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30 Years of Rwandan Genocide One Year of War in Sudan



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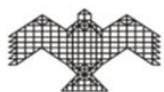
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NIAS Africa Studies would include a series of expert lectures, workshops, publications and a monthly exclusively focussed on Africa. The initiative also aims to create a network of young scholars studying Africa and African scholars studying in various Indian institutions.



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About Africa Monitor

Africa Monitor is an academic initiative under the area studies programme of STIR. It is an advanced form of Africa Weekly that used to be published earlier. The monthly publication includes commentaries, short notes and daily developments on a monthly basis.

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Image Source: Al Jazeera

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COMMENTARY

30 years after the Rwandan Genocide

Anu Maria Joseph

On 7 April, it would be 30 years since the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, a massacre of 800,000 ethnic Tutsis and moderate Hutus by the ethnic Hutus over 100 days. On the day, Rwandan President Paul Kagame will light a remembrance flame at the Kigali Genocide Memorial.

The UN and the African Union (AU) would additionally join the commemoration. On 2 April, remembering the genocide, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres stated: “This year, we remind ourselves of genocide’s rancid root: hate. To those who would seek to divide us, we must deliver a clear, unequivocal and urgent message: never again.”

On 4 April, French President Emmanuel Macron, in a video message which is to be released on 7 April, stated: “France, which could have stopped the genocide with its western and African allies, did not have the will.”

A brief historical note on the genocide

In 1994, on 6 April, a day before the massacre began, a plane carrying Rwanda's Hutu President Juvenal Habyarimana was shot down, killing everyone on board. The extremists within the Hutus blamed the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF); the latter is a Tutsi-led rebel group which fought the Rwandan government during 1990-1993. Subsequently, the Hutu extremists began a slaughter campaign against the ethnic Tutsis. Neighbours and families killed each other using machetes and small arms. Tutsi women and girls were raped and kept as sex slaves; more than 15,000 women and girls were raped. The youth wing of the governing MRND party, Interahamwe, was converted into a militia to carry out the massacre. Through radios

and newspapers, the Hutus spread the genocide propaganda under the phrase "weed out the cockroaches." The slaughter ended on 4 July 1994; the RPF with the support of the Ugandan army marched into the capital Kigali. Nearly two million Hutus fled to the Democratic Republic of Congo fearing revenge attacks.

A too late and too little international response

It was too late and when it happened it was too little. The UN Mission to Rwanda (UNAMIR) was deployed in October 1993 with a limited mandate to implement the Arusha Agreement; the agreement signed in August 1993, between the RPF and the Rwandan government, ended the conflict. The mission did little during the genocide and withdrew soon after the outbreak. Later, in November 1994, the UNSC established the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Arusha (in Tanzania) to prosecute the perpetrators. The Tribunal has indicted 93 people responsible for the genocide. In 1999, the UN acknowledged its failure in stopping the genocide. Outside the UN, there was little interest among the other big countries. The US, after its troops were killed in Somalia in 1993, was not interested in getting involved in another African conflict. France, an ally of the Hutu government, (France supported the Hutu-led government under Habyarimana who was fighting against the Tutsi-led RPF militia since 1990) evacuated its citizens and was accused of not doing enough to stop the violence. It was only in 2021, after 27 years, that French President Emmanuel Macron, for the first time, acknowledged its "overwhelming responsibility" for the genocide.

The generational trauma and a never ending post-genocide reconstruction

Two-thirds of the Rwandan population today are born after the genocide. Gacaca, a system of community courts within Rwanda was set up to achieve truth, justice and reconciliation. The gacaca courts adjudicated over 1.2 million cases. At present, Rwandan society does not talk about ethnicity anymore. The historic ethnic division between the Tutsi, Hutus and Twa is replaced by Ndi Umunyarwanda, meaning "I am Rwandan." Ndi Umunyarwanda has been a successful post-genocide social reconstruction to move on from the past, at least for the young generation. However, fear of a resurgence of ethnic tensions exists among the old generation. A wave of violence has been ongoing in eastern DRC bordering Rwanda with the involvement of several militant groups, including the Democratic Forces for the Liberation Rwanda (DFLR). DFLR is known to be the perpetrators of the genocide. Many fear that the extreme ideologies of the DFLR could surpass the progress made by the Ndi Umunyarwanda.

International debate on genocide

The first UN initiative to prevent another genocide was the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) in 2005. According to the R2P, all countries have the responsibility to protect people from genocide crimes by force, if required, with the authorisation of the UNSC. However, R2P is criticised for its non-binding character. The R2P was first tried in Libya in 2011 against the Gadaffi regime. Although the foreign intervention prevented genocide, the fall of Gadaffi and the subsequent civil war put the Western intentions behind the interventions under

scrutiny. Now, the West is indifferent to intervention, especially in Africa. In 2020, an ethnic conflict broke out in Ethiopia's Tigray region between the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Ethiopian federal forces. The conflict killed more than 600,000 people. The international community remained silent while the violence continued. The situation repeated today in the Sudanese civil war and the war in Gaza.

Lessons learned and not learned

The international community consider the Rwandan genocide of 1994 as a lesson that gathered a collective conscience against 'genocide.' 30 years into truth, justice and reconciliation, Rwanda is on the right path towards social reconstruction. However, concerns about resurging ethnic tension do persist. Meanwhile, the international community continue to discuss how an early action could have prevented the genocide.

Although "never again" is a common narrative, collective mechanisms and actions to prevent genocides are a few. Moreover, countries waver to acknowledge the "g-word" which comes with a baggage of responsibilities. Countries settle for conflicts in Africa as low-intensity conflict leaving it to humanitarian agencies. After Rwanda, Darfur in Sudan, Rohingyas in Myanmar and Tigrayans in Ethiopia all were genocide victims which the international community failed to acknowledge and prevent. Until addressing the causes is prioritised above the consequences, "responsibility to protect (R2P)" would remain aspirational and "never again" would end up "yet again."

COMMENTARY

Sudan: One Year of Civil War

Anu Maria Joseph

On 15 April, Sudan marked one year of the civil war. The conflict between the rival military forces, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has killed nearly 16,000 people and displaced 8.4 million.

On 10 May, the RSF advanced towards the al-Fasher region in North Darfur, the only region under the control of the SAF in Darfur. The conflict has intensified in the region.

The international community has acknowledged that the war in Sudan has been “forgotten” at an international conference discussing the conflict hosted by France on 15 April. France's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Stéphane Séjourné, stated that “the Sudanese people have been the victims of a terrible war” for a year and suffered from “being forgotten” and “indifference.”

According to the UN, Sudan is facing “one of the worst humanitarian disasters in recent memory” and “the largest internal displacement crisis in the world.”

The one year of the war is being marked by intensifying and expanding violence, a humanitarian crisis and a regional crisis.

