody including union leader; union members reported security forces beat some students, causing injuries, and forced others to pay fines to secure release; police alleged that they were called in to “maintain law and order” after violent altercations broke out. Police 31 July arrested and detained 13 CCC party members, including MP John Houghton, in Kariba town, Mashonaland West province, for staging peaceful demonstration; security forces same day detained four human rights activists, forcibly removing them from plane they had boarded at Harare airport; Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights alleged activists were detained “incommunicado” for eight hours and said one was tortured. Earlier, police 3 July arrested, and later released without charge, six people associated with local media organisation Community Voices Zimbabwe during meeting in Gokwe town, Midlands province. Human rights organisations including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch decried increased repression of dissenting voices in build up to SADC meeting and called on body to speak out. Amid ruling ZANU-PF party’s unease over potential anti-govt protests at summit, President Mnangagwa 24 July called for “peace and stability” around event.

In another important development. High court 22 July exonerated opposition leader Job Sikhala, clearing him of two criminal charges of inciting public violence and publishing falsehoods, for which he spent nearly 600 days in pre-trial detention.

Horn of Africa

➔ **Eritrea Asmara banned Ethiopia Airlines and expelled Sudanese chargé d'affaires as regional tensions simmered.**

Tensions with Ethiopia shaped Asmara’s regional foreign policy. Amid souring relations with Ethiopia over resolution of Tigray conflict, Eritrea’s Civil Aviation Authority 21 July advised Ethiopian Airlines that carrier would not be allowed to operate flights to country effective from 30 Sept. Meanwhile, Eritrea 24 July expelled Sudanese Chargé d’Affaires Khaled Abbas, giving him 72 hours to leave capital, Asmara, without providing reasons. Move came two weeks after Ethiopian PM Abiy visited Sudan and met with chief of Sudanese Army (SAF), General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, in apparent attempt to mend relations; this, alongside Tigray People’s Liberation Army’s alleged support for SAF, may have prompted decision.

Somalia's president visited Eritrea for third time since January. Somali President Mohamud 8-9 July made third official trip to Eritrea this year, meeting with President Isaias Afwerki to discuss political and military cooperation. Mohamud also addressed Somali Air Force cadets undergoing training at Eritrean Air Force Training Centre, urging them to revive once-prominent Somali Air Force and to safeguard national unity. Visit took place in context of diplomatic disputes between Mogadishu and Addis Ababa, as Somalia opposes Ethiopia's port deal signed in Jan with breakaway region of Somaliland.

Gunmen attacked Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia. Unidentified gunmen 6 July stabbed seven Eritrean refugees at Alemwach refugee camp, North Gondar Zone, in Ethiopia's Amhara Region; Eritrean refugees had been relocated to Alemwach in 2021 after facing attacks in their previous camps in Tigray region.

➔ **Ethiopia Fano militias continued to wreak havoc in Amhara, thousands of displaced Tigrayans returned to areas disputed between Tigray and Amhara, and Oromia insurgency took heavy toll on civilians.**

Amhara insurgency continued despite peace initiative. After late-June formation of Regional Peace Council to facilitate talks with Fano militias, some factions 16 July formed Amhara Fano Popular Organization and elected as leader former journalist Eskinder Nega, who in June stressed need for united front before talks with govt can begin. Meanwhile, clashes between security forces and Fano continued in East, West and North Gojjam, North Shewa, North and South Wollo, and North, Central, South and West Gondar zones. Violence 5 July also broke out between Fano and ethnic Agaw militias in Quara woreda (West Gondar) after Fano asked Agaw to hand over weapons and stop supporting govt; Fano 9 July reportedly took control of area, while local authorities reported over 80 civilians killed and 10,000 displaced.

Tensions persisted over return of displaced Tigrayans to disputed territories. Some 15,000 internally displaced persons late June-early July returned to Tselemti district in Tigray's North Western Zone after removal of Amhara administration, and to Alamata town in Southern Tigray Zone, sparking two-day protest from Amhara residents who said Tigray soldiers were among returnees. Resettlement in Western Tigray likely to face resistance from well-armed militias associated with Amhara administration there. Meanwhile, tensions between Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and federal govt, and divisions within TPLF leadership came to fore. Notably, PM Abiy late July threatened war if TPLF does not register with election board before it holds party congress, while Tigray Interim Administration President Getachew Reda 29 July accused TPLF leadership of corruption, mismanagement and jeopardising regional security.

