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IN FOCUS

## The Wagner Group in Africa

AFRICA IN BRIEF

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## In Focus

### The Wagner Group in Africa: A Profile

*A Profile of the Wagner group in Africa: From supporting military, authoritarian leaders to fighting militancy and mine licencing*

Jerry Franklin



Image source: PaulLorgerie,Reuters

The Wagner Group, a private military company (PMC) with alleged ties to the Russian government, has increasingly made its presence felt in various countries across the African continent. The group has been operating in several African countries, offering direct military support and related security assistance.

The footprint of the Wagner Group can be seen in countries including Libya, Sudan, the Central African Republic (CAR), Zimbabwe, Angola, Madagascar, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Mali, Burkina Faso, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Wagner and its subsidiary firms hold certain privileges and rights in these countries that allow them to access and capitalise on natural resources in exchange for providing arms, technology, and military assistance. According to a study by the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime, the sale of armaments and bilateral military cooperation agreements between Russia and several African countries paved the way to the deployment of the Wagner group in Africa. Moscow has been using the Wager group to advance its geopolitical objectives on the African continent. Moreover, Russia seeks to

present itself as a reliable ally to African countries where the influence of the West is declining gradually.

#### The Wagner Footprint in Africa

The Wagner group's presence in Africa can be profiled through individual countries.

#### Libya: The Khalifa Haftar connection

In Libya, the Wagner group was accused of supporting General Khalifa Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA) against the UN-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA). Wagner's combat activities in Libya began in 2018 to support the Libyan National Army's (LNA) attempt to conquer Tripoli and destabilise the GNA. It was estimated that 2,000 Wagner members were stationed in Libya between July and September 2019.

The group was indicted with unlawful killings and the setting of landmines in residential areas. In 2020, a ceasefire ended the conflict between the warring factions. Since 2020, the focus of Wagner's operations has been on the oil infrastructure in eastern Cyrenaica bordering Egypt, and they have continued to provide Hifter troops with military training. Currently, the Wagner units are located in the eastern province, particularly at al-Khadim air base near al-Marj city, and in the central region's cities of Sirte and al-Jufrah.

The Wagner Group tried to utilise Libya as a strategic base to conduct its operations in the Sahel area, notably in Chad and Niger. Russia intends to establish a base along the southern flank of NATO and Libya provides strategic options for naval and aviation bases and provide support for operations further into Africa. Russia

seeks to make more investments and create new business prospects in Libya's energy industry.

### **Sudan: From President Omar al Bashir to Gen Hamdan Dagalo**

In Sudan, the Wagner group began its operation during the reign of former President Omar al-Bashir. During a visit to Moscow in 2017, Sudan's then-President Omar al-Bashir signed several agreements with the Russian government. These included a deal for Russia to establish a naval facility at Port Sudan on the Red Sea and gold extraction concession deals between Russian enterprise and the Sudanese Ministry of Minerals.

In Sudan, Russia has prioritized establishing a naval base for strategic purposes. Additionally, Russia has established a network of gold mining and smuggling activities in Sudan through Wagner. The Wagner group established Meroe Gold, a Prigozhin-controlled firm, to oversee its operations in the country.

The Wagner group was reported to have deployed 500 Wagner members in Sudan to train the Sudanese military forces and guard the country's gold mines. During the transitional period following the removal of President Omar al-Bashir in 2019, the group has allegedly provided military support to the Sudanese government. General Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, often known as Hemedti, and his Rapid Support Forces (RSF) had been closely associated with Wagner in weapon smuggling through the Darfur region bordering Chad. There have been accusations of Wagner providing missiles and weapons to RSF in its current conflict with the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF).

**Mozambique: Combating Al Shabaab**  
Mozambique, a southeastern African country rich in natural resources, has been grappling with a resurgence of violence since 2017.