The state of war

For the past year, two rival military leaders - Hamdan Dagalo of the paramilitary RSF (a derivative of Janjaweed militia) and Abdel Fattah al-Burhan of the SAF- have been fighting for the country's leadership. RSF and SAF which together toppled the dictator, Omar al-Bashir in 2019 had promised a civilian transition at the earliest. The promised transition never happened and SAF carried out another coup sabotaging the civilian-military transitional government. The war began after the SAF solely took control of the

country and RSF disagreed to merge with the SAF.

The conflict has expanded in terms of geography and intensity. The war, which started in the capital, Khartoum, has spread to the cities of Omdurman, Port Sudan, Bahri and recently, Wad Madani. It has spread over the states of Darfur, Nile and Kordofan. Both sides carry out frequent attacks using tanks, artillery, rockets, and air-delivered munitions in all the hotspots. The RSF controls the majority of the conflict hotspots, especially the capital Khartoum. The SAF is held east of the country, including Port Sudan near the Red Sea. In March, SAF advanced and recaptured several pockets of Omdurman. What began as a military rivalry has turned into ethnic conflict, especially in Darfur and Kordofan states. RSF, along with several arab militias, is accused of carrying out atrocities against the Darfurians. Arab and non-Arab militias have taken sides with the RSF and the SAF, respectively. Several regional and international mediations have failed without a concrete outcome. Meanwhile, both parties are vying for international and regional legitimacy for a sovereign leadership of the country.

The indefinite human cost

According to the UN, 48 million people are facing catastrophic levels of hunger in the country. It has warned of an impending famine. Nearly 230,000 children are severely malnourished. Ethnic atrocities are mounting in Darfur, a region which has been grappling with two decades of genocidal violence. Civilians are slaughtered, rape is being used as a weapon, aid camps and homes are burned. According to the Ministry of Health, more than 11,000 suspected cases of cholera, including over 300 deaths, have been reported from 11 of Sudan's 18 states. Aid

agencies claim that reach to conflict-hit regions is restricted by the army, and RSF-controlled areas risk looting.

Regional repercussions

WFP warns that across the region, 28 million people face acute food insecurity: 18 million in Sudan, seven million in South Sudan, and three million in Chad. Nearly two million people have fled to neighbouring countries, including South Sudan and Chad. Due to a lack of funds and refugee surge, three million people in South Sudan are facing acute hunger with no assistance from the WFP. Similarly, in Chad, 1.2 million refugees need humanitarian support. The exodus surge has burdened the neighbouring countries of South Sudan, Chad and Ethiopia, where ethnic rivalries and violence are a daily occurrence along the borders. Recently, ethnic violence in the Abiey region, a disputed land between Sudan and South Sudan, has increased, with the UN reporting more than 100 casualties.

A lack of international response to the worsening humanitarian response has left the country on the verge of collapse. A famine would likely spill over the region, impacting Chad and South Sudan. Humanitarian crises would potentially trigger inter and intra-ethnic and resource violence.

International limitations

The international community initially made considerable efforts to bring about peace talks. At least nine rounds of ceasefire efforts were mediated by several international actors, including the US, the UN, and Saudi Arabia; all failed. Both

warring parties are persistent for an absolute victory. They have shown little commitment to compliance. Currently, with the war in Gaza and Ukraine taking momentum, attention to the conflict in Sudan has decreased. Although both sides rhetorically agreed to all rounds of ceasefires, none was achieved on the ground.

The African Union (AU) and other African countries are absent in all the mediations. Regional efforts are limited to calling for an end to hostilities. The lack of effective ceasefire monitoring mechanisms failed the international efforts. The efforts are challenged by the inability to propose a peace talk which matches the complex conflict. Unsuccessful attempts imply the need to revisit the approach to the conflict in Sudan.

The conflict stalemate

The conflict in Sudan has been prolonged for a year with failed ceasefires and peace talks. It has become complex, with the involvement of multiple actors and extended geography and character. Now, it is challenging for the mediators to bring the multifaceted conflict to a negotiating table. Although the SAF has gained a little ground around Khartoum, defeating the RSF is far from happening, and the RSF is unpopular and unequipped to defeat the SAF and take over the country's leadership. A compromise between the RSF and the SAF is unlikely. Hence, the fighting is at a stalemate, which would continue with a lower frequency during the coming months until a significant breakthrough.

COMMENTARY

One year of civil war in Sudan: Regional implications

Vetriselvi Baskaran

On 15 April, one year into the war in Sudan, humanitarian agencies are warning that the country is on the brink of famine due to the dire conditions and insufficient aid. The conflict has intensified and expanded, reaching the cities of Khartoum, Omdurman, Bahri and Port Sudan and the Darfur and Kordofan states. The warring parties, the RSF and the SAF have sided with ethnic Arab and non-Arab militias and have been carrying out atrocities. The conflict has killed more than 16,000 and has left thousands displaced. Several rounds of ceasefires mediated by regional and international actors have failed.

On 5 April, the WFP's spokeswoman, Leni Kinzli, stated that the UN's World Food Programme (WFP) has begun distributing food in Sudan's war-ravaged West and Central Darfur for the first time in months. WFP said two aid convoys crossed the border from Chad in late March, distributing food and nutrition assistance to about 250,000 people for a month. This was the first convoy to cross the Chad border following a long negotiation to reopen the humanitarian corridors which were closed by authorities loyal to the Sudanese army.

Meanwhile, according to the Sudan Tribune, the conflict has been escalating in North Darfur. On 27 April, the UNSC expressed concern and asked the parties to take steps to de-escalate the conflict. Local media in Sudan reported that a full-scale attack on the city of al-Fashir was already underway. The spokesperson for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the attack would be devastating since the city is already on the brink of famine.

While the conflict is escalating and intensifying, there is a critical warning of famine and an increase in displacement which would ultimately lead to a crisis beyond Sudan's borders.

The following are the regional implications of the civil war in Sudan.

1. The spillover of the conflict. Sudan shares common cross-border communities with Chad, South Sudan and CAR. With the countries unable to control the cross-border movement due to the war, violence has erupted in several common cross border communities of Rounga, Zaghawa, Massalit, and Tama. For example, the SAF-allied Zaghawa tribes of the Darfur region are extended to Chad. They seek to protect their kin in Sudan against the RSF's atrocities in Darfur. The disruption of South Sudan's oil pipeline in Sudan and inability to repair has affected the country's oil demands. Arab News quoted South Sudan Vice President Riek Machar: "The repercussions of the conflict in Sudan extend far beyond our economy, posing significant threats to our security." In the Abyei region, a border region claimed by Sudan and South Sudan, communal clashes erupted in February. 13 intercommunal clashes between the Ngok Dinka and Twic Dinka communities, seven between the Ngok Dinka and Nuer communities, and one between the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya community were recorded by Sudan Tribune in the region. The media also reported that there were an estimated 175 clashes in the region where 257 people were killed. The clashes on the Al-Fashaga border have deteriorated the relationship between Ethiopia and Sudan. Recently, on 12 May, Sudanese army ground defences shot down two drones attempting to target an airport in the Al-Fashaga.

