



NIAS Area Studies

# Africa Monitor

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COVER STORY

## Russia in Africa

AFRICA IN BRIEF

Regional | Economy | Gender | Climate Change | Migration | Peace and Conflict |  
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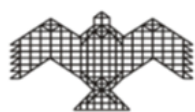
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NIAS Africa Studies would include a series of expert lectures, workshops, publications and a monthly exclusively focussed on Africa. The initiative also aims to create a network of young scholars studying Africa and African scholars studying in various Indian institutions.



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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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## AFRICA MONITOR

**Africa Monitor #4, Vol.01, No.04**  
**July 2024**



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## COVER STORY

### Russia's increasing footprints in Africa

Anu Maria Joseph

On 3-8 June, Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergei Lavrov visited Guinea, the Republic of Congo and Chad. The major focus of the visit was military partnership and energy investments. Russia-Africa engagements have strengthened since the War in Ukraine. There were frequent visits from Russia and to Russia. Russia's relations with the continent appear to have taken a new turn with increasing and expanding political, military and economic footprints. The growing footprints have changed the narratives of Russia in Africa in 2024.

#### Russia's footprints in Africa

*1. Military ties.* Russia has been militarily supporting several African countries through its PMCs. It has military cooperation agreements with 43 African countries. Russian mercenaries first appeared in the Central African Republic in 2017. Around 1000 Russian PMC troops have been fighting the rebels in the country. In Libya, around 300 Wagner troops have been fighting alongside Khalifa Haftar in the civil war since 2018. In Sudan, the Wagner Group allegedly supported the Omar al Bashir to suppress the 2019 revolution. Initially, there were reports of the Group supporting the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in the Sudanese civil war. Following the French withdrawal, the Wagner Group expanded its footprints in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, fighting Islamist insurgency. Despite the death of Wagner Group leader Yevgeny Prigozhin, the group has continued its activities with the support of the Russian government. Besides, Russia has been supplying weapons to Angola, Mali, Ethiopia, Sudan, Algeria, Nigeria, Niger, Libya, Rwanda and Burkina Faso.

*2. Political ties.* Russia hosted the second Russia-Africa Summit on 27 July 2023. 49 African countries participated in the summit. It emphasised the principles of "sovereign equality of States, non-interference in their internal affairs, respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and the right of all peoples to self-determination." Besides, Lavrov and the Russian delegation's visits have increased in the past year. Lavrov visited Guinea, the Republic of Congo, Burkina Faso, Chad, Kenya, Sudan, Mali, Mauritania, South Africa, Eritrea, Angola, and Eswatini in a year. Visits by the Russian delegation to African countries including Mali, and Burkina Faso have become frequent. Besides, several African heads, ministers and delegations have been visiting Russia; Burkina Faso's defence minister in November 2023, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in July 2023, Chad's military head in January 2024, Sudanese delegation in June 2024, and the Republic of Congo President Denis Sassou Nguesso in June 2024. In December 2023, Russia reopened its embassy in Burkina Faso after 30 years. Russia has also been providing aid and expanding its investments in Africa's health and education sectors.

*3. Trade and energy.* Africa's imports from Russia account for less than one per cent. Exports from Africa to Russia are even smaller. The country has a major presence in Africa's mining and energy sector apart from oil and gas. Russia's mining investments in Africa include gold from Sudan, cobalt and coltan from the Democratic Republic of Congo, platinum and diamonds from Zimbabwe, nickel and manganese from South Africa, Uranium from Namibia, and gold and diamond from the Central African Republic. Egypt and

Nigeria have signed a nuclear cooperation agreement and preliminary plans to build nuclear plants. South Africa's Koeberg Nuclear Power Station is the only one in Africa, supported by Russian technology.

### **Russia's growing influence in Africa: Factors and Actors**

The following are the factors and actors behind Russia's growing influence in Africa.

*1. Successful Russia-Africa Summit 2023.* In July 2023, Russia successfully hosted the second Russia-Africa summit. 17 heads of state attended the summit. Putin promised 25,000 to 50,000 tonnes of grain to six African countries including Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Eritrea, Mali, Somalia and Zimbabwe, clearing the uncertainties following the suspension of the grain deal. Although Russia's rejection of Africa's peace plan in Ukraine brought unfavourable narratives, Putin successfully diverted the focus to the joint declaration to counter neocolonialism. 92 agreements, contracts and memoranda of understanding, worth USD 12.5 billion were signed during the summit.

*2. Ukraine War.* Russia has increased seeking African alliances following the onset of the War in Ukraine, a move to gather support in the UN. 17 of the 54 African countries abstained from a UN vote condemning Russia's invasion in 2022. While the EU reduced its reliance on Russian supplies, Russia has been trying to find alternative markets in Africa.

*3. Coups and authoritarian shift.* Nine military coups occurred in Africa since 2020; two in Mali, Sudan and Burkina Faso and one each in Guinea, Gabon and Niger. Military coups and authoritarian shifts in Africa have always been favourable to Russia. Unlike the West, Russia's engagements in Africa do not come with the baggage of democratic values. This has encouraged African juntas

and populist illiberal leaders to forge Russia's partnership.

*4. West losing the ground.* Since 2020, anti-West sentiments have been strengthening in West Africa and beyond. It is attributed to the West's failure in fighting the Islamist insurgency and its interventionist approach. The West's approach in Africa was always perceived as paternalistic and neocolonial. Western countries' lucrative ties with African populist leaders received public scepticism. This led to anti-West protests and pro-Russia narratives across West Africa. While French forces in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso and the US forces in Niger were asked to withdraw, Russia introduced itself as an alternative to fill the vacuum.

*5. Russia's successful narratives and Africa's positive responses.* Russia's modus operandi has been based on equal partnership, and a non-interventionist approach, placing it as the right alternative to the neocolonial West. Its narrative as a security provider without involvement in internal affairs is a partner in the best interest of African leaders. Pro-Russian narratives accompanied the anti-West sentiments simultaneously. Russia has gained popular support across Africa. Financial Times quoted a Malian media representative: "Down to the last peasant in the last village, if you ask them who's working in the best interests of Africans, they'll say Russia."

### **Major Issues**

The following are the major issues of Russia's increasing engagements in Africa.

*1. Human rights allegations.* Several human rights groups have accused the Russian mercenaries of carrying out human rights atrocities in West African countries. In 2023, Human Rights Watch found out that the Wagner Group executed nearly 300 people in Mali under suspicion

of involvement with jihadists. In the Central African Republic, the UN accused the Wagner forces and instructors, fighting the rebels alongside the government forces since 2017, of more than 500 incidents of human rights violations including extrajudicial killings, torture and sexual violence.

*2. Allegations of Russian propaganda.*

Many Western countries accuse Russia of using tactics of disinformation propaganda, and deception to bring African countries under Russian influence. They accuse Russia of infiltrating pro-Russian narratives equating it with anti-neocolonialism. Financial Times quoted a report by Meta which found around 30 networks in Africa, the majority pushing pro-Russia narratives.

*3. Democratic degradation.* While Russia placed itself as an alternative to the West, African countries are more incentivised to move away from the West. Series of coups, increasing authoritarian governments and illiberal democracies were outcomes that followed. It has undermined Africa's democratic aspirations.

*4. Conflict multiplier.* The involvement of Russian paramilitaries has worsened several civil conflicts in African countries. During the Libyan civil war, the Wagner Group supported Khalifa Haftar to secure access to oil fields. The group was also allegedly supporting the paramilitary

Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in the Sudanese civil war.

**Conclusion**

Russia's influence in Africa has strengthened in the past two years. It has secured African allies through the narratives of anti-neocolonialism and equal partnership. Russia is committed to showcasing its power by being Africa's security provider. Africa has become the geopolitical flashpoint for Russia in its competition against the West. Additionally, it serves Russia's economic interests in securing markets and minerals. With the African countries, Russia has been modelling a multipolar world far off from Western influence. However, Russian footprints in Africa accompany several uncertainties. The Western forces were able to contain the Islamist insurgency in West Africa for a long time. Following the withdrawal of the Western forces, the frequency of attacks has increased and the Tuareg rebellion is said to have re-emerged in the region. According to Relief Web Terrorism Index 2023, the number of attacks has increased with Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger topping the ranking. Although Russian forces have replaced the Western forces, their capacity to address the insurgency in the region is uncertain. Besides, Russia's engagements in Africa come at the cost of human rights and democracy. While Russia successfully expands its footprints in Africa, apparent objectives and unclear methodologies are Africa's concerns.