Mass kidnapping highlighted insecurity in Oromia region. Clashes between Ethiopian military and Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) persisted across Oromia, including East and West Wollega, Horo Guduru Wollega, South West, West and North Shewa, Sheger City areas, and Guji zones. Assailants believed to be OLA members 2 July kidnapped over 160 students near Gebre Guracha town (North Shewa), though many were reportedly released in following days; OLA 11 July denied involvement and blamed govt.

➡ **Somalia Govt prepared to resume operations against Al-Shabaab as militants conducted further attacks; clan conflicts spiked, leaving dozens killed in Jubaland state.**

Preparations for counter-insurgency offensive continued. In build-up to long-promised resumption of military campaign against Al-Shabaab, President Mohamud early July held meetings with security officials and visited frontlines including Waragadhi area of Middle Shabelle region (centre). Smaller operations continued elsewhere including in Hirshabelle state (centre), as govt and allied clan militias 11 July seized Burweyn and Shaw villages east of Shabelle river in expansion of operations' focus from river's western bank. In Jubaland state (south) security forces 10 July captured Harbole and Miido villages between Afmadow and Kismayo towns; but Al-Shabaab continued to pose threat and 22 July attacked the two villages as well as recently recaptured town Buulo Xaaji; group, however, failed to defeat Jubaland forces, incurring heavy casualties. Militants also carried out attacks in capital Mogadishu including 13 July jail break attempt that left eight dead, and car bomb that killed five and injured 20 next day near Presidential Palace.

Clan violence remained high in several states. In Jubaland, clash between security units 5 July in Luuq district, Gedo region, in following days snowballed into clan-based conflict, killing at least 30 and displacing 42,000; state officials 9 July visited area and secured initial ceasefire ahead of further mediation. Clan violence also recorded in July along Galmudug-Puntland state border and in Lower Shabelle region (South West state). Meanwhile, local militia 15 July attacked convoy carrying armaments near Abudwaq town, Galmudug state (centre), killing at least ten and seizing heavy weaponry, raising concerns about arms proliferation.

Tensions continued ahead of federal member states elections. Ahead of federal member state elections, due in Nov but surrounded by uncertainty, Jubaland parliament 2 July amended state constitution to abolish term limits and pave way for incumbent state President Madobe to stand again.

Ankara attempted to mediate between Mogadishu and Addis Ababa. Amid continued tensions over Ethiopia-Somaliland port deal, Türkiye 1 July announced it had facilitated indirect talks between FM Fiqi and his Ethiopian counterpart; officials did not reach agreement but committed to further talks on 2 Sept.

➡ **Somaliland Authorities affirmed November schedule for party and presidential elections, while ties with Somalia remained strained.**

Electoral preparations continued despite political tensions. Amid speculation govt was seeking to delay concurrent party and presidential elections, election commission 6 July and cabinet 10 July reiterated polls would be held as scheduled on 13 Nov; electoral body also cautioned against "interfering" with its work or "spreading false information" about election process.

Tensions with Mogadishu remained high. Govt 16 July expressed "grave concern" over arms proliferation in Somalia and "Mogadishu govt's apparent inability to secure its arms", called for reinstatement of UN arms embargo after militia previous day seized heavy weaponry near Abudwaq town, Galmudug state (see Somalia). Hargeisa 23 July also reaffirmed "significance" of its deal with Ethiopia for

diplomatic recognition in return for access to port, asserting its “sovereign right” to engage in relations and agreements with other nations.

➔ **South Sudan Talks between govt and holdout opposition groups stalled after VP Machar’s party withdrew from initiative, concerns about December election abounded, and violence persisted in several areas.**

Machar’s party withdrew from Kenya-led “Tumaini” peace initiative. Talks between govt and several opposition groups who did not sign 2018 peace accord, dubbed Tumaini Initiative, early July continued in Kenyan capital Nairobi; parties 15 July signed protocols on security reforms, humanitarian access and confidence-building measures, among other things. Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-In Opposition (SPLM-IO) led by VP Machar (which forms part of govt delegation) 16 July withdrew from talks, however, saying initiative undermined 2018 peace deal. Decision brought dialogue to halt, and govt delegation returned to capital Juba for consultations.