2. The humanitarian crisis beyond borders. According to the OCHA, in April 2024, over 8.6 million people have fled their homes since the conflict began. More than two million people crossed the border, including 1.8 million who fled to neighbouring countries including the Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, and South Sudan. Of these, 660,000 people fled to South Sudan, 579,000 people to Chad, and 500,000 people to Egypt. UNHCR reported that one-fifth of children who fled Sudan to Chad are facing acute malnourishment and food insecurity. OCHA says that nearly four million children have been displaced. About 17.7 million people experience acute hunger. The country is grappling with acute shortages of essential items such as food, clean water, medicines and fuel. According to several humanitarian agencies, about 65 per cent of the population lacks healthcare as conflict zones are no longer functional. Disease outbreaks are increasing with disrupted health services, including disease surveillance, functions of laboratories and rapid response teams. The Federal Ministry of Health estimated over 11,000 suspected cases of Cholera and 305 deaths from eight states. Further, the UN Refugee Agency reported that schools are all closed and students are deprived of education. In December, the UNHRC reported that at least 118 people were subjected to sexual violence.

3. The involvement of the proxies. Several regional and international actors including the US, Russia, China, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Israel are playing their role in the conflict to protect their interests. Russia's Wagner group has been allegedly involved in the conflict. The group has been benefiting from the

country's mineral resources. UAE's Haftar along with Wagner has been supplying weapons to the RSF. Both have a long relationship with RSF's leader through the mining and smuggling of gold from Darfur's Jebel Amer mines. The SAF is backed by Egypt which sees Sudan as a major ally against Ethiopia in its conflict over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). With Ethiopia, Sudan's SAF had a bitter relationship over the disputed Al-Fashaga region. Iran backs the SAF with weapon supply and "Mohajer 6" drones to get its foothold in the Red Sea. The leaders of the SAF and the RSF have visited several countries seeking alliances and legitimacy to their leadership. While, the RSF leader Dagalo visited Ethiopia, Uganda, Djibouti, South Africa, and Kenya, SAF leader Al-Burhan visited Libya and Egypt.

4. Failure of regional organizations. Negotiation efforts by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the AU, and other regional actors including South Sudan have failed. In December, IGAD planned for negotiations and invited both parties. However, Al-Burhan of SAF suspended Sudan's membership in the group for inviting RSF to a summit. In March, the UNSC passed a resolution calling for a ceasefire ahead of Ramadan. SAF demanded RSF to return the seized provinces and RSF denied the condition which foiled the ceasefire attempt. On 3 February, the AU High Level Panel on Sudan (HLP-Sudan) was commissioned to end the fighting but failed to coordinate between the warring parties. Often regional attempts to bring negotiations were overshadowed by the international attempts including the US-Saudi Arabia led mediations.

SHORT NOTES

US withdrawal from Niger

Anu Maria Joseph

This week, the major development from Africa is the US agreeing to withdraw its troops from Niger. On 20 April, the US agreed to withdraw its troops from Niger as the country is turning to Russia for support in fighting insurgency. The US has 1000 troops stationed in Niger, fighting Islamist militancy. It has a drone facility, Base 201, at Agadez, which was opened in 2018. The decision to withdraw came after the Niger junta revoked a 12-year-old security agreement with the US on 15 March. Despite the revoking of the agreement, the troops stayed on the ground. Ultimately, the junta described the continued military presence in the country as “illegal.” Additionally, a series of public protests have been ongoing demanding the withdrawal. Niger’s relations with the US deteriorated after the coup in July 2023 and increased anti-West sentiments.

Following the coup, the junta has established closer ties with Russia, similar to neighbouring Burkina Faso and Mali. Russian paramilitary, Russia’s Africa Corps, has arrived in the country, promising to fight insurgency. This move has been denounced by the West. Recently, Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali formed the Sahel Alliance against the foreign forces trying to intervene in their internal affairs; they have cut ties with ECOWAS. The West has lost its major influence in the region, the regional efforts are barren, the engagement with Russia comes with a baggage of doubts, the insurgency is expanding in terms of geography, and a democratic turn is unlikely.

Togo’s constitutional reforms

Anu Maria Joseph

On 20 April, Togo’s parliament approved to amend the constitution relating to the presidential term and the election of the president. Several opposition politicians and civil society groups have denounced the move as a constitutional coup. The amendment was adopted on 25 March but was called for a second parliamentary vote amidst opposition.

The reforms have introduced a parliamentary system of government in place of the presidential system and have shortened the presidential term to four years from five years with a two-term limit. According to the amendment, the president will be elected indirectly from now on by the members of the parliament.

Togo has scheduled its delayed legislative elections for 29 April following the issues around the amendments. The opposers claim that the reforms would allow the President, Faure Gnassingbe, to extend his term limit. The opposition party, Dynamique Pour la Majorité du Peuple (DMP), has described the amendment as a constitutional coup. If Gnassingbe wins the 2025 elections, he would be able to stay in power until 2033 as the new law does not take into account the previous term in office. This is highly likely as his party controls the parliament. Gnassingbe and his family have been in power for the past 19 years. His father, Gnassingbe Eyadema, seized power through a coup in 1967.

The development in Togo is not new in Africa. Several African countries including the Central African Republic, Rwanda, the Republic of the Congo, Ivory Coast and Guinea have pushed for constitutional reforms allowing their presidents to extend their term limits.

AFRICA IN BRIEF

1 April-30 April

By Anu Maria Joseph and Vetriselvi Baskaran

EGYPT

A third term for President Sisi

On 2 April, Egypt's President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi of Egypt would take office for a third consecutive six-year term on 3 April, after winning elections in December securing 89.9 per cent of the vote. Sisi took office in 2014 after a military coup which overthrew his Islamist predecessor Mohammed Morsi. ("[Egypt's Sisi due to be sworn in for third term](#)," *BBC*, 4 April 2024)

TUNISIA

Italian prime minister's visit

On 17 April, Italian Prime Minister, Giorgia Meloni, visited Tunisia to enhance cooperation between the countries. Meloni stated that several initiatives focusing on energy and educational sectors were signed with Tunisia. She stated: "We want to work especially on regular flows, as we have done with Tunisia, with a decree that allows approximately 12,000 trained Tunisian citizens to come to Italy legally." ("[Italian PM Giorgia Meloni visits Tunisia to discuss migration](#)," *Africanews*, 17 April 2024)

SUDAN

UN begins to distribute aid in Darfur

On 5 April, Al Jazeera reported that the UN began distributing food in the war-torn Darfur region of Sudan. The move came after months of warning of a looming famine in the region. According to the UN aid agencies, the war between the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) has left 18 million people facing acute hunger. In March, UNICEF warned that 222,000 children could die of malnutrition in the region.