## COMMENTARY

### Lavrov's visit to Africa: Four takeaways

Ayan Datta

On 3-8 June, Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov visited four African countries: Guinea, the Republic of Congo, Burkina Faso, and Chad. Through the visit, Moscow sought to bolster its presence and influence in Africa amid rising global isolation after its military operations in Ukraine. Lavrov presented Russia as a reliable security, economic and diplomatic partner.

In Guinea, Lavrov focused on implementing projects in "geological exploration," "mineral deposits," energy production, and UN-level cooperation. He condemned the West's "neocolonial practices" and stressed the need to "African solutions to African problems."

In Republic of Congo, Lavrov met President Denis Sassou and Minister of Foreign Affairs Jean-Claude Gakosso. Both sides pledged to strengthen "intensive military and military-technical cooperation in the interest of strengthening the defence capability of the Republic of the Congo." Lavrov's visit marked the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

In Burkina Faso, Lavrov met President Ibrahim Traore and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Cooperation and Burkinese Affairs Abroad, K J M Traoré. Both sides announced that Russia's state-owned nuclear power firm Rosatom would engage high-ranking Burkinabe officials on nuclear cooperation.

In Chad, Lavrov met President's Mahamat Idriss Deby and discussed strategies to combat terrorism and enhance military ties.

The visit followed multiple important developments in the region concerning Russia: France's declining influence in northern Africa and the Sahel, increasing anti-West sentiments, and the increased presence of Russia's Africa Corps, which took over the private military company Wagner's operations after the death of its leader Yevgeny Prigozhin.

The following are the major takeaways of the visit.

*1. A push for military cooperation.* Russia aims to expand military cooperation and economic presence in Africa. Lavrov articulated this agenda in Burkina Faso, stating that the two partners were "fully unlocking the potential for mutually beneficial, equitable cooperation in a wide range of areas, including economy, social issues, health care, education, military and military-technical cooperation." The push for military cooperation underscored Russia's objective of becoming an alternative security partner to Western powers.

Lavrov's message of building bilateral relationships "based on equality and mutual benefit" resonated strongly in Burkina Faso, which experienced two coups in the past two years and multiple security challenges. His messaging aligned with the anti-colonial narratives used by the country's military leadership.

Lavrov reiterated existing defence and military-technical cooperation agreements in Chad, stating: "The Chadian armed and security forces receive Russian weapons and military equipment that strengthen your country's defence capability and enable it to fight terrorism more

effectively." He underscored Russia's current military engagements and signalled Russia's interest in intensifying these ties.

2. *Russia-Africa partnership: Diversifying beyond weapons sales.* During his visits, Lavrov emphasised potential domains of economic collaboration, including infrastructure development, resource exploration and nuclear energy. In Chad, the Minister stressed "major joint projects in geological exploration, the use of subsurface resources, and nuclear power production," indicating Russia's objective of diversifying beyond military cooperation. The focus on natural resource extraction and energy solutions aligned with Russia's economic interests. Lavrov highlighted Russia's infrastructure development capabilities in other countries, especially in railway construction, highlighting the Russian Railway's performance in the continent. However, the greater emphasis on military-technical cooperation indicated that weapons sales remained Russia's primary tool of economic influence in Africa.

Lavrov indirectly acknowledged that Russia's economic capabilities had been eroded by the West's sanctions, stating that he wanted African leaders to "communicate their wishes about the forms of cooperation and the sectors of their economy where they would consider the presence of Russian economic operators useful."

3. *Russia gathering diplomatic support for its Ukraine conflict.* Lavrov's engagement with African leaders and public statements reflected his diplomatic efforts at garnering support for the War in Ukraine. In the Republic of Congo, Lavrov praised President Denis Sassou Nguesso for the "fair and honest stance on Ukraine." Lavrov commended African leaders who adopted "an objective and balanced view" of the conflict, reflecting his strategy to

cultivate diplomatic support in the Global South.

Framing the Ukraine issue as a result of Western interference and aggression, he stated while in Chad: "The Western policy of interference in the domestic affairs of sovereign states caused the Ukraine crisis."

Lavrov criticised West-led diplomatic initiatives to resolve the Ukraine conflict. Dismissing the Swiss peace conference on Ukraine as a desperate US attempt to "preserve the collapsing anti-Russian bloc," Lavrov argued that such initiatives were counterproductive and harmful to the peace process in Ukraine because they excluded Russia. Furthermore, Lavrov accused Western countries of pressuring African countries to take sides in the conflict. He claimed that the organisers of the Swiss conference were telling African countries: "It is up to you to choose sides, whether you stand with us or with Russia. We will punish those who side with Russia." Lavrov attempted to position Russia as a defender of Africa's sovereignty against Western coercion. By floating this narrative, he sought to position Moscow as a champion of a more equitable multipolar international order.

4. *A challenge to France's influence in Africa.* Lavrov challenged French influence in Africa by visiting multiple countries that were historically under French rule, including Burkina Faso and Chad. In Burkina Faso, Lavrov stated: "I see Russian flags in Burkina Faso. I don't see European flags." Lavrov asserted Russia's policy as "either you are with us or against us" and contrasted it with Russia's policy of "friendship without alliances against others." He sought to capitalise on the growing anti-Western sentiments in African countries.

In Chad, when questioned about whether improved Russia-Chad relations would



affect Chad's relationship with France, Lavrov assured that Russia's "friendship with Chad will in no way affect our relations with France." It implied that African countries need not choose between partnerships, subtly encouraging them to

diversify their international relations. He questioned the notion that northern Africa and the Sahel were "French influence zone(s)," stating that "we have a different principle. We are friends with those who want to be friends. We never ally with someone against someone else."

## COMMENTARY

### Kenya: Protests force the government to withdraw the financial bill

Anu Maria Joseph

On 26 June, Kenyan President William Ruto withdrew the finance bill following the countrywide violent protests. Ruto stated: "I run a government, but I also lead people, and the people have spoken."

On 25 June, protests against tax reforms turned violent after the lawmakers passed the bill with several concessions. The demonstrators tried to breach Parliament House and set fire to parts of the building in the capital Nairobi. Police fired live ammunition, killing 22.

On 25 June, President William Ruto stated that all means would be used to "thwart any attempts by dangerous criminals to undermine the security and stability of our country." He deployed military to disperse the protesters. Ruto added: "Violence, disrespect and wanton destruction of property and blatant attack on public institutions shall not be condoned."

On the same day, the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, expressed that he was "deeply saddened by the reports of deaths and injuries - including of journalists and medical personnel - connected to protests and street demonstrations in Kenya."

On the same day, the AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat called

on the stakeholders "to engage in constructive dialogue to address the contentious issues that led to the protests in the supreme interest of Kenya."

Following are the major issues behind the protests.

#### **The bill against the economic crisis.**

The financial bill, introduced in May, imposes a 16 per cent value-added tax (VAT) on bread, a 25 per cent excise duty on cooking oil, a five per cent tax on digital financial transactions, a 2.5 per cent annual tax on vehicles and an "eco levy" on plastic goods. The government aim to collect USD 2.7 billion in taxes to address the debt crisis which amounts to USD 80 billion. The country's public debt records 68 per cent of the GDP. Despite the concessions, the protesters claim that the new taxes would further increase the cost of living. The trading economics recorded the country's inflation rate at 5.1 per cent in May. According to the World Bank, although Kenya is one of the most developing countries in Africa, a third of its 52 million people live in poverty due to the high cost of living.

#### **Recurring protests against Ruto**

Ruto took office in September 2022, promising to address unemployment and poverty. However, a month later, Ruto removed fuel subsidies, increasing the

costs of basic commodities. In July 2023, violent anti-government protests erupted against a new bill, which introduced a five per cent housing levy, and a 16 per cent tax on petroleum products; 23 people were killed during the protests.