Armed extremist groups, known locally as Al-Shabaab, launched numerous attacks in the Cabo Delgado province, causing significant humanitarian and security challenges. In 2019, Wagner deployed 160 Wagner members to help President Filipe Nyusi's government in its combat against Al-Shabaab but the group failed to contain the insurgency. The Wagner group withdrew its troops from the country in November 2019.

According to the New York Times, the government maintains a small cyberwarfare group that the Wagner group has left behind. Mozambique possesses natural gas reserves that have attracted international investors. By establishing a foothold in Mozambique, Russia seeks to secure lucrative contracts in the energy sector.

### **Central African Republic: From training Army to mine licensing**

The Wagner Group started operations in the Central African Republic (CAR) in 2018. The group has supported President Faustin-Archange Touadéra's government in its fight against armed rebel groups. The group trained the CAR army as well as local security services. In return, the Wagner Group received the licence to mine for diamonds and gold. As of February 2023, it is estimated that 1,890 military trainers are in DRC.

The DW, a German news organization, reported the government in Bangui granted unrestricted logging rights across 1,87,000 hectares to the Wagner group, and it generated revenue importing timber. Additionally, the group guarded the CAR's gold and diamond mines and seized a significant amount of the income generated from these mines. Wagner's firms were provided access to the Ndassima gold mine under a contract. In the past five years, the Wagner Group has

established ties with political leaders and a strong grip over the country's economy.

Russian military engagement in CAR has been seen as a way to increase its diplomatic influence in the Central African region. Recently, Russia and the Central African Republic (CAR) have been negotiating to establish a military base in the country. The CAR's Minister of Defence, Rameaux-Claude Bireau, stated that due to security issues that have plagued the nation, authorities are prepared to accommodate a Russian military base.

### **Mali: From training local forces to access to mines**

In December 2021, the Wagner group deployed its forces in Mali to train the local forces and to assist the interim leader Colonel Assimi Goita in the conflict against extremists in the Sahel region. The deployment was followed by the end of France's Operation Barkhane in Mali. The group deployed 1,000 Wagner members to provide training and security. It is believed that the group has access to the country's uranium, diamond, and gold mines.

The group has been charged with committing war crimes in Mali and killing

hundreds of innocent civilians in its continuous attacks. The objective of Russia in Mali is to secure economic and military ties. On 7 February 2023, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, stated that large supplies of aviation equipment were provided to Mali which improved the capacity of local troops to combat extremists.

### **Conclusion**

The Wagner Group's clandestine operations in Africa have raised significant concerns in the international community. The motive of the Wagner group in Africa can be observed in two ways, first, its economic interests, seeking access to valuable resources and business opportunities and second, its geopolitical aspirations, as the Group seeks to expand Russia's influence in the region, challenging the presence of the West. The group's role in providing military support to various governments and non-state actors has the potential to exacerbate existing conflicts and destabilize fragile regions. Moreover, their opaque nature and lack of accountability raise questions about the legality and ethical implications of their actions on the continent.

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## COMMENTARY

### **The Wagner Group in Africa: Fallouts of the failed revolt in Russia**

*More than an alternative dilemma, the Wagner uncertainty in Africa will become an opportunity for other players to fill the void. However, African countries over dependency on PMCs is a matter of concern in terms of territorial sovereignty, human rights and their lucrative objectives.*

Anu Maria Joseph

On 23 June, the Wagner group, headed by Yevgeny Prigozhin who had closer ties with Russian President Vladimir Putin, revolted against Moscow. Although the

deal brokered by Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko ended the revolt, the equation between Putin and Prigozhin is being questioned, with uncertainty over the group's activities in Africa. It has also

raised questions about Russia-Africa relations, where Wagner has been a significant player.

On 28 June, Russian foreign ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova commented: "Whether they continue on in African countries, whether they continue to work under contracts and stay there depends on the sovereign authorities of the African countries." Zakharova added that the leaders of the African countries have hired professionals, experts, and instructors, entered into agreements with them, and invited them to their countries. For African countries, what should matter is the effectiveness of personnel engaged to carry out extremely difficult duties, rather than politicised evaluations.