("First UN food aid in months arrives in Sudan's Darfur as famine looms," *Al Jazeera*, 5 April 2024)

Junta to hand over power only to its supporters

On 11 April, Sudanese military leader General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan stated that the army "will not hand over the authority of our state to any internal or external party." He added: "Anyone who conspired against the Sudanese people inside and outside the country will not have any role to play in the future running of this country." He warned that democratic rule would not return to the country until the conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) which began in April 2023 ends. Peace talks mediated by the US between the warring parties were expected to resume in Jeddah after Eid. However, the RSF leader, Hamdan Dagalo, stated that "there is no other option for the Rapid Support Forces but victory." ("[Sudan army says will only hand over power to its supporters](#)," *BBC*, 11 April 2024)

Humanitarian agencies warn of looming famine

On 15 April, Africanews reported on humanitarian agencies warning of a looming famine in Sudan. The civil war in the country marked one year on 14 April. The war has killed thousands and displaced over eight million. In March, the international community warned that immediate action is necessary to "prevent widespread death and total collapse of livelihoods and avert a catastrophic hunger crisis in Sudan." According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, 17.7 million people in the

country are facing acute food insecurity and five million are one step away from famine. (“[Sudan war: risk of famine looms](#),” *Africanews*, 15 April 2024)

International conference to aid humanitarian crisis

On 16 April, while concluding the international conference gathering humanitarian support for Sudan, French President, Emmanuel Macron, announced that the international community has promised USD 2.1 billion in humanitarian assistance to Sudan. The UN and countries’ representatives have urged the warring parties to end the hostilities. Macron stated: “Today, from this mobilisation, all of our presence, it sends a clear message we are sending to the belligerents. We are making a solemn appeal out of respect for international humanitarian rights and for the protection of the civil population.” (“[Donors pledge \\$2.1 billion to aid war-stricken Sudan - Macron announces](#),” *Africanews*, 16 April 2024)

UN warns of foreign supply of weapons

On 20 April, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary Anne DiCarlo, warned of the “crisis of epic proportions” due to the supply of weapons from foreign countries despite sanctions. She added: “If the parties have been able to sustain their confrontation, it is in no small part thanks to the material support they receive from outside the Sudan. These external actors continue to flout the sanctions regime imposed by the Council to support a political settlement, thereby fuelling the conflict. This is illegal, it is immoral and it must stop.” Although she did not name any of the foreign actors, according to *Africanews*, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Egypt are accused of their involvement in the war. The sanctions imposed on Sudan include an arms and ammunition embargo and assets freeze. (“[Sudan war fuelled by weapons from foreign actors in violation](#)

[of sanctions - UN](#),” *Africanews*, 20 April 2024)

DJIBOUTI

38 migrants die off the coast of Djibouti

On 9 April, Al Jazeera quoted the International Organization of Migration (IOM) that at least 38 migrants including children died after their boat capsized off the coast of Djibouti. IOM stated that since 2014, nearly 1,000 people have died while crossing the “Eastern Route.” The route takes migrants from Ethiopia, Somalia and Djibouti through Yemen to Arab countries. (“[UN says 38 dead, including children, as migrant boat sinks off Djibouti](#),” *Al Jazeera*, 9 April 2024)

UGANDA

Constitutional Court rejects appeal against anti-LGBTQ law

On 3 April, Uganda’s Constitutional Court rejected an appeal seeking to annul the anti-LGBTQ law. The court ruled that a few sections of the law were “inconsistent with the right to health, privacy and freedom of religion.”; however, did not suspend the law. Uganda’s deputy chief justice and head of the court, Richard Buteera, stated: “We decline to nullify the Anti-Homosexuality Act 2023 in its entirety, neither will we grant a permanent injunction against its enforcement.” Uganda-based Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum (HRAPF) said that the decision “unfortunately will fuel human rights violations” against the LGBTQ community in the country. Uganda’s Anti-Homosexuality Act 2023 imposes a lifetime in prison for same-sex relations and describes “aggravated homosexuality” as an offence punishable by death. (“[Uganda’s Constitutional Court rejects petition against anti-gay law](#),” *Al Jazeera*, 3 April 2024)

ETHIOPIA

70,000 national repatriated from Saudi Arabia

On 1 April, the Ethiopian Minister of State, Birtukan Ayano, announced that the country would repatriate 70,000 citizens living in Saudi Arabia this month. According to the Ethiopian Refugees and Returnees Service (RSS), four million Ethiopians have been displaced to several countries amidst conflicts and environmental issues. In March 2022, Ethiopia signed a deal with Saudi Arabia to repatriate 100,000 Ethiopians after human rights groups accused Saudi Arabia of exploiting foreign labourers. ("[Ethiopia to repatriate 70,000 nationals from Saudi Arabia](#)," *Africanews*, 1 April 2024)

Federal forces carry out war crimes in Amhara, says HRW

On 4 April, Human Rights Watch (HRW) accused Ethiopian federal forces of summarily executing civilians and committing war crimes in the Amhara region. It called on the UN for an independent investigation. Deputy Africa director at HRW, Laetitia Bader, stated: "Civilians are once again bearing the brunt of an abusive army operating with impunity. The Ethiopian armed forces' brutal killings of civilians in Amhara undercut government claims that it's trying to bring law and order to the region." Additionally, it called on the AU to suspend Ethiopia's participation in the peacekeeping missions until "commanders responsible for grave abuses are held accountable." ("[Ethiopia's army accused of committing war crimes in Amhara region](#)," *Al Jazeera*, 4 April 2024)

Fresh wave of fighting between Tigray and Amhara militias

On 16 April, BBC reported on a fresh wave of fighting between Ethiopia's Tigray and Amhara regions. The fight broke out in the Raya Alamata district, a region claimed by Tigray and Amhara ethnic groups. While Amhara officials

accused fighters aligned with the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) of triggering the clashes, Tigray regional officials blamed Amara militias for launching the offensive. The new wave of clashes has disrupted the peace deal signed between the TPLF and the federal forces in 2022. ("[Tigray leader blames unnamed 'enemies' for fresh fighting](#)," *BBC*, 16 April 2024)

AU expresses concerns over community disputes

On 26 April, the African Union (AU) raised concern on "escalating tensions between local communities" in North Ethiopia. The country has been in turmoil since the war broke out between the Tigrayans and the federal government in 2020. The Tigrayans seized the regions including Alamata Town, Raya Alamata, Zata, and Ofla which are claimed by the Amharas. The violent disputes have caused 50,000 to flee their hometown. The AU Chairman, Moussa Faki Mahamat, urged both sides to immediately "halt hostilities and ensure the safety of civilians to end the renewed displacement of the local population." ("[AU 'deeply concerned' about north Ethiopia tensions](#)," *BBC*, 26 April 2024)