Juba remained divided about how to proceed with December general election. Separate dialogue in Juba among 2018 peace deal signatories continued throughout July to clarify electoral process and address other unimplemented provisions of agreement. Tensions mounted between President Kiir’s Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) and SPLM-IO, however, exacerbated by disagreement over Tumaini Initiative. Some fear Kiir will hold election without consensus among parties on process, further undermining peace deal and raising risk of political turbulence. Meanwhile, international actors remained concerned about poll, with U.S. official Elizabeth Campbell 22 July criticising govt’s “lack of progress” toward creating conditions for “genuine and peaceful elections”.

Security situation remained fragile. In Equatoria region, reports late June-early July emerged that rebel group National Salvation Front (NAS) led by Thomas Cirillo was actively recruiting in Western Equatoria State, while John Kenyi Loburon, who defected from NAS late June, reportedly recruited in Central Equatoria State; divisions within NAS, including risk of clashes between Cirillo’s and Loburon’s groups, could fuel instability in region. In Jonglei State (Greater Upper Nile region), clashes between Duk County and Twic East County communities 19 July killed at least nine. Meanwhile, Sudan’s paramilitary Rapid Support Forces made gains near South Sudanese border, raising concerns of spillover (see Sudan).

Economy continued to deteriorate. South Sudan’s main oil pipeline through Sudan remained in disrepair, shrinking govt revenues and fuelling inflation. Parliament 26 July summoned finance minister to explain delays in civil servants’ salaries.

➔ **Sudan Fighting between army (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) persisted in multiple states, U.S. sought to revive peace efforts, and array of Sudanese actors gathered for political dialogues.**

In east, RSF advance into Sennar state slowed as its forces eyed White Nile state. RSF early July gained more ground in Sennar, seizing military bases in al-Mazmoum, al-Suki, Wad al-Neiyal and al-Dinder towns, after its late-June capture of state capital, Sinja, and strategic Jebel Moya mountains. Fighting late July began to subside, however, primarily due to seasonal rains complicating military movements. Meanwhile, RSF attacked multiple locations in neighbouring White Nile

state, including 29 July drone attack on army barracks in state capital, Rabak, indicating White Nile may be paramilitary's next target. Hostilities persisted in El Gezira and Blue Nile states, and in and around capital Khartoum.

Clashes continued in western North Darfur and central West Kordofan states. RSF's siege of North Darfur capital, El Fasher, persisted as battles raged across state; all sides targeted civilians allegedly supporting their opponents, threatening to exacerbate intercommunal conflict. Humanitarian crisis remained dire, with World Health Organization official 16 July saying fighting had made access to El Fasher "impossible". In West Kordofan, RSF 3 July seized strategic town of al-Meiram near South Sudanese border as it consolidated control over almost entire state except Babanussa city.

U.S. called for ceasefire talks. U.S. 23 July invited warring parties to Switzerland in Aug in effort to reinvigorate peace talks. RSF next day confirmed it would attend; Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan's govt in Port Sudan 30 July signalled possible participation, though it remains unclear whether SAF will attend given Burhan's later statements to his soldiers contradicting announcement. Burhan 31 July survived apparent assassination attempt. Meanwhile, Ethiopian PM Abiy 9 July travelled to Port Sudan city and met with Burhan to discuss "sustainable solutions for Sudan's stability".

Two political dialogues among Sudanese actors held. Cairo 6 June convened Sudanese civil society and political groups in attempt to achieve unified stance on resolving conflict. AU 10-15 July held preparatory meeting of Inter-Sudanese Political Dialogue with around 20 political and civil society groups in Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa; participants agreed to hold dialogue conference following ceasefire and establish interim caretaker govt.

Sahel

➔ **Burkina Faso Govt faced criticism from senior military figures about widespread insecurity and repression; diplomatic tensions heightened with Benin and Côte d'Ivoire.**

Discord within military persisted over govt's failure to address insecurity and shrinking space for dissent. Former President Lt. Col. Damiba 1 July sent letter to President Capt. Traoré raising alarm about challenges facing country, said "all-military strategy" had failed, and denounced violations of "elementary civil rights" amid ongoing repression and insecurity. Reports of internal discord within security forces continued; notably, gunmen 13 July abducted two senior military officers, including Damiba ally Lt. Col. Bamouni. Space for critics continued to be curtailed. Notably, at least four renowned journalists went missing from mid-June to late July, including unidentified armed men 13 July abducting radio journalist Alain Traoré. Govt 13-18 July also passed series of restrictive legislation criminalising homosexuality, allowing state to strip someone of nationality if they "act against the interests of the country" and permitting govt to take up to 15% stake in new mining projects.