### **Increasing young discontent**

The protesters were predominantly young. It began as angry responses in social media including TikTok, Twitter, WhatsApp and Instagram. It revolved into demonstrations and live streaming of clashes with police without any political backing. The hashtags #OccupyParliament and #RejectFinanceBill2024 went popular on social media. The police arrested more than 200 young protesters. A 15 per cent withholding tax for digital content creators and a five per cent tax on digital transactions were considered the triggers.

### **The government's harsh response to the protests**

The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNHRC) reported that 21 protesters have disappeared since 24 June. Police used live ammunition, rubber bullets, tear gas and water cannons to disperse the protests. Ruto deployed military to quell the protesters stating that his government would prevent its recurrence “at whatever cost.”

### **The debt crisis of African countries**

Kenya is not the only country in Africa vulnerable to similar instabilities attributed to high debts. According to the World Bank, nine African countries are

struggling with debt distress in 2024 and 15 are at high risk of distress. The majority of the population in the continent pays their taxes to spend on interest payments rather than services. They rely on repeated borrowing, leading to an increased total debt burden.

### **What does it mean?**

The withdrawal of the bill is a victory of the protests. The involvement of the young generation and their methods without political backing were the first of a kind for the administration

Ruto received widespread international criticism over the use of force. The sudden shift in his stance is likely an attempt to save face in front of the international community. The US has supported Kenya in deploying its police forces in Haiti. However, it is unclear how the country would address the debt crisis. Any further financial reforms would likely face a similar popular reaction, implying that the administration is at a crossroads.

Meanwhile, the increasing debt crisis in Africa would leave the governments to either increase taxes or wait for debt reconstruction. The successful young protests in Kenya would likely encourage the youth across the continent to seek a similar method to protest against any financial reforms by respective administrations.

## COMMENTARY

### Kenya's non-NATO ally designation by the US | Explained

Vetriselvi Baskaran

On 24 June, US President Joe Biden vowed to designate Kenya as a “major non-NATO ally.” His announcement came during the Kenyan President William Ruto’s three-day visit to the US. Biden detailed the decision as a “fulfilment of years of collaboration.” Biden and Ruto stated that the announcement “is a powerful symbol of the close relationship.”

A brief background on Kenya-US relations The US-Kenya shared diplomatic relations since the latter gained independence from the UK in 1963. In 2018, countries elevated their strategic partnership and held a Bilateral Strategic Dialogue (BSD). In 2020, Kenya received USD 560 million from the US as peace and security assistance. Over the past three years, Kenya purchased over USD 139 million worth of US military equipment. The US supports the Kenya Defence Force (KDF) in terms of counterterrorism, border security, aviation security, maritime security (including the newly established Kenyan Coast Guard), peacekeeping support, and broader professionalization efforts. Kenya would receive eight Hueys and MD500s before 2025 to boost its regional peacekeeping missions. The US is planning to upgrade Manda Bay airfield in northern Kenya and is in the process of joining the operation Gallant Phoenix, a multinational initiative in Jordan. Through the operation, Kenya would receive information on terrorist threats.

#### What does it mean by Kenya's non-NATO ally designation?

Major Non-NATO Ally (MNNA) designation is given to countries not part of NATO. It underlines the high-level trust, and access to military and financial advantages without the full-fledged

advantages of a NATO member. Kenya gained this designation as the fourth African country and first in sub-Saharan Africa. It would allow Kenya to obtain more sophisticated weapons, training, and loans to augment defence expenses from the US. In addition, Kenya becomes eligible to access loans to buy cooperative research and evaluation equipment, a site to stockpile US war reserves, and depleted uranium ammunition.

#### What are the US' extended objectives through Kenya?

The US' major objective is to provide security assistance in East Africa through Kenya. It includes professionalizing the Kenyan military force, boosting counterterrorism and border security capabilities, increasing Kenya's maritime awareness, and improving peacekeeping capabilities. Since 2011, Kenya has been fighting the al-Shabaab militancy in Somalia. A US military base in Kenya's coastal county of Lamu has been the major support for this operation. In addition, the US aims to limit the Russian and Chinese influence in East Africa by boosting ties with Kenya. Additionally, in July 2024, Kenya deployed around 400 police officers in Haiti as part of a UN-backed initiative. This move aligns with the US' broader foreign policy goals of strengthening regional stability.

#### How would the non-NATO designation help Kenya?

Kenya's objectives in its relationship with the US entail security, economy, and cooperation in humanitarian efforts. Kenya aims to advance its military capabilities to fight terrorism with US support. Security assistance from the US includes training, equipment, and advisory support to the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF). Kenya further seeks to bolster digital security and

cyber security capabilities as it faces cyberattacks. According to the Cybersecurity Report for January to March 2024 published by the National Kenya Computer Incident Response Team – Coordination Centre, Kenya saw almost 970 million cyber-attacks. During Ruto’s visit, both countries agreed to share information and foster collaboration in Artificial Intelligence (AI). The US would provide policy and regulatory advisory services to Kenya.

Kenya seeks to expand trade and investments through initiatives such as the Strategic Trade and Investment Partnership (STIP). Attracting private sector investment from the US is also one of Kenya’s objectives, particularly in sectors like renewable energy, manufacturing and digital technology. Kenya further wants to

secure US assistance for debt relief and financing. Besides, promoting democratic governance and human rights is one of the factors. Kenya seeks assistance in terms of resources from the US in managing humanitarian challenges as it hosts refugees and asylum seekers.

US’ designation of Kenya as a Major Non-NATO Ally (MNNA) is seen as a recognition of a strategic partner and its role as a security partner in the region. Further, the status benefited the earlier African members including Tunisia, Egypt, and Morocco. It is anticipated that Kenya would benefit in advancing its defence sector and achieving its counterterrorism efforts. This would also provide the US space to contain increasing Chinese and Russian footprints in the region.

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## COMMENTARY

### **7 June 1893: Gandhi gets thrown out of a first-class train in South Africa, leading to his first experiment with non-violent resistance**

Anu Maria Joseph

On 7 June 1893, Mahatma Gandhi, then a lawyer in Natal, South Africa, was thrown out of a first-class train seat while travelling from Durban to Pretoria. Despite having a valid ticket, a white passenger called the railway officials to move Gandhi to a different seat naming his "coolie" race. The coolies (racial term for Indians) and non-whites were not permitted to travel in first class at the time. Gandhi refused and protested claiming his right to travel in

first class. Later, he was forcibly thrown out at Pietermaritzburg station.

While travelling to Transvaal the next day, Gandhi was forced to sit outside next to the coachman. Later, the conductor ordered him to sit on a dirty rag spread on

the footboard. When Gandhi refused, the conductor started beating him.

About the incidents, he wrote in his autobiography: "The cold was extremely bitter. My overcoat was in my luggage, but I did not dare to ask for it lest I should be insulted again, so I sat and shivered." He adds that the incident enlightened him to realise his "duty" to fight for his "rights." The well-known train incidents changed Gandhi's life, becoming a catalyst for his idea of Satyagraha. It was also the beginning of Gandhi's nonviolent resistance against injustices in South Africa and later in India.

**The Making of Gandhi in South Africa**  
Across Natal, Pretoria and Transval, the Indian residents were treated poorly. They were not allowed to own property except

in allocated regions and travel with first-class train tickets, were subjected to curfews, had no franchise, and had to carry passes to walk on the pavement under the British colonialists.

While in Pretoria, Gandhi was influenced by Christianity. The teachings of Christ changed his view towards life and his ideals. He made his first public speech on “truthfulness in business.” It awakened Indians against the racial suppression they were suffering. He mobilised Indians to take up the issue of first-class travel in trains. Subsequently, Indians “who were properly dressed” could travel with first and second-class tickets. This was a short victory and the beginning of the making of Gandhi in South Africa. He united Indians from diverse communities, religions and languages in South Africa. However, it angered the white authority in Natal.