KENYA

President visits Central African Republic

On 8 April, Kenyan President William Ruto visited the Central African Republic and held talks with President Faustin Touadera. Touadera stated: "It is a real honour for the Central African Republic and opens up good prospects for cooperation between our two countries. I think this is the first time that a Kenyan president has visited the CAR, and I don't think it will be the last." He added: "Under your leadership we have seen stability, we have seen peace and we are witnessing progress. And for that, your excellency, on behalf of the people of our region, I want to say congratulations, and you have my

support.” Ruto stated: “This inaugural visit opens a big door for us to explore the possibilities that exist between Kenya and the Central African Republic.” He added: “As you have said correctly, we have huge potential in agriculture, and I have agreed with you that we are going to work with our farmers, bring agricultural experts to work with your people here, for technology transfer.” (“[Kenya and Central African Republic strengthen ties](#),” *Africanews*, 8 April 2024)

Doctors strike into fifth week

On 17 April, *Africanews* reported on the doctor’s strike entering its fifth week in Kenya. Hundreds of doctors and medical staff have protested demanding better pay and working conditions since March. A protesting medical staff, Emmanuel Odhiambo, stated: “We are not going to bow to any forms of intimidation and threats. And we are hereby saying today that we are going to continue picketing, we are going to continue our constitutional rights as per article 37 of the constitution.” The strike has left several patients without access to services. The government has not taken any action to address the concerns of the medical community. (“[Kenya: Doctors begin fifth week of strike](#),” *Africanews*, 17 April 2024)

Plane crash kills army chief

On 18 April, *Al Jazeera* reported that Kenya’s military chief, General Francis Ogolla, and nine others were killed in a plane crash in Egeyo Marakwet County. The military aircraft was visiting the troops deployed in the northwest, combatting cattle rustling. The cause behind the crash is unclear. Ogolla was the head of Kenya’s Air Force previously and was promoted by President William Ruto to the head of the military in 2023. At a news conference, Ruto stated: “Our motherland has lost one of her most valiant generals. The demise of General Ogolla is a painful loss to me.” (“[Kenya’s military chief among 10 people killed in](#)

[helicopter crash](#),” *Al Jazeera*, 18 April 2024)

Floods cause troubles in Nairobi

On 25 April, *Al Jazeera* reported that at least ten people were killed in floods in the capital Nairobi. The El Nino weather phenomenon has intensified the heavy seasonal rainfall. The floods had a significant impact on approximately 60,000 individuals, primarily women and children, as reported by the Nairobi County governor’s office. The Kenya Meteorological Department has issued a warning regarding the continuous occurrence of “heavy to very heavy” rainfall in several regions until the end of May. On 24 April, police fired tear gas on civilians who blocked the main highway protesting against government’s inaction. Kenya Railways has declared a temporary suspension of services. Meanwhile, in neighbouring countries of Burundi and Tanzania, approximately 100,000 individuals have been forced to leave their homes. (“[Suleja prison: 108 inmates on the run in Nigeria](#),” *BBC*, 25 April 2024)

SOMALIA

Ethiopian ambassador expelled

On 4 April, Somalia expelled the Ethiopian ambassador to the country and ordered the closure of consulates. It additionally recalled the ambassador to Ethiopia. The expulsion came after a rise in tensions between the two, following Ethiopia’s port deal with self-declared Somaliland in January. Somalia considers Somaliland as part of its territory and accused Ethiopia of infringing on its “sovereignty and internal affairs.” Somalia described the deal as an act of “aggression” and an “impediment to... peace and stability.” (“[Somalia expels Ethiopian ambassador amid row over Somaliland port deal](#),” *BBC*, 4 April 2024)

Seized Bangladesh-flagged ship released after 32 days

On 16 April, Operation ATLANTA stated that the 23 crew members of the Bangladesh-flagged cargo carrier, MV Abdullah, were released after 32 days in captivity. The vessel was hijacked by the Somali pirates on 12 March in the Indian Ocean near the Somali coast. The circumstances of the ship being released are unclear. ("[Bangladeshi ship seized off Somali coast is freed after more than a month](#)," *Africanews*, 16 April 2024)

RWANDA

Kagame acknowledged as presidential candidate by seven political parties

On 1 April, two of the Rwandan political parties, the Liberal Party (LP) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP), acknowledged Paul Kagame, the candidate of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), for the presidential elections scheduled for July. The PSD president, Vincent Biruta, stated: "It is a good thing that President Kagame acknowledges and considers ideas from other political parties." Kagame has ruled the country for decades, securing more than 90 per cent of votes during the 2003, 2010 and 2017 elections. Critics and rights groups accuse him of the authoritarian character of his government. ("[Rwanda: Kagame endorsed as candidate by seven political parties](#)," *Africanews*, 1 April 2024)

Marks 30 years of genocide

On 7 April, Rwanda marked 30 years of the genocide in 1994. During the commemorating ceremony, President Paul Kagame blamed the international inaction in preventing the genocide which killed 800,000 people. Kagame stated: "Rwanda was completely humbled by the magnitude of our loss, and the lessons we learned are engraved in blood. But the tremendous progress of our country is plain to see and it is the result of the choice we made together to resurrect our nation." US President, Joe Biden, commented: "We

will never forget the horrors of those 100 days, the pain and loss suffered by the people of Rwanda, or the shared humanity that connects us all, which hate can never overcome." UN human rights chief Volker Turk stated: "I urge states everywhere to redouble their efforts to bring all surviving suspected perpetrators to justice – including through universal jurisdiction – and to combat hate speech and incitement to commit genocide." ("[Kagame blames world's 'cowardice' as Rwanda remembers 1994 genocide](#)," *Africanews*, 7 April 2024)

BURUNDI

Hundreds displaced due to heavy floods

On 22 April, *Africanews* reported on the floods in Burundi. Thousands were displaced and several houses and schools were destroyed. A disaster management expert and professor of geography at Burundi University, Jean-Marie Sabushimike, stated: "The economic impacts are starting to weigh heavily. But why these floods? It must be said that they are associated with the climate changes that are affecting Burundi, like other countries in the region." He added that the flooding is exacerbated by poor land use. According to the UN, since September 2023, more than 200,000 people have been displaced due to floods across the world due to the El Nino weather phenomenon. ("[Hundreds of thousands displaced by flooding in Burundi](#)," *Africanews*, 22 April 2024)

ZIMBABWE

National disaster announced amidst severe drought

On 3 April, Zimbabwe's President Emmerson Mnangagwa declared a national disaster amidst the prolonged drought. Mnangagwa stated that the country requires USD two billion to address the hunger crisis induced by the drought. According to BBC, nearly 2.7 million people in the country face hunger.