Insecurity continued across country. Al-Qaeda-affiliated Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM) throughout month clashed with govt forces and military auxiliaries, with civilian fatalities recorded; notably, JNIM militants 12 July attacked Nagrabondi village (East region), reportedly killing 20 civilians. Thousands 17 and 20 July gathered in Bogande town (East) and Djibo city (Sahel region), respectively, to denounce govt's inability to tackle deteriorating security situation.

Govt criticised Benin and Côte d'Ivoire, Alliance of Sahel States (AES) held summit. During 11 July speech which addressed security situation, diplomatic relations and plans for next five years, Traoré accused Benin and Côte d'Ivoire of hosting French military to train jihadist fighters; both immediately denied allegations and Benin 16 July summoned Burkinabé ambassador. Concurrently, Côte d'Ivoire 16 July expelled over 150 newly arrived Burkinabé refugees near shared border, heightening bilateral tensions. Meanwhile, AES – bringing Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger together – 6 July held summit in Niger's capital Niamey to discuss joint military operations and reaffirmed decision to leave West African regional body ECOWAS (see Mali, Niger).

➔ **Mali Govt and Russian paramilitary forces suffered significant losses against separatists in north; crackdown on critics continued amid easing of restrictions on political party activities.**

Dozens of Russian forces reportedly killed in Kidal region, violence in centre continued. Govt with support from Russian paramilitary group Africa Corps (formerly Wagner Group) 22 July recaptured Inafarak town (Kidal) near Algerian border from separatist Permanent Strategic Framework (CSP) armed group coalition; troops pushed on to Tinzaouaten town but suffered heavy defeat in fighting 25-28 July; unconfirmed reports suggested dozens of Russian paramilitaries killed including local commander in perhaps deadliest incident to date for Russian forces in Mali. Meanwhile, local sources and civil society groups 5 July reported discovering mass graves containing dozens of civilian bodies near Abeibara village (Kidal) after military operations in late June. Also in north, Islamic State Sahel Province 1 July allegedly killed Ismaguil Ag Arahmat, pro-Bamako military leader of Movement for the Salvation of Azawad, in Gao town (Gao region). In Mopti region (centre), al-Qaeda-affiliated Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM) fighters 1 July killed at least 21 civilians at wedding in Djiguibombo village; 21 July allegedly attacked Dembo village, killing 25 civilians.

Repression continued as govt lifted three-month ban on political party activities. Court 8 July sentenced PM Maïga's close aide, Boubacar Karamoko Traoré, to one-year imprisonment for "undermining the credibility of the state" for letter that criticised govt. Authorities 12 July arrested Youssouf Daba Diawara, associate of govt critic in exile Imam Mahmoud Dicko, and 15 July charged him with "opposition to legitimate authority". Meanwhile, authorities 10 July re-authorized political party activities which had been suspended in April, same day invited parties to resume national dialogue; several party leaders 15 July said they would boycott consultations while their political partners remained in detention.

Sahelian states reiterated break from ECOWAS. Alliance of Sahel States (AES) – bringing Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger together – 6 July held summit in Niger's capital Niamey, to discuss joint military operations and reaffirmed decision to leave

West African regional body ECOWAS (see Burkina Faso, Niger); President Col. Goïta named inaugural leader of rotating presidency of AES heads of states.

➡ 🇳🇬 **Niger** **Efforts to repair diplomatic ties with Benin made progress as neighbours agreed to establish joint committee which may lead to wider agreement in August; detainees broke out of major prison housing jihadists.**

Diplomatic efforts progressed in Benin-Niger dispute. Following mediation initiative by two former Beninese presidents, including late June visit to capital Niamey, Beninese President Talon 1 July issued communiqué emphasising commitment to “swift restoration of dialogue” with Niger. Nigerien authorities next day proposed formation of joint committee to resolve differences. Interior Minister Gen. Mohamed Toumba 24-25 July visited Benin’s Cotonou city to meet Talon, as both sides reported positive meetings and progress. Talks could pave way to restoring ties, reopening border, and resuming oil exports through joint pipeline. Meanwhile, unidentified armed group 13 July attacked Niger-Benin pipeline near Muntseka village, Tahoua region (west), copying tactics employed by pro-deposed President Bazoum armed group Patriotic Liberation Front in June.