On 29 June, Russian defence ministry spokesperson Dmitry Peskov stated: "We have state co-operation with the Central African Republic, we will continue it, it is supported by the necessary agreements, and, of course, our military advisers will continue their activities in the necessary and demanded quantity. The company [Wagner] had an independent business there, and the state [of Russia] had nothing to do with this business."

Fidèle Gouandjika, a special adviser to Central African Republic President Faustin-Archange Touadéra, told Agence France-Presse that CAR had signed "a defence deal with Russia and not Wagner. Moscow has subcontracted to Wagner, and if Russia doesn't agree, it will send us a new contingent. If Moscow decides to withdraw them and send us the Beethovens or the Mozarts rather than Wagner's, we will have them."

The Wagner Group operates in Mali, Libya, Sudan and the Central African Republic through the direct engagement of the Russian Ministry of Defence. For Russia, the Wagner was considered as a pipeline for Russia's strategy in Africa.

Wagner's involvement in Libya, Mali and CAR played a significant role in Moscow securing 15 abstentions from African countries in the UN's resolution condemning its aggression in Ukraine.

If so, what will be the unfolding uncertainties in Africa following the Wagner mutiny? What will be the trajectory of the Russia-Africa relations? Can African countries rely on Wagner any more? What are African countries' options beyond Wagner?

### **Wagner's revolt: Four issues for Russia and Africa**

First, Wagner in Africa was a win-win relationship for Russia and the Wagner Group. For Russia, Wagner was the best source to expand its influence in Africa and for Wagner, Russia's prestige was best to profit from Africa's natural resources as well as Russian weapons.

However, following the revolt, Russia is shifting its stance. Initially, Russia commented that the group would continue its operations in Africa. However, later it said that the future of Wagner contracts depends on the African countries that the host sought for the services of Wagner. Russia's shifting stance questions Africa's image as Russia as an alternative to the West and as a trustable partner. The revolt has imperilled not only the Wagner group's activities, but also Russia-Africa bilateral relations.

Second, for African countries, especially in Mali and Burkina Faso, following the rise of anti-West sentiments that collided with the French withdrawal and end of MINUSMA, Russia's Wagner was the immediate alternative. In February, during Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov's visit to Mali, Moscow had promised continued military support to West African countries in the battle against Islamist militants. Mali, Burkina Faso, CAR, Sudan and Libya, all the countries where Wagner had a presence, are grappling with a

delicate security atmosphere threatened by jihadist insurgency, rebel groups and ethnic conflicts. Prompted by its interventions in Mali as well as its success in influencing public opinion, Wagner successfully made overtures in other west African countries including Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast. With Wagner's failed mutiny, there is a lack of clarity on the prospects of the group's presence, prompting a security dilemma in African countries.

Third, the Wagner heavily relied on the Russian defence ministry for weapons. They supplied arms and weapons and trained regional forces in fighting jihadist threats, unconstrained by human rights responsibilities in Africa. In turn, Russia demanded concessions to access natural resources, commercial contracts, and strategic airbases or ports. For struggling economies and insecurities in Africa, Wagner weapon supply, business subsidiaries and Wagner services with mining rights and market access were an advantage. The Wagner-Russia uncertainty put forward an unclear prospect of weapon supply and business entities and labour sectors in Africa.