When self-governance was granted to Natal in 1893, anti-Indian sentiments had spread among the majority white population and authorities. Several bills were passed during the next two years restricting the freedom of Indians (Immigration Law Amendment Bill and Franchise Amendment Bill). The Immigration Law Amendment Bill demanded Indians to return at the end of a five-year indenture period and the Franchise Amendment Bill limited Indian’s right to vote. In April 1894, Gandhi converted a party, which was supposed to be his farewell, into an action committee against the bill to disfranchise Indians. The committee drafted a petition, collected signatures and filed to the Natal Legislative Assembly. Although the petition was unsuccessful, it gained widespread popularity. Undismayed Gandhi filed another petition to Lord Ripon, the Secretary of State of Colonies. His petitions and letters to authorities, politicians, lawyers, and media gained widespread attention to the oppression of Indians in South Africa. The attention

went beyond the borders to India. In 1894, Gandhi was instrumental in forming the Natal Indian Congress. It was the first political organisation to protect the rights of Indians in South Africa.

During his initial period in South Africa, he maintained the standards of an English barrister. In 1899, during the second Anglo-Boer war, although his sympathies were with the Boers, he requested Indians to support the British as Indians claimed rights as their subjects. However, during the Zulu revolt in 1906, he changed and requested Indians to join the stretcher-bearer corps to carry wounded soldiers. It was the beginning of Gandhi’s second phase in South Africa.

In 1907, Gandhi practised satyagraha in South Africa for the first time against the Asiatic Registration Law (The Black Act). According to the Act, all Indians, young and old, men and women, had to get fingerprinted and keep registration documents with them everywhere. Gandhi advised the Indians to refuse this indignity by defiance. Indians defied, organised mass nonviolent protests, and went on strikes. Indian protesters travelled from Natal to the Transvaal opposing the Black Act. Many protesters including Gandhi himself were arrested several times. Gandhi’s nonviolent protests were successful for the first time when the Black Act was repealed in June 1914. Gandhi’s struggle in South Africa ended in June 1914 with the Indian Relief Bill which conceded to major Indian demands.

### **From South Africa to the launch of the Non-Cooperation Movement in British India**

Despite being born in India, Gandhi always said that he was made in South Africa. He theorised and practised satyagraha in South Africa. Later, he used the same methodology in India against the British colonialism. From the Non-Cooperation Movement (1919-22) to

the Civil Disobedience Movement (1930-34) and the Quit India Movement (1942), his idea of nonviolent resistance was significant to India's struggle for independence.

Mahatma Gandhi's idea of Satyagraha had a deep impact on South Africa's Apartheid movement (1948-1990). South Africa's anti-Apartheid leader Nelson Mandela credited the victory of South Africa's truth and reconciling committee to Gandhi's ideology. Mandela once said: "Gandhi is most revered for his commitment to non-violence and the Congress Movement

was strongly influenced by this Gandhian philosophy, it was a philosophy that achieved the mobilisation of millions of South Africans during the 1952 defiance campaign, which established the ANC as a mass-based organization."

It is said that the seed of "satyagraha" was planted at the Pietermaritzburg station where he was thrown out on 7 June 1893. Every year, South Africans commemorate the incident in front of the plaque established at the station. His journey of exploring truth continues to influence many.

## SHORT NOTE

### Suicide Bombings in Nigeria

Ayan Datta

On 29 June, three female suicide bombers targeted a wedding, a funeral and a market in northwestern Nigeria's Borno State. The attacks killed around 32 civilians and injured around 48. Although no group claimed the attack, the armed groups Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) were suspected because they used female suicide bombers in past attacks. Nigeria's President, Bola Tinubu, stated that the acts were "desperate acts of terror" and that the government would "not allow the nation to slither into an era of fear, tears, sorrow, and blood."

On 28 June, armed groups killed 17 people in Borno State.

#### Major issues

*1. An overview of insurgent groups operating in Nigeria's Borno state.* Since the early 2000s, the Borno state became the operating base of three armed groups: Boko Haram, the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) and Ansaru. In 2002, a Salafist preacher, Mohammad Yusuf, established Boko Haram in Borno's capital, Maiduguri. Its objective was to

establish a Sunni Islamic State and oppose Western culture and education. In 2012,

Ansaru emerged as a faction of Boko Haram and aligned with Al-Qaeda. Ansaru focused on targeting foreigners and Nigerian government officials. In 2015, Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekaku formed an ISIS-aligned splinter group called Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) to establish a caliphate in West Africa.

*2. The continuing suicide attacks in Nigeria.* In 2011, Boko Haram began using suicide attacks in Nigeria. Since then, Boko Haram and ISWAP regularly used this tactic. During 2011-2018, armed groups carried out around 245 suicide bombings. From 2018-2024, the number of attacks was around 35.

*3. Using women and girls for suicide attacks.* In 2014, Boko Haram began the practice of using female suicide bombers. The attacks often involved multiple women who detonated in coordination. According to survivors' accounts, the group abducted women and girls,

brainwashed them, and forced them to carry out suicide attacks. The women are threatened with violence if they refuse. However, ISWAP reduced the use of female suicide bombers to gain local support and avoid civilian casualties.

*4. Profile of the victims and locations of the armed groups.* Boko Haram targeted civilians of all religions in 85 per cent of its suicide bombings and attacked public spaces like markets, weddings and hospitals. However, ISWAP and Ansaru targeted non-Muslim civilians like Christians and the visible sites of government presence, including government officials, police stations, and military camps.

#### **In perspective**

First, armed groups use female suicide bombers because of tactical reasons. Armed groups like Boko Haram use women to carry out suicide attacks because they are assumed to be beyond suspicion, cannot be body-searched by male soldiers, and can be trained cheaply. For little cost, these bombings create

public insecurity, cripple local economies and boost morale and cohesion among members of the armed group.

Second, the government's ineffectiveness in suppressing armed groups in the Borno region. Nigeria's military is severely underfunded, with significant funds lost yearly because of corruption in the Ministry of Defence. Since the military is underfunded, the armed groups often have more advanced equipment than the army overwhelms them in battles.

Third, reasons for the prevalence of armed groups in the Borno region. All three of Nigeria's armed groups are based in the Borno State, located on the country's geographic and political periphery. Owing to low state capacity, government institutions aside from military camps are almost absent in the Borno. The region is prone to raids by bandits and armed groups. Under such conditions, local youths often join one of the groups for economic benefits and protection against other groups.

## AFRICA IN BRIEF

1 June-30 June

By Ayan Datta and Anu Maria Joseph

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### EGYPT

#### **Inhuman treatment of refugees from Sudan, reports Amnest International**

On 19 June, a report published by Amnesty International stated that Egypt deported thousands of Sudanese refugees and arrested many unlawfully. It documented 12 instances where Egyptian authorities returned 800 Sudanese nationals without allowing them to claim asylum or challenge deportation decisions. There was an additional case of 27 Sudanese refugees arrested between October 2023 and March 2024, 26 of whom were collectively expelled. The group claimed that refugees were held in inhuman conditions before their deportation. While Egypt's National Council for Human Rights denied these claims and asserted that they respected international law, Egypt's State Information Service did not respond to the report. ("[Egypt unlawfully deported Sudanese refugees, rights group says](#)," *Reuters*, 19 June 2024)

### LIBYA

#### **UN representative expresses the need for elections**

On 19 June, the UN deputy representative, Stephanie Koury, told the UN Security Council that the current divisions between political players are unsustainable and that Libya needs an election. Following the death of dictator Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, rival administrations took over in the east and west backed by militias and foreign governments respectively. Sierra Leone, Algeria, Mozambique, and Guyana have emphasized the UNSCs commitment to an inclusive Libyan-led political process facilitated by the UN. Libya's UN Ambassador Taher El-Sonni, expressed concern over UNSC's inactivity, stating:

"We are tired and fed up with using Libya as a proxy for certain countries and regional powers for selfish greedy battles, some of which have colonial ambitions." ("[Libyans demand elections and unity, says UN envoy](#)," *Africanews*, 20 June 2024)

### SUDAN

#### **Sudan one of the worst places for children, says UNICEF**

On 24 June, according to BBC, the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Catherine Russel, stated that Sudan was one of the world's worst places for children. Russel said Sudan had the largest number of displaced children in the world. Nine million do not get enough food, around four million face acute malnutrition, and five million were without schooling. Russel said the crisis was "100% man made." The ongoing civil war between Sudan's military and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) was the main reason behind the humanitarian situation because it destroyed Sudan's food economy and displaced local populations. ("[Sudan's children going hungry as famine looms](#)," *BBC*, 24 June)