Violence in west and south west continued. In Tillabery (south west), military 4 July claimed to have killed “more than 100 terrorists” in response to June attack on Tassia village. Unconfirmed number of detainees 11 July escaped from Koutoukalé high-security prison in Tillabery, where dozens of jihadist fighters are detained; authorities 15 July said large number of escapees caught and three killed during search operations. Suspected al-Qaeda linked militants 21 July reportedly ambushed military near Tankadémi area in Tahoua; details and casualties remained unclear.

Govt continued geopolitical realignment, including away from Western military support. Authorities withdrew permit of Canadian company GoviEx to exploit uranium deposit at Madaouela mine, Agadez region, after firm failed to meet 3 July deadline to begin extraction. Germany 6 July announced withdrawal of all 38 troops by 31 Aug, while U.S. forces next day completed troop withdrawal from base in Niamey, with its remaining forces in Agadez to leave by 15 Sept. Meanwhile, Alliance of Sahel States (AES) – bringing Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger together – 6 July held summit in Niamey to discuss joint military operations and reaffirmed decision to leave West African regional body ECOWAS; ECOWAS next day held meeting in Nigeria and designated Presidents Faye of Senegal and Gnassingbé of Togo as mediators with AES (see Burkina Faso, Mali).

West Africa

➡ 🇳🇬 **Benin** **Efforts to repair diplomatic ties with Niger made progress as neighbours agreed to establish joint committee which may lead to wider agreement in August; jihadist violence remained threat in north.**

Relations with Niger thawed amid former presidents’ mediation initiative. Benin’s former presidents Boni Yayi and Soglo 1 July met with current President Talon to discuss their late-June visit to Niger’s capital Niamey as part of efforts to solve year-long Benin-Niger tensions. In communiqué same day, Talon emphasised

commitment to “swift restoration of dialogue” with Niamey, while Nigerien authorities next day announced formation of joint committee to resolve differences. Nigerien Interior Minister Gen. Mohamed Toumba 24-25 July visited Benin’s Cotonou city to meet Talon, as both sides reported positive meetings and progress. Talks could pave way to restoring ties, reopening border and resuming oil exports through joint pipeline. Meanwhile, govt 11 July dismissed Burkina Faso President Capt. Traoré’s allegations that Benin hosted French military bases as “disinformation” and 16 July summoned Burkinabé ambassador.

Jihadist insurgency persisted in northern departments. Suspected al-Qaeda-affiliated Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims militants 24 July killed seven soldiers and five park rangers near Mékrou river in National Park W; meanwhile, amid concerns over impact of spreading insecurity along northern border, govt 21 July announced some 5,000 Burkinabé refugees had crossed border in space of two days.

➔ **Côte d’Ivoire Former President Gbagbo began 2025 election campaign; tensions with Burkina Faso remained high.**

Former President Gbagbo kicked off campaign for 2025 presidential election. Gbagbo from African People’s Party-Côte d’Ivoire (PPA-CI) party 14 July called for opposition to “unite” ahead of vote during speech in Bonoua town, former stronghold of party he founded in 1980s. Gbagbo’s candidacy, however, faces major obstacles including his age (79), ineligibility due to 2018 criminal conviction for looting Central Bank of West African States during 2010-2011 post-electoral crisis and competition from previous allies.

Ties with Ouagadougou remained strained. Burkina Faso’s President Capt. Traoré 11 July accused Côte d’Ivoire of hosting “centre of operations to destabilise” his country, following recent incidents along border. In interview with Jeune Afrique newspaper, Defence Minister Téné Birahima Ouattara 19 July denied accusations, saying any destabilisation would send people across its border. Meanwhile, govt 16 July expelled over 160 Burkinabé refugees who had just crossed border, as authorities appeared increasingly reluctant to accept refugees, seen as potential source of insecurity; country has hosted over 60,000 refugees from Burkina Faso since 2021.

Reports emerged of planned U.S. military base in north. Amid early-July reports that govt had agreed to establish American military base in Odienné town (north west), govt officials on several occasions throughout July said they were not “aware” of plans. Meanwhile, speaking to media in Abidjan city, U.S. commander for Africa Gen. Kenneth Ekman 24 July dismissed reports, saying “we have no plans to build a base”; U.S. would, however, continue working with Ivorian security forces to “consolidate existing partnerships”.

In another important development. Clashes 25 July erupted between residents and local govt officials backed by security forces in Adjamé Village neighbourhood in Abidjan following evictions linked to road construction project, reportedly killing two people.