According to the World Food Programme (WFP), 13.6 million people are experiencing crisis-level food insecurity across the region. ([“Zimbabwe's President Mnangagwa declares national disaster over drought,” BBC, 3 April 2024](#))

Gold-backed currency to tackle inflation

On 5 April, Zimbabwe’s central bank introduced a new “structured currency” backed by gold. It aims to address the inflation in the country which has reached 55 per cent. The governor of Zimbabwe’s Reserve Bank, John Mushayavanhu, said that the new currency, Zim Gold (ZiG), “With effect from today ... banks shall convert the current Zimbabwe dollar balances into the new currency.” He added that the currency aims at enhancing simplicity, certainty, [and] predictability” in the financial affairs of the country. ([“Zimbabwe introduces new gold-backed currency to tackle inflation,” Al Jazeera, 5 April 2024](#))

Mnangagwa announces the decision to not run for a third term

On 8 April, Zimbabwean President, Emmerson Mnangagwa, announced that he would not run for an unconstitutional third term. He said: “There is not an iota of evidence where Zanu PF or I, as President, has ever expressed the violation of our Constitution.” Since independence, the Zanu PF party has ruled the country. ([“Zimbabwe: I have no intention to run for a third term - President Mnangagwa,” Africanews, 8 April 2024](#))

El-Nino-linked drought disrupts maize production

On 20 April, Africanews reported that Zimbabwe’s Mazowe district is facing a severe drought with the disrupted supply of maize throughout the country. A poor rainfall in the region has dried out hectares of maize. The chairman of the Grain Millers Association, Tafadzwa Musarara, stated: “The drought itself in terms of our

estimation will require us to import about 1.1 million tonnes of maize for both human and livestock consumption from between now and July 31 of 2025.” The president has declared a state of disaster amidst the drought. ([“Zimbabwe: El Nino-linked drought threatens maize production,” Africanews, 20 April 2024](#))

TANZANIA

Floods kill 60

On 15 April, BBC quoted the Tanzanian government that at least 60 people died in heavy floods. The floods have destroyed thousands of farms and houses. A government spokesperson, Mobhare Matinyi, stated: “Serious flood effects are experienced in the coast region where 11 people have so far died.” The floods have affected the neighbouring country Kenya, where at least 13 people were killed and 15,000 displaced. ([“Tanzania floods kill nearly 60 in two weeks,” BBC, 15 April 2024](#))

SOUTH AFRICA

Zuma clears legal barriers to run for elections

On 9 April, Al Jazeera reported on the South African court which ruled that former President Jacob Zuma can run for the presidential elections. The ruling came after the country’s electoral commission barred Zuma from running for the elections citing his criminal record. Zuma, a former ANC leader, recently dissented from the party and formed the new uMkhonto weSizwe Party (MK) and promised to run for the elections. ([“South Africa’s Jacob Zuma wins court bid to contest upcoming election,” Al Jazeera, 9 April 2024](#))

Electoral commission appeals against Constitutional Court’s ruling on Jacob Zuma’s candidacy

On 12 April, South Africa’s electoral commission appealed to the Constitutional Court against overturning the ban on former President Jacob Zuma standing for

the upcoming elections. The commission alleged that the constitution bars the candidacy of individuals who have been sentenced to more than 12 months in prison. In 2021, Zuma was sentenced to 15 months in jail for contempt of court and only served three months in Jail. Zuma is running for his newly formed party, uMkhonto weSizwe (MK), with a bid to end decades of rule under the African National Congress (ANC). (“[SA poll body challenges ruling allowing Zuma's candidacy](#),” *BBC*, 12 April 2024)

High Court rules against ANC's bid to block Zuma's MK party

On 22 April, the Durban High Court of South Africa ruled against the African National Congress (ANC) on its case against Jacob Zuma's uMkhonoto weSizwe party using the name which was formerly the name of ANC's military wing. ANC alleged intellectual property theft against the MK party. The court has ruled in favor of MK's right to use the name which is currently a defunct organization. South Africa has scheduled its elections for 29 May. (“[South Africa: Another loss for ANC to stop Jacob Zuma's MK party](#),” *Africanews*, 22 April 2024)

30 years of democracy

On 27 April, the country celebrated its 30 years of democracy. President Cyril Ramaphosa lauded the achievements of his party since the end of apartheid. He gave a speech marking “Freedom Day.” He stated: “South Africa's democracy is young. What we've achieved in these short 30 years is something of which all of us should be proud. This is an infinitely better place than it was 30 years ago.” The celebrations additionally comes ahead of the presidential elections scheduled on 29 May. He stated: “We have made much progress and we are determined to do much more.” The country had its first democratic election in 1994, African National Congress (ANC) won the

election, and Nelson Mandela became the country's first President. (“[Ramaphosa hails ANC record as South Africa marks 30 years of democracy](#),” *Al Jazeera*, 27 April 2024)

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC Renews ties with France

On 17 April, the Central African Republic (CAR) President, Faustin-Archange Touadera, met with French President, Emmanuel Macron, in Paris. Both countries agreed to boost bilateral cooperation and revive strained ties. The France-CAR relations took a downturn after CAR began leaning on Russia for military and political support. According to a joint statement following the meeting, both countries “aim to establish the framework of a constructive partnership that respects the sovereignty of the state.” The statement added that the cooperation would “contribute to stability, strengthen national cohesion as wide as possible and support the economic and social development of the country [CAR].” (“[CAR and France hold talks seeking to revive strained ties](#),” *BBC*, 18 April 2024)

CHAD

The US repositioned its military forces

On 25 April, US Pentagon Press Secretary, Major General Pat Ryder, announced that the US has temporarily repositioned its military forces in the country. The announcement came days after the US announced the withdrawal of its troops from Niger. He stated: “This is a temporary step as part of an ongoing review of our security cooperation, which will resume after Chad's 6 May presidential election.” (“[US to 'temporarily' pull troops out of Chad](#),” *BBC*, 26 April 2024)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

President appoints first female Prime Minister

On 2 April, President Felix Tshisekedi appointed Judith Suminwa Tuluka as the first female Prime Minister of the country. Tuluka, previously the Minister of Planning, succeeded Jean Michel Sama Lukonde following Tshisekedi's reelection in December 2023. ([“DR Congo president names Judith Suminwa Tuluka as first woman PM,”](#) *Al Jazeera*, 4 April 2024)

Three Tanzanian soldiers killed

On 9 April, Africanews reported that three Tanzanian soldiers, part of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) forces, were killed in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The troops have been fighting the M23 rebels in the eastern DRC since December 2022. ([“Three Tanzanian soldiers killed in Democratic Republic of Congo,”](#) *Africanews*, 9 April 2024)

SIERRA LEONE

Emergency amidst drug crisis

On 6 April, Sierra Leone declared a national emergency amidst increased use of the drug, Kush. The drug is a mix of marijuana, tentanyl and tramadol, which has caused hundreds of deaths in the country. President Julius Maada Bio called the drug a "death trap." One of the ingredients in the drug is human bones. Bio stated: "Our country is currently faced with an existential threat due to the ravaging impact of drugs and substance abuse, particularly the devastating synthetic drug kush." ([“Sierra Leone declares emergency over drug kush - made from human bones,”](#) *BBC*, 6 April 2024)

SENEGAL

Ousmane Sonko appointed as Prime Minister

On 3 April, Senegal's new President, Diomaye Faye, appointed Ousmane Sonko as the Prime Minister of the country. Faye

announced the appointment after he was sworn in as the President. Since 2021, Sonko has been at the centre of Senegal's politics for his years-long protest against the former government. He was arrested, and his party was banned and barred from running elections after the former government accused him of corrupting the youth. Faye, a follower of Sonko replaced Sonko as the Presidential candidate promising to fight rampant corruption. ([“Senegal's Faye appoints ally Ousmane Sonko as prime minister,”](#) *Al Jazeera*, 3 April 2024)