#### **Iran and UAE accused of supplying arms**

On 13 June, the BBC reported that Iran and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) had been accused of violating a 2005 UN arms embargo to Sudan. Dutch peace organisation PAX's Humanitarian Disarmament Project Leader Wim Zwijnenburg analysed videos of the conflict on Twitter and said that Sudan's Armed Forces used Iran-made drones, Mohajer-6 and Ababil-3. Amnesty International Crisis Team's Weapons



Investigator Brian Castner said that the UAE supplied drones to Sudan's Rapid Support Forces. ("[Sudan war: Evidence that Iran and UAE drones used](#)," *BBC*, 13 June 2024)

### **US envoy says fall of El Fasher is imminent**

On 11 June, according to the BBC, US Special Envoy for Sudan Tom Perillo said that El Fasher could fall to Rapid Support Forces (RSF) imminently. The Envoy said that the RSF considered establishing Darfur as an independent state after capturing it. Perillo said: "We see 45,000 pregnant women who not only have no real prenatal care, but don't even have enough meals a day to be nourished enough for a healthy pregnancy." El Fasher was a sanctuary for people fleeing the conflict. However, it recently became another frontline zone. Perillo said that the US would not recognise any breakaway independent state of Darfur. ("[Sudan's El Fasher could fall to rebels imminently - US](#)," *BBC*, 11 June 2024)

### **Number of internally displaced persons crosses ten million**

On 10 June, according to Africanews, the International Organisation of Migration (IOM) said that Sudan's multiple conflicts displaced more than ten million people internally. Over two million were forced to neighbouring countries, mainly to Chad, South Sudan and Egypt. The IOM's Director General Amy Pope said: "Imagine a city the size of London being displaced. That's what it looks like, but it's happening with the constant threat of crossfire, with famine, disease and brutal ethnic and gender-based violence." ("[Sudan's Internal Displacement surpasses 10 Million](#)," *Africanews*, 10 June 2024)

### **UN agencies warn over RSF attacks**

On 5 June, the International Organisation for Migration's (IOM) Senior Operations Coordinator, Mohamed Refaat, highlighted the "horrifying reports of violent attacks

and casualties" in Sudan's Al Jazirah state. The Rapid Support Forces (RSF) allegedly carried out the attack, which killed 100 people, including 35 children. Speaking on the humanitarian consequences of the conflict, Senior Communications Officer of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, Alpha Seydi, said that the crisis in Sudan had sent over 600,00 refugees into neighbouring Chad. The World Health Organisation (WHO) spokesperson Christian Lindmeir said: "Only about 25 per cent of the medical supplies needed are available in the country. In hard-to-reach areas, only 20 to 30 per cent of health facilities remain functional, and even so, at a minimal level." ("[UN condemns attack in Sudan by RSF paramilitaries that left at least 100 dead](#)," *Africanews*, 8 June 2024)

### **RSF kill 150 people in Gezira**

On 7 June, BBC reported that Sudan's Rapid Support Forces (RSF) killed 150 people in Gezira state's Wal-al-Nourah village. The World Health Organisation's (WHO) Executive Director Catherine Russel said: "This is yet another grim reminder of how the children of Sudan are paying the price for the brutal violence." The RSF has been fighting Sudan's army since April 2023. Over 15,000 people are estimated to have died because of the conflict. ("[At least 150 villagers feared dead in Sudan massacre](#)," *BBC*, 7 June 2024)

### **100 dead in RSF attack**

On 5 June, the Sudan Tribune reported that the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) killed 100 people in Al-Jazira state's Wad Al-Norra village. Local neighbourhood committees reported: "The village of Wad Al-Noora witnessed a massacre after the RSF militia attacked it twice." The RSF took control of Al-Jazirah state in 2023. Since then, it has been raiding villages and committing atrocities against residents. Residents want to arm themselves to resist the RSF. ("[RSF commits massacre in Al-Jazirah village](#),"

[leaving nearly 100 dead](#),” *Sudan Tribune*, 6 June 2024)

### **1280 civilian casualties in El-Fasher**

On 5 June, the aid group Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) stated: “Since the fighting began on May 10, we have received 1,280 casualties at the MSF-supported South Hospital – 203 have died from their injuries.” The MSF said that with the intensification of the conflict in El Fasher, the South Hospital was the only remaining in the region. The hospital had been bombed three times in a week and at the brink of being non-operational. (“[El Fasher Conflict: 1,280 civilian casualties and hospital closure looms](#),” *Sudan Tribune*, 6 June 2024)

## **ETHIOPIA**

### **US-based institute reports Ethiopia committed genocide in Tigray**

On 4 June, Al Jazeera reported that the New Lines Institute found evidence that Ethiopia’s military committed “acts constituting the crime of genocide.” The report’s authors say that Ethiopia violated the Genocide Convention because it engaged in mass killings and starvation tactics. The authors say Ethiopian forces “possessed the intent to destroy Tigrayans as an ethnic group.” The authors call for Ethiopia to be tried before the International Court of Justice (ICJ). (“[Strong evidence that Ethiopia committed genocide in Tigray war: Report | Crimes Against Humanity News](#),” *Al Jazeera*, 4 June 2024)

## **KENYA**

### **Law Society says police abducted and tortured protesters**

On 29 June, BBC, according to BBC, the Law Society of Kenya, said that police abducted protesters who were demonstrating against the government’s finance bill and traumatised them. However, Government Spokesperson Isaac Mwaura stated that “criminal elements who wanted a coup d’etat” tried to misuse

the peaceful protests. However, some detainees said the police confiscated their phones and laptops and tortured them. (“[Kenya finance bill: Anti-tax protesters traumatised by abductions, say lawyers](#),” *BBC*, 29 June 2024)

### **Independent Policing Oversight Authority investigating shooting of protesters**

On 29 June, according to BBC, Kenya’s Independent Policing Oversight Authority began investigating allegations that officers killed protesters outside the country’s Parliament and in central Nairobi’s Githurai. Kenya’s National Commission on Human Rights said it “received unverified reports of scores of residents who were killed by the stray bullets.” Law Society of Kenya President Faith Odhiambo called for an international investigation into the “massacre” at Githurai. (“[Kenya finance bill protests: Was there a massacre in Githurai?](#),” *BBC*, 29 June 2024)

### **Protests in Kenya**

On 25 June, according to Al Jazeera, Kenyan police shot and killed 13 people who were rallying against the government’s finance bill. United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres stated that security forces should “exercise restraint” and protesters should demonstrate peacefully.

The same day, according to BBC, protesters broke into Kenya’s parliament complex, vandalised its interiors and set parts of the complex on fire. The police shot dead five protesters and used rubber bullets and tear gas to control the crowd. The protesters were rallying against the government’s recent finance bill, which included multiple tax rises. Kenya’s President William Ruto also deployed the military and said that the government would “thwart any attempts by dangerous criminals to undermine the security and stability of our country.”

On 26 June, according to BBC, Kenya's President William Ruto said that the government would use all instruments at its disposal to prevent a repeat of the 25 June violence between protesters and the police. He said that "legitimate" protests against his finance bill were "hijacked by a group of organised criminals." The protestors had set fire to the Nairobi governor's office, the City Hall and Kenya's parliament. They organised the protests to oppose Ruto's corrupt government and his finance bill, which raised taxes on healthcare and housing. However, Ruto argued that the tax increases were necessary to prevent Kenya from defaulting on its foreign debts. ("[Kenya tax protests: Five reported killed in capital Nairobi](#)," *BBC*, 25 June 2024; "[Kenya tax protests updates: 13 killed as demonstrations rock country](#)," *Al Jazeera*, 25 June 2024; "[Kenya's president faces tough choices after day of bloodshed](#)," *BBC*, 26 June 2024)

#### **Police officers depart for Haiti mission**

On 24 June 2024, BBC reported that 400 Kenya's police officers will depart for a mission to Haiti to combat powerful criminal gangs in the country. The gangs controlled parts of Haiti's territory and carried out violence against civilians. Kenya's President William Ruto stated that it was "a mission to affirm the universal values of the community of nations, a mission to take a stand for humanity." ("[Kenyan police to depart for contentious peacekeeping effort in Haiti](#)," *BBC*, 24 June 2024)