↓ **Guinea** **Military authorities intensified crackdown on civil society opponents, as tensions rose over death of former junta ally, exposing rifts in ruling powers.**

Authorities allegedly detained several activists, creating widespread uproar. In incident that highlighted mounting tensions between military govt and civil society, one of main civil society groups National Front for Defense of Constitution (FNDC) accused security forces of “kidnapping” three of their activists on night of 9 July – Foniké Menguè, Mamadou Billo Bah, as well as Mohamed Cissé, who was released following day; FNDC condemned arrest and claimed it was carried out “in violent manner” while activists’ lawyers said those who took them did not have warrant. In response, coalition of opposition parties and civil society groups Les Forces Vives de Guinée 13 July called for mobilisation to free activists, restore constitutional order and fundamental freedoms; lawyers’ union 16 July began two-week strike to protest arbitrary arrests. Attorney General 17 July denied junta’s involvement in disappearances and called for investigation; activists’ lawyers next day made “urgent” appeal to International Criminal Court. Arrests of opposition figures continued late month including of activist Simon Pierre Camara 27 July and politician Francis Haba next day. Security forces and demonstrators 30 July clashed in capital Conakry during anti-govt protests organised by civil society groups demanding activists’ release. Rights group Amnesty International 11 July said authorities have increased “crackdown on peaceful dissent” in recent months.

Rumours of cracks within military emerged after former chief of staff’s death. Sudden death of former military head Gen. Sadiba Koulibaly in June continued to drive speculation of splits within army. Despite authorities maintaining Koulibaly – previously key ally of President Col. Doumbouya – had died of cardiac arrest, many details remained unclear; govt 5 July called on media to act responsibly over case and said victim’s family “could go before the courts to have the doubts removed” if they had uncertainty over cause of death. Case continued to raise speculation throughout month that govt remained worried over potential threats to Doumbouya’s position.

In another important development. Govt 29 July presented draft constitution to be submitted to referendum before end 2024.

➔ **Nigeria** **Security forces continued operations against armed groups but jihadist, bandit, herder-farmer and separatist violence persisted.**

Jihadist violence lingered in North East despite military efforts. Govt forces reported further gains against Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) and Boko Haram in Borno state. Notably, air force claimed it killed several insurgents, destroyed numerous hideouts and camps in 3 July airstrikes in Mandara mountains. Meanwhile, also in Borno, insurgent explosive devices 25 July killed at least seven soldiers on Monguno-Baga road and 31 July killed at least 19 civilians at teahouse in Kawuri village, Konduga area. Court 28 July sentenced 125 suspected Boko Haram members and financiers to various jail terms.

Bandits plagued North West and North Central zones, despite security operations. Notably, in Katsina state, bandits 6 July kidnapped 26 in Runka village, Safana area. In Zamfara state, armed group 14 July killed four and abducted about 150 from Dan

Isa village, Kaura Namoda area. In Sokoto state's Sabon Birni area, bandits 27 July seized local chief and six others, demanding over \$300,000 ransom, and 30 July killed two, abducted 20.

Herder-farmer crisis remained potent as govt announced new peace efforts. Armed groups attacked several farming villages in Benue state: 9 and 14 July killed 25 people in Agatu and Gwer West areas, locals blamed herders; 20 July killed 18 and abducted two in Katsina-Ala area as authorities blamed "local militia". President Tinubu 9 July announced creation of new federal livestock ministry and committee to recommend measures to end herder-farmer violence.

Separatist-related violence continued in South East. Army 1 July said it killed a leader of separatist group Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) armed wing Eastern Security Network (ESN), and arrested two others during raids on forest camps in Imo state. Gunmen 29-30 July killed five police in Owerri and Mbaitoli areas of Imo; Finland-based IPOB factional leader, Simon Ekpa, claimed his Biafra Defence Forces were responsible.

In another important development. Govt and security forces ramped up efforts to prevent planned 1-15 Aug nationwide protests against rising living costs, including raising minimum wage and threatening crackdown on violence; but protest leaders remained adamant and tensions rose nationwide.

➔ **Togo Jihadist violence continued in north with assault on base that reportedly killed dozen troops.**

Dozens of suspected al-Qaeda-affiliated Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM) insurgents 20 July attacked military outpost in Kpinkankandi village near Burkina Faso border, Savanes region, reportedly killing at least 12 soldiers and holding base for several hours; 40 militants reportedly killed during attack. Assault came after suspected JNIM fighters 21 June killed two soldiers and wounded two others in attack on army patrol in Kpentendjoaga village and same day killed four civilians in Bamone village, both Savanes region.