TOGO

Delay in elections amidst constitutional reform

On 4 April, BBC reported on Togo announcing the delay in the parliamentary and regional elections over the controversial constitutional reform. According to the reform which was approved the previous week, the country replaced the presidential system with a parliamentary one. The opposition parties rejected the reform citing that it would let President Faure Gnassingbé stay in power. On 3 April, the presidential office announced the postponement of the elections which were initially scheduled for 20 April. The election delay was announced after President Gnassingbé returned the bill for a second reading amidst widespread criticism. ([“Togo postpones elections after new constitution row,”](#) *BBC*, 4 April 2024)

Developments on the new constitutional review

On 9 April, Togo began talks between the traditional chiefs and parliament members on the constitutional change in the country. On 25 March, the parliament adopted a new constitution replacing the semi-presidential system with a parliamentary system. The move sparked public outcry leading to the consultations. Togo had initially scheduled elections for 20 April but was postponed amidst the

tensions. Vice-President of the National Assembly, Mémounatou Ibrahima, stated: "This was an opportunity for us to explain the advantages and disadvantages of both systems. We pointed out the advantage of a parliamentary system. Power will no longer be concentrated in the hands of the President of the Republic." ("[Togo: Consultation between MPs and traditional leaders begin over constitutional review](#)," *Africanews*, 9 April 2024)

Approves constitutional reforms

On 20 April, Togo's parliament approved to amend the constitution relating to the presidential term and the election of the president. Several opposition politicians and civil society groups have denounced the move as a constitutional coup. The amendment was adopted on 25 March but was called for a second parliamentary vote amidst opposition. The reforms have introduced a parliamentary system of government in place of the presidential and have shortened the presidential term to four years from five years with a two-term limit. The opposers claim that the reforms would allow the President, Faure Gnassingbe, to extend his term limit. ("[Togo approves constitutional reform changing how president is elected](#)," *Al Jazeera*, 20 April 2024)

NIGER

Russian military instructors arrive to train army

On 12 April, BBC reported that Russian troops arrived in Niger as part of the recent military agreement aiming at boosting Niger-Russia security cooperation. The country cut ties with the West and turned towards Russia after the Military coup in July 2023. One of the Russian military officials told Niger's state media: "We are here to train the Nigerien army ... [and] to develop military cooperation between Russia and Niger." ("[Russian military instructors arrive in Niger to train army](#)," *BBC*, 12 April 2024)

Signs deal with Mali on diesel supply

On 18 April, Africanews reported that Niger would deliver 150 million litres of diesel to Mali as part of the deal signed on 16 April. The diesel would be supplied to Mali's national energy company, Énergie du Mali (EDM-SA), as the country is facing power shortages. According to the deal, Niger would be selling the diesel at half the normal rate. ("[Niger signs deal to supply Mali with cheaper diesel](#)," *Africanews*, 18 April 2024)

Withdrawal of US troops

On 20 April, the US agreed to withdraw its troops from Niger as the country is turning to Russia for support in fighting insurgency. The US has 1000 troops stationed in Niger, fighting Islamist militancy. The decision to withdraw came after continuous demand from the junta amidst increasing anti-West sentiments. ("[US agrees to withdraw troops from Niger amid Sahel region's pivot to Russia](#)," *Al Jazeera*, 20 April 2024)

Protest demanding immediate withdrawal of US troops

On 22 April, hundreds of people protested in the Agadez region of Niger, demanding the immediate withdrawal of the US troops. The protests came two days after the US agreed to withdraw its troops from the country. BBC quoted the protester telling AFP media: "Our message is clear: American soldiers, pack your bags and go home." The protesters were carrying the flags of Russia, Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. Following the series of coups in the region, the military governments ended ties with the West and turned to Russia for its fight against insurgency. ("[Pack your bags: Hundreds in Niger tell US troops to go home](#)," *News24*, 22 April 2024)

NIGERIA

Six soldiers killed in Bandit's attack

On 22 April, at least six soldiers were killed in an attack in the Shiroro region of Niger state of Nigeria. The military stated that its troops were attacked while on a "fighting patrol." The region is known for bandit leader, Dogo Gide, an ally of the IS linked jihadists. ("[Six soldiers killed during an operation against bandits in Nigeria](#)," *Africanews*, 22 April 2024)

Amnesty International calls to block Shell oil business sales

On 15 April, Amnesty International called on the Nigerian government to stop the UK-based oil and gas company, Shell, from selling the country's onshore oil businesses. The group stated that the sales should be blocked until human rights in the Niger Delta are protected. It added that the company must provide funds to address the environmental pollution it has caused, which is worth USD 2.4 billion. Frequent oil leaks in the region had caused contamination of the groundwater sources. ("[Amnesty urges Nigeria to block Shell oil business sale](#)," *BBC*, 15 April 2024)

Inflation hits highest in three decades

On 15 April, the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reported that the annual inflation reached the highest level in three decades, increasing to 33.2 per cent. The rising cost of food ingredients including bread, grains, dairy, eggs, meat and vegetable oil is the major trigger of inflation. Increasing energy costs additionally contributed to the rise. The Nigerian Central Bank has increased the borrowing rates twice during the past two months, however, these gains are yet to be witnessed. ("[Nigeria inflation hits highest rate in nearly 30 years](#)," *BBC*, 15 April 2024)

Villages form vigilante groups to fight insecurity

On 18 April, *Africanews* reported that several conflict-hit states in Nigeria are

setting up community-based vigilante groups to ensure security in the villages amidst increasing attacks and kidnappings. The country's security forces are unequipped with resources. In March, in the Kduna state, 300 schoolchildren were abducted. The state has formed a vigilante group, the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), to protect the villages. Besides, the government forces are increasingly relying on these groups for intelligence and characters of the attackers due to their familiarity with the attacks. ("[Vigilante groups protect communities in northern Nigeria](#)," *Africanews*, 18 April 2024)

Hosts counterterrorism summit

On 22 April, Nigeria hosted the counterterrorism summit in the capital, Abuja. The summit aimed at enhancing West Africa's response to increasing Islamist insurgency in the region. Nigeria's National Security Advisor, Aliyu Gusau, stated that the summit aims to initiate an African-led solution to the insurgency. Meanwhile, three countries which are affected by the insurgency, Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, did not attend the summit. ("[Nigeria Hosts African Counter-Terrorism Summit In Abuja Amid Threat On Continent](#)," *Saharareporters*, 22 April 2024)

BURKINA FASO

Three French diplomats expelled

On 16 April, Burkina Faso expelled three French diplomats for alleged "subversive activities." The diplomats included two political advisers at the French embassy in Ouagadougou. They were asked "to leave the territory of Burkina Faso within the next 48 hours." On 18 April, France responded that the expulsion was based on "unfounded" allegations. ("[Burkina Faso expels three French diplomats for 'subversive activities'](#)," *Reuters*, 16 April 2024)