#### **Seven new bodies exhumed from forest**

On 4 June, seven new bodies were recovered in Kenya's Shakahola forest. A total of 436 bodies have been exhumed from the mass gravesite so far. Pastor Paul Mackenzie is the suspected murderer. He is alleged to have encouraged his followers to starve themselves to death so that they would meet Jesus. The case brought state attention to Kenya's unregulated Churches

and cults. ("[Kenya: exhumations continue in Shakahola forest](#)," *Africanews*, 4 June 2024)

## **SOMALIA**

### **Government seeking slow withdrawal of ATMIS troops**

On 20 June, Al Jazeera reported that Somalia's government wrote a letter to the African Union Peace and Security Council in May 2024 s

seeking a slow withdrawal of the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), fearing a potential security vacuum. In a joint assessment in March, the government recommended that the AU withdraw in a timely manner according to the capabilities and readiness of Somali forces. National Security Adviser Hussein Sheikh-Ali explained the need for the postponement, fearing the al-Shabab resurgence. ("[Somalia asks peacekeepers to slow withdrawal, fears armed group resurgence](#)," *Al Jazeera*, 20 June 2024)

### **Secures non-permanent UNSC seat**

On 7 June, Somalia secured a non-permanent UN Security Council (UNSC) seat. Somalia won the UNSC's allocated East Africa seat by receiving 179 out of 193 votes in the UN General Assembly. Somalia was elected along with Denmark, Greece, Pakistan and Panama for the rotating non-permanent seat from January 2024 for the next two years. The country's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Ahmed Moalim Fiqi, stated: "We stand ready to play a vital role in promoting peace and security in the world." ("[Giant step for Somalia with UN Security Council seat](#)," *BBC*, 7 June 2024)

## **MADAGASCAR**

### **France funds to install cable car**

On 23 June, Africanews reported that Madagascar introduced cable cars as a new means of public transport. Secretary of State for New Towns and Housing, Gérard Andriamanohisoa, said that the cars would "remove 75,000 passengers every day, at

bus level, remove 2,000 cars at Tana Road level,” and improve carbon savings and the peoples’ mobility. France provided a EUR 152 million loan for the project. However, the public has complained that the government focussed on cable cars and not on basic social problems including water and electricity. ([“Madagascar's capital launches cable cars to ease traffic jam,”](#) *Africanews*, 23 June, 2024)

## **RWANDA**

### **Candidates begin campaigning for the 15 July presidential elections**

On 22 June, *Africanews* reported that Rwanda began campaigning for the presidential elections. The elections are scheduled for 15 July. Three candidates are running for the elections- Paul Kagame, incumbent President and leader of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) party; Frank Habineza, leader of the Democratic Green party; and Phillippe Mpayimana, an independent candidate. ([“Rwanda: A campaign period of three weeks to convince voters,”](#) *Africanews*, 22 June 2024)

### **Stampede at Kagame rally**

On 22 June, one person died, 37 were injured, and four were hospitalised after a stampede in President Paul Kagame’s campaign rally in the Rubavu district. Around 250,000 people attended the rally. The same day, parties began campaigning for the 15 July general election. Rwanda’s Ministry of Local Government stated that people should “follow the instructions given by those in charge to ensure the safety and tranquillity of those participating in campaign activities”. ([“Rwanda 2024 election: One killed in Paul Kagame rally crush in Rubavu,”](#) *BBC*, 22 June 2024)

### **Presidential and parliamentary elections announced**

On 14 June, the Rwanda National Electoral Commission announced the presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled for 15 July 2024. Paul Kagame, Rwanda's

president will stand against two other presidential candidates, Frank Habineza of the opposition Democratic Green Party and an independent candidate Phillippe Mpayimana. For the last three elections, Kagame won securing more than 90 per cent of the votes. (“Rwanda: Two candidates up against Paul Kagame in July 15 poll,” *Africanews*, 17 June 2024)

### **UNHCR warns of new evidence against Rwanda’s asylum policy**

On 10 June, according to the BBC, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees warned the UK’s High Court of Justice that it may have new evidence from 2024 that Rwanda endangered asylum seekers. Senior Legal Officer at UNHCR in London, Lawrence Bottnick, told the court: “UNHCR is aware of repeated incidents of refoulement from Rwanda and denial of access to the asylum procedure to asylum seekers in Rwanda.” The new evidence endangers Rishi Sunak’s “Rwanda plan” for deporting illegal immigrants. ([“UN agency warns of new Rwanda abuses evidence,”](#) *BBC*, 10 June)

### **Kagame critic barred from presidential race**

On 7 June, according to BBC, Diane Rwigara, a critic of incumbent President Paul Kagame, was barred from contesting the presidential elections. Diane said: "I'm representing the vast majority of Rwandans who live in fear and are not allowed to be free in their own country." She added: “Rwanda is portrayed as a country where the economy has been growing. But on the ground, it's different. People do lack the basics of life, food, water, shelter.” ([“Kagame critic Diane Rwigara barred from Rwanda presidential race,”](#) *BBC*, 7 June 2024)

## MALAWI

### Top comedian Usi becomes Vice-President

On 23 June, BBC reported that comedian-turned-politician Michael Usi was sworn in as Malawi's Vice President. Usi replaced Saulos Chilima, who died in a plane crash in May. Before becoming Vice President, Usi was an actor, comedian and a celebrity on television and radio. He was the leader of the movement Odyza zale alibe Mulandu, which became part of Chilima's UTM party. From July 2020 to February 2023, he was cabinet minister for tourism, culture and wildlife. He then became Minister of Natural Resources and Climate Change. However, Usi's swearing-in divided the party, with many UTM leaders not attending the swearing-in ceremony. ("[Comedian Michael Usi becomes Malawi's vice-president after Saulos Chilima's death](#)," BBC, 23 June)

### Vice President Saulos Chilima confirmed dead in plane crash

On 11 June, according to BBC, Malawi's President Lazarus Chakwera said that the wreck of the plane carrying the country's Vice President Saulos Chilima had been found with no survivors. Chakwera said: "I consider it one of the great honours of my life to have had him as a deputy and as a counsellor." ("[Saulos Chilima: Malawi vice-president confirmed dead in plane crash](#)," BBC, 11 June 2024)

### Aircraft carrying Vice-President goes missing

On 10 June, according to BBC, the Office of Malawi's President stated that the Malawi Defense Force aircraft carrying the country's Vice-President Saulos Chilima and nine others had gone missing. The President's Office stated that the aircraft "went off the radar" after leaving Malawi's capital Lilongwe. ("[Aircraft carrying Malawi vice-president goes missing](#)," BBC, 10 June)

## SOUTH AFRICA

### Parliament to open on 18 July; Ramaphosa-DA negotiations continuing

On 28 June, according to Africanews, South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa said that Parliament would open for its upcoming term on 18 July. Ramaphosa will negotiate with coalition partners to form a Cabinet before that date. Disagreements over Cabinet positions were straining the national unity government. Leaked letters revealed that Ramaphosa accused Democratic Alliance party leader John Steenhuisen of "moving the goalposts" and demanding eight cabinet positions. The DA replied that Ramaphosa reneged on his promise to give the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition to the DA. Steenhuisen's party might leave the National Unity government. However, African National Congress (ANC) Secretary-General Fikile Mbalula stated that the parties were "almost done" with a final agreement which would be "in the best interest of all South Africans." ("[South Africa's Parliament to open on July 18 – President](#)," Africanews, 28 June 2024)

### President Cyril Ramaphosa sworn in for second term

On 19 June, President Cyril Ramaphosa sworn in for his second term. At the ceremony, he announced the beginning of a "new era" referring to the country's first coalition. The ANC has formed a coalition with its major opponent, Democratic Alliance (DA) and three smaller parties. Calling for cooperation among his colleagues, he stated: "They have directed their representatives to put aside animosity and dissent, to abandon narrow interests, and to pursue together only that which benefits the nation." Although the two parties are ideologically at odds, they have agreed on a common agenda to focus on the country's infrastructure, providing basic services, and creating jobs. Chief Justice Raymond Zondo administered the oath of office. The opposition party, MK,

led by Jacob Zuma boycotted the parliament's first sitting. ("[Cyril Ramaphosa vows 'new era' for South Africa at presidential inauguration](#)," *BBC News*, 19 June 2024)

### **Zuma to join an opposition bloc**

On 16 June, South Africa's former President Jacob Zuma announced his party uMkhonto weSizwe (MK)'s decision to join the opposition alliance. He described the ruling partnership as a "white-led unholy alliance between the DA and the ANC of Ramaphosa." On 17 June, the ANC announced that the Good Party, would join the ruling coalition. ("[Jacob Zuma's MK party to join South Africa's opposition alliance](#)," *BBC*, 17 June 2024)

### **First death from Mpox**

On 13 June, South Africa's Health Minister Joe Phaahla said that the country registered its first death from the Mpox virus on 10 June. A 37-year-old man died of Mpox in South Africa's Gauteng province. Phaahla said: "One death is too many, especially from a preventable and manageable disease." ("[Mpox in South Africa: One person dies in Gauteng, says Health Minister Joe Pahaala](#)," *BBC*, 13 June 2024)

### **Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) agrees to join national unity government**

On 13 June, the President of the Inkatha Freedom Party, Velenkosini Hlabisa, said that he would join the national unity government with the African National Congress and the Democratic Alliance. Hlabisa said: "The only options were to become part of the government or part of the opposition." This was also the first official admission by any party in South Africa that a national unity government would be formed. ("[South Africa election: IFP agrees to join ANC and DA in government of national unity](#)," *BBC*, 13 May 2024)

### **ANC to form national unity government**

On 5 June, BBC reported that a spokesperson of the African National Congress (ANC), Mahlegi Bhengu-Motsiri, said that the party seeks to form a government of national unity with others. She said: "The results indicate that the South Africans want all parties to work together." Bhengo-Motsiri said that the ANC had discussed with the Democratic Alliance (DA), the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), and MK party. By forming a national unity government, the ANC could avoid the dilemmas of choosing coalition partners. The DA is seen as pro-white and opposes the ANC's black empowerment policies. The MK and EFF would alienate the business community. There is also the personal animosity between Zuma and Cyril Ramaphosa. South Africa had a national unity government in 1994 when a Nelson Mandela-led ANC formed a coalition government with the pro-apartheid National Party. ("[South Africa election: ANC eyes government of national unity](#)," *BBC*, 6 June 2024)

### **ANC to form coalition within the week**

On 4 June, Africanews reported that the African National Congress (ANC) would hold a National Executive Committee meeting to determine the party's coalition partners. The meeting would be held this week. In the recently concluded elections, President Cyril Ramaphosa lost his parliamentary majority. The ANC has multiple potential partners, but each comes with costs. If the ANC allies with the Democratic Alliance (DA), it would have the requisite numbers. However, the two have irreconcilable policy disagreements. If the ANC allies with Jacob Zuma's MK party, it would also have the numbers. However, Zuma and Ramaphosa have personal differences. The ANC could include the Economic Freedom Fighters Party. However, any alliance of the ANC with EFF and MK will alienate the DA. The ANC's secretary-general, Fikile

Mbalula, said on 3 June that the party was “having discussions within the organisation and with other parties and stakeholders on how best to establish national and provincial governments that reflect the will of the people.” ([“Talks to form South Africa's next government, choose coalition partners,” Africanews](#), 4 June 2024)

### **ANC’s electoral dilemma**

On 3 June, BBC’s opinion discussed the African National Congress (ANC) was in a critical dilemma. The ANC won only 40 per cent of the vote. It needs to find a coalition partner to secure a parliamentary majority. The partner has to support the ANC’s choice of President. Its first option for a coalition partner is the Democratic Alliance (DA). However, the public perceives the DA as pro-White and pro-apartheid. The DA opposes the ANC’s welfare state policies and “black empowerment” efforts. For the ANC, these policies are non-negotiable. The ANC’s second option is to ally with Jacob Zuma’s MK party. However, there is personal animosity between Zuma and the ANC’s leader Cyril Ramaphosa. The Economic Freedom Party (EFF) can be a third option for ANC. However, the EFF considers the seizure and redistribution of white-owned land without compensation as its “cardinal principle.” The ANC opposes this policy. ([“South Africa elections: ANC's dilemma over coalition government,” BBC](#), 3 June 2024)

### **Ramaphosa faces poor election results, needs to form coalition**

On 2 June, according to BBC, South Africa’s President Cyril Ramaphosa admitted that his African National Congress (ANC) party suffered a challenging election result. Ramaphosa said: “Our people have spoken, whether we like it or not, they have spoken.” With all voters counted, the ANC finished with a 40 per cent share. It won 159 seats in the nation’s 400-seat Parliament. The

Democratic Alliance (DA) finished second, with 87 seats. DA leader John Steenhuisen said he was prepared to form a coalition government. He said: “We urge all others who love our constitution and all it represents to set aside petty politics and narrow sectarian interests and join hands now.” Jacob Zuma’s MK party came third with 58 seats. However, Zuma disputed the results. His party alleged that the elections had been rigged. The MK demanded fresh elections and an independent investigation. The ANC’s performance decreased from 58 per cent vote share in the previous election. The 1994 elections were the first in which all South Africans voted. The ANC, then led by Nelson Mandela, had won. Since then, the ANC’s vote share has been steadily declining. This year, the party finally lost its parliamentary majority. It needs to form a coalition government to stay in power. Analysts say that issues like water shortages, corruption, unemployment, crime, and power outages have caused the decline. ([“South Africa president faces up to poor poll result,” BBC](#), 2 June 2024)

## **ZAMBIA**

### **Chinese nationals arrested for running cybercrime syndicate**

On 5 June, according to BBC, 22 Chinese nationals pled guilty to committing cyber-related crimes. The Drug Enforcement Commission (DEC) arrested them in April after raiding their premises. The accused were charged with running a “sophisticated internet fraud syndicate.” The individuals worked at the Golden Top Support Services, operated in Lagos. The syndicate targeted people in Singapore, the United Arab Emirates, and African countries with online scams. Li Xianlin, a Chinese national, is believed to be the company’s director. ([“Zambia cybercrime: Chinese nationals plead guilty to scam charges,” BBC](#), 6 June 2024)

## GHANA

### Civil society demonstrations in Accra over power shortages

On 9 June, according to Africanews, a massive demonstration gathered in Ghana's capital, Accra, to demand an end to power shortages in the country. The demonstration was led by civil society groups, entertainers and business owners. ("[Hundreds rally in Ghana over power outages](#)," *Africanews*, 9 June 2024)

## CHAD

### Foreign Minister Lavrov finishes Africa tour in Chad

On 7 June, Africanews reported that Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov visited Chad. He met Chad's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abderaman Koulamallah. Lavrov stated: "I can guarantee you that our friendship with Chad will not affect our relations with France in any way. France has other approaches, it proceeds from the fact that either you are with us or you are against us." ("[Russian foreign minister wraps Africa tour with working visit in Chad](#)," *Africanews*, 7 June 2024)

## DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

### President Nguesso meets Putin

On 24 June, according to Africanews, Congo's President Denis Sassou Nguesso was expected to meet Putin in Moscow. The two heads of government discuss economic, trade, energy and security cooperation. Nguesso's trip followed the previous visit to Congo by Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergei Lavrov. ("[Congolesse President visits Moscow in bid to deepen ties](#)," *Africanews*, 24 June 2024)

### M23 rebel attack kills five civilians

On 19 June, a bombardment in eastern Congo's North Kivu province killed five people, including three women and a girl in an M23 rebel attack. The Congo army accused the M23 rebel group of the attack.