220 civilians killed by the military, says HRW report

On 25 April, Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported that 220 civilians, including at least 56 children, were killed by the Burkinabe army. The group reported that the army killed 179 people in Soro village and 44 others in Nondin village. The group described the attack as "the worst army abuse" in the country in a decade. The residents claimed that the mass killings were in retaliation to the allegations of the villagers aiding Islamist militants. The executive director of HRW, Tirana Hassan, stated: "The massacres in Nondin and Soro villages are just the latest mass killings of civilians by the Burkina Faso military in their counterinsurgency operations." The Burkinabe government has not yet commented on the attack. (["Burkina Faso army massacred 223 villagers in revenge attack, says HRW,"](#) *BBC*, 25 April 2024)

Mass killings by army, reports HRW

On 25 April, the Human Rights Watch (HRW) released a report titled "Burkina Faso: Army Massacres 223 Villagers." According to the report, mass killings are at the top "among the worst army abuse" in a decade. It found that the military has killed 220 civilians including 56 children in a single day. The attack was carried in retaliation for supporting armed jihadists. The country's authorities are yet to respond to the report. However, in March, an appeal was filed by public prosecutor Aly Benjamin Coulibaly to find the perpetrators. The military violence against civilians have doubled since the 2020 coup. (["Burkina Faso army massacred 223 villagers in revenge attack - HRW,"](#) *BBC*, 25 April 2024)

Suspends BBC over HRW report

On 26 April, the country suspended the BBC and the US public broadcaster Voice of America following its coverage of mass killings. The report accused the Burkinabe military of carrying out at least 223

civilian massacres in February. The country's media regulator warned other media outlets not to cover the news and suspended BBC publications. UN Human Rights Office spokesperson Marta Hurtad raised concerns over the suspension. She stated: "Restrictions on media freedom and civic space must stop immediately. Freedom of expression including the right of access to information is crucial in any society, and even more so in the context of the transition in Burkina Faso." (["Burkina Faso suspends BBC over HRW report on alleged mass killings,"](#) *BBC*, 26 April 2024; ["UN criticises Burkina Faso's BBC ban,"](#) *BBC*, 26 April 2024)

Junta denies mass killing allegations by HRW

On 28 April, Burkina Faso condemned report by the HRW accusing Burkina Faso army killing 223 people and decried it as "baseless accusation." The Communications Minister, Rimalba Jean Emmanuel Ouedraogo, stated: "The government of Burkina Faso strongly rejects and condemns such baseless accusations." He asserted that the country has initiated a legal inquiry to "establish the facts" to prove the HRW "guilty." (["Burkina Faso rejects 'baseless accusations' that soldiers massacred 223 villagers,"](#) *BBC*, 28 April 2024)

MALI

Political parties call for early elections

On 2 April, Malian political parties demanded an early presidential election, as the transition period expired last month. The junta has not yet responded to the demands. In August 2020, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita was overthrown in a military coup. In March 2022, the military extended the transition for a year. (["Mali parties call for polls 'as soon as possible',"](#) *BBC*, 4 April 2024)

Junta suspends all political activities

On 11 April, Reuters reported that the Malian junta suspended all political activities in the country. Military spokesperson, Colonel Abdoulaye Maïga, stated that the decision was taken amidst “sterile discussions” during the national dialogue this year. He said that all the activities of political parties are suspended to maintain public order. The announcement came after more than 80 political parties and civil groups called for presidential elections “as soon as possible” to end the military rule. Previously, the junta had agreed to hold elections in February, but were postponed without details. (“[Mali: Junta suspends all political activities](#),” *Reuters*, 11 April 2024)

Joint military kills IS commander

On 29 April, BBC reported that IS Commander, Abu Huzeifa, was killed by Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger joint troops. Mali state TV reported that Abu Huzeifa was also known as “Higgo,” a Moroccan national and Commander of the IS in the Sahel region. He was killed in an operation carried out in the Menaka region. He was linked to several high profile raids in the Sahel region including a 2017 attack where four US soldiers were killed. (“[Mali kills IS commander blamed for US deaths - state TV](#),” *BBC*, 29 April 2024)

Jihadists abduct 110 civilians

On 22 April, Africanews reported that at least 110 people were kidnapped by jihadists the previous week in the Mopti region. BBC quoted the residents who told the AFP media that the jihadists hijacked three buses and forced them to drive in the direction of a forest between the regions of Bandiagara and Bankass. Recently, the Mopti region has been under frequent attacks by Islamist militants. Several civil society organizations in the region have been staging protests against the junta's inaction on the increasing insecurity in the region. (“[Mali: More than 110 civilians kidnapped by "suspected jihadists"](#),”

Africanews, 22 April 2024)

REGIONAL

East Africa: Heavy rains cause casualties in Kenya and Tanzania

On 24 April, BBC reported on heavy floods in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi. According to the UN, at least 32 people were killed, and 40,000 others were displaced. UN official in Nairobi, Edwin Sifuna, stated: “The situation in Nairobi has escalated to extreme levels. The County Government, for all its efforts, is overwhelmed. We need all national emergency services mobilized to save lives.” Meanwhile, in Tanzania, at least 58 people were killed, and 100,000 others were displaced. The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), or the “Indian Niño,” has caused heavy rain in East Africa. (“[Floods wreak havoc in Kenya, Tanzania and Burundi](#),” *BBC*, 24 April 2024)

Sahel: Heat wave caused by anthropogenic causes, reports WWA

On 18 April, World Weather Attribution (WWA), an international agency focusing on extreme weather events reported that anthropogenic factors are contributing to climate change, leading to the unusual heatwave in the Sahel region in April. The temperature has risen to more than 45 degrees Celsius in Mali and Burkina Faso between 1 April and 5 April. The study states: “Even minimum temperatures, overnight, remained relatively high, making it so that people did not get a break from the heat.” The agency's observations found that “heatwaves with the magnitude observed in March and April 2024 in the region would have been impossible to occur without the global warming of 1.2C to date,” which it linked to “human-induced climate change.” (“[Deadly Sahel heatwave caused by 'human-induced' climate change: Study](#),” *Al Jazeera*, 18 April 2024)

West Africa: Ukraine opens embassies in DRC and Ivory Coast

On 12 April, Ukraine opened an embassy in Ivory Coast. The development came a day after it opened an embassy in the Democratic Republic of Congo. BBC quoted Ukraine's special envoy for Africa and the Middle East, Maksym Subkh, from French public broadcaster RFI: "A brilliant new chapter has been added to the

history of Ukrainian-African and Ukrainian-Ivorian relations." He appreciated Ivory Coast's "support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, including voting in favour of key UN resolutions on the large-scale Russian invasion." ("[Ukraine opens embassies in DR Congo, Ivory Coast](#)," *BBC*, 12 April 2024)

NIAS AFRICA TEAM



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