The blasts in the city led to many people evacuating the area. ("[DR Congo says five people killed in rebel bombing of eastern town](#)," *Reuters*, 19 June 2024)

### Boat sinks in Kwa river, killing 80

On 13 June, the BBC reported that 80 people died as a boat sank in the DRC's Kwa River. The country's President, Félix Tshisekedi, said he was "devastated." He called for an "investigation into the true causes of this unfortunate incident to prevent such a disaster from happening again in the future." ("[DR Congo: 80 people killed after boat sinks](#)," *BBC*, 13 June 2024)

### Armed group kills 45 in North Kivu

On 8 June, according to BBC, an armed group killed 45 civilians in a series of attacks in the DRC's North Kivu province. Local sources say the Islamic State-linked Allied Democratic Force (ADF) is suspected to be the attackers. The province's Mamove district was hit worst. The attackers torched homes and stole motorbikes. ("[Dozens killed by suspected DR Congo rebels in spate of attacks](#)," 8 June 2024)

### Alleged coup-plotters on trial

On 7 June, BBC reported that DRC's military court began the trial of 51 suspects of the attempted coup in May. The trial was held in Kinshasa's N'dolo military prison. The accused individuals were facing multiple charges, including financing terrorism, and attempted assassination. ("[Failed 'coup plotters' go on trial in DR Congo](#)," *BBC*, 7 June 2024)

### Central Bank pushes Congolese Franc against Dollarisation

On 7 June, Africanews reported that the Central Bank of Congo (BCC) mandated all Electronic Payment Terminal (EPT) to accept Congolese Franc. The Central Bank's decision aimed to increase the use of the national currency and reduce dependency on the US dollar. Promoting



financial inclusion is another aim of the BCC. ([“DR Congo seeks to curb dollar dominance by fronting use of local currency,”](#) *Africanews*, 7 June 2024)

### **Lavrov meets President Nguesso**

On 4 June, Russia’s Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sergey Lavrov, met with Congo’s President Denis Sassou-Nguesso. The crisis in Libya was high on their agenda. On 4 June, Lavrov and Congo’s Minister of Foreign Affairs Jean-Claude Gakosso held a joint press conference. Gakosso argued for a negotiated end to the Russia-Ukraine war. He said: “Those who urge to send troops on the ground do not help the peace process, but on the contrary, they put all humanity under risk of fatal and definitive confrontation.” Lavrov criticized the upcoming peace conference in Switzerland. ([“Russian FM in Congo: Libya, war in Ukraine and cooperation top agenda,”](#) *Africanews*, 4 June 2024)

## **MAURITANIA**

### **Elections scheduled for 29 June**

On 29 June, BBC reported that Mauritania would hold presidential elections on the same day. The country faced multiple issues, including slavery, migration, corruption and jihadists. Mauritania was the world’s last country to make slavery illegal in 1981. However, according to the Global Slavery Index (GSI), around 149,000 Mauritians were still enslaved. Migration was another issue for Mauritania’s electorate. The country was a transit point for West African migrants heading to Europe. Corruption was a critical problem for the people, with former President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz being jailed for embezzlement and illegally enriching himself. Since Mauritania is located in the Sahel region, jihadists were another problem for it. However, because of President Mohamed Ould Cheikh Ghazouani’s military background, the problem was tackled well recently. ([“Mauritania election: Jihadist,](#)

[migration, slavery the key issues,”](#) *BBC*, 29 June 2024)

### **President Ghazouani re-elected by comfortable margin**

On 1 June, according to BBC, Mauritania’s incumbent President Mohamed Ould Ghazouani was re-elected. He won with 56 per cent of the vote in the first round of polling, without the need for un-off elections. Anti-slavery activist Biram Dah Abeid secured second position with 22 per cent, and Hamidi Sidi el-Mokhtar secured third place with 13 per cent. Abeid refused to accept the results, calling it an “electoral coup.” 55 per cent of the electorate turned out to vote. ([“Mauritanian president comfortably wins re-election,”](#) *BBC*, 1 June 2024)

## **BENIN**

### **Five Nigeriens detained, bilateral row escalates**

On 9 June, according to Africanews, Benin arrested five Nigerien nationals and accused them of entering the Seme port illegally. Benin claimed that two of the detained were agents of Niger’s military government using fake documents. Niger countered the accusations. It said that Benin kidnapped staff of its oil company who were at the port to witness a shipment being loaded. The incident was part of a large bilateral dispute between the two countries over oil shipments and borders. ([“From oil to arrests: Niger-Benin row escalates,”](#) *Africanews*, 9 June 2024)

## **NIGER**

### **Armed group damages oil pipeline to Benin**

On 23 June, according to BBC, Niger’s military government confirmed that the Patriot Liberation Front damaged an oil pipeline connecting Niger with Benin. Trade relations between the two have remained tense because of Niger’s allegations that Benin was hosting French troops and Benin’s arresting of five Niger citizens at an oil port. However, the

relations normalised with China's assistance. ([“Niger-Benin oil pipeline: Junta admits rebels attack,” BBC, 23 June 2024](#))

## **NIGERIA**

### **25 years of democracy**

On 12 June, according to BBC, Nigeria celebrated 25 years of democratic rule. A 2022 survey by the research organisation Afrobarometer found that 75 per cent of Nigerians were “not very” or “not at all” satisfied with democracy. However, the survey concluded that a majority of those surveyed preferred democracy to any other system of government. Nigeria was under military government from the 1960s and democratised in 1999. ([“Nigeria democracy day: Despite anger the country sticks with civilian rule,” BBC, 12 June 2024](#))

### **Gunmen kill 25 people in raid**

On 11 June, according to BBC, gunmen killed 25 people and abducted multiple others in the northwestern Katsina state. The bandits rode in the village on motorbikes, shot people, looted shops, and abducted multiple. A local resident, Abdullahi Yunusa Kankara, said: “Our town has turned into a death zone. Almost every house in the village has fallen victim to this attack. More dead bodies were recovered this [Monday] morning.” ([“Nigeria gunmen kill at least 25 in village raid, officials say,” BBC, 11 June 2024](#))

### **Nigeria to purchase 3.5 million power meters by the end of 2024**

On 7 June, Africanews reported that Nigeria's Federal Minister of Power, Adebayo Adedun, announced that the government would acquire 3.5 million prepaid power meters by the end of 2024. The step aims to increase revenue collection and solve the country's power shortage problems. ([“Nigeria to purchase 3.5 million prepaid power meters by end of 2024,” Africanews, 7 June 2024](#))

### **Worker unions organise national grid shutdown**

On 3 June, the BBC reported that Nigerians were left without electricity after labour union members shut down the national grid. The shutdown was part of a general strike against the rising cost of living in the country. The unions were demanding an increase in the minimum wage. Nigeria's economy has been suffering from high inflation. Workers' wages are not keeping up with the rising cost of commodities including rice. However, the government says wage increases would harm the economy and increase unemployment because businesses would be forced to close. This is the fourth strike since President Bola Tinubu took office in 2023. ([“NLC strike update in Nigeria: National grid shut down,” BBC, 3 June 2024](#))

## **BURKINA FASO**

### **Armed group attack soldiers**

On 16 June, Al Jazeera reported that more than 100 Burkina Faso soldiers in the Niger border were killed by an armed group linked to al-Qaeda, Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM). The SITE Intelligence Group stated that “fighters stormed a military post in the town, where they killed 107 soldiers and took control of the site.” The attack was one of the deadliest ones that the government and the country army struggled with. Nearly 50,000 soldiers are fighting in the region against insurgency. According to Ulf Laessing, head of the Sahel programme at the Konrad Adenauer Foundation: “Burkina Faso is the smallest of the three and very densely populated ... Whenever the army attacks, you have many more civilian victims, that makes it so brutal.” ([“Al-Qaeda affiliate claims responsibility for June attack in Burkina Faso,” Al Jazeera, 16 June 2024](#))

### **Foreign Minister Lavrov's visit**

On 4 June, Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergei Lavrov, visited Burkina

Faso. This was his first visit to Burkina Faso. Lavrov met Burkina Faso's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Karamoko Jean-Marie Traoré. Lavrov said that he was grateful for Traoré's assistance in helping Russia reopen its embassy in Burkina Faso's capital, Ouagadougou. ("[Lavrov arrives in Burkina Faso, third leg of his Africa tour](#)," *Africanews*, 6 June 2024)

## INTERNATIONAL

### **Lavrov says exploitation continues in Africa through economic methods**

On 25 June, according to Africanews, Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergei Lavrov, said, "In Africa, many countries are increasingly asserting their

national interests and understanding that exploitation continues, but through different economic methods." He added that African states "wanted to be independent and seek mutually respectful partnerships." Lavrov was speaking in Minsk during an official visit to Belarus. ("[Exploitation continues in Africa, but through economic methods](#)," *Lavrov*," *Africanews*, 25 June 2024)

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