Fourth, for the authoritarian regimes in Africa, especially for Mali, Burkina Faso, Sudan and Libya, Wagner was a source to enhance their power, and to protect African authoritarian leaders and their properties without being externally intervened unlike the West. For African countries that hired Wagner and has direct security cooperation with Moscow, the mutiny has put leaders in hardship in opting Russia or Wagner

### **Beyond Wagner: Are there other options for Africa?**

Wagner is not the only PMC active in Africa. According to a study by the Group of Research and Information on Peace and Security (GRIP), an independent research institute based in Brussels, “private

military companies have increased their power and influence in many African countries over the past four years.” The US companies of CACI and Academi are among the most prominent military companies present in the continent, apart from Wagner. London based Sandline International is active in Papua New Guinea. South Africa based Executive Outcomes is active in Angola and Sierra Leone. In addition, French company Secopex, British based Aegis Defence Services and G4S, and Germany’s Xeless and Asgaard are active in the continent. Wagner mercenaries appear to face a large amount of criticism on human rights atrocities. However, other private military companies, which are ultimately business entities, including those from the US and Europe, active in Africa, are unlikely to take human rights into account. While Wagner's activities in Africa were more transparent, other PMCs are more opaque.

More than a shortage of options, the deteriorating Russia-Wagner relationship would mean that there will be fierce competition among other actors and PMCs to increase their footprints in Africa. Meanwhile, China is also trying to expand its security interventions in Africa. On 5 July, a Chinese naval fleet reached Lagos aimed at improving maritime security. Chinese ambassador to Nigeria Cai Jianchun stated: “Peace is not free, peace should be defended. So I think that we need military security collaboration. So Africa-China, Nigeria-China can do things to not only safeguard the peace, but to protect the vessels in the Gulf of Aden and also here in the Gulf of Guinea.”

More than an alternative dilemma, the Wagner uncertainty in Africa will become an opportunity for other players to fill the void. However, African countries’ over dependency on PMCs is a matter of concern in terms of territorial sovereignty, human rights and their lucrative objectives

## AFRICA IN BRIEF

27 June-18 July

By Jerry Franklin and Ryan Marcus

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### TUNISIA

#### Sub-Saharan migrants attacked in Sfax

On 5 July, BBC reported that migrants from sub-Saharan Africa had been assaulted in Sfax, Tunisia. The violence was caused due to the killing of a Tunisian man. An NGO stated that some migrants were thrown off balconies. Additionally, it stated that women and children were targeted. Witnesses stated that assaults on migrants have forced them to seek refuge in the European Union. ("[Migrants attacked in Tunisia and 'thrown off balconies'](#)," *BBC*, 5 July 2023)

### EGYPT

#### President Fattah urges rivals in Sudan to end fighting

On 13 July, BBC reported that Egyptian President Abdul Fattah urged the warring parties in Sudan to cease fighting and consider peaceful negotiations during a peace summit held in Cairo. The summit had been attended by Sudan's neighbouring countries, including South Sudan, Chad and Central African Republic. Additionally, he called for the parties to facilitate the passage of humanitarian aid. The rival military factions in Sudan had sent delegations to the summit. ("[Egypt's president pleads with Sudan rivals for peace](#)," *BBC*, 13 July 2023)

### LIBYA

#### Rivals agree to share oil revenue

On 8 July, BBC reported that political rivals in Libya have decided to set up a committee to ensure the sharing of oil revenues. Eastern military strongman Khalifa Haftar threatened to force shut-down oil production. Khalifa called on the UN-backed Tripoli-based government to address the issue. The administration between the east and west

has hampered the oil production in the area. ("[Rival Libyan sides agree to share oil revenue](#)," *BBC*, 8 July 2023)

### SUDAN

#### Clashes continue amidst Eid

On 29 June, BBC reported that clashes continued despite the announcement of a ceasefire by military groups owing to Eid al-Adha. Residents of Khartoum have reported heavy artillery during the occasion. Residents have additionally reported raidings of stalls and houses. The UN mission to Sudan urged both parties to maintain truces. ("[Eid in Sudan: 'I couldn't sleep because of the sounds of the gunfire'](#)," *BBC*, 29 June 2023)

#### Khartoum rejects African peace bid

On 11 July, Al Jazeera reported that Sudan's foreign ministry rejected the regional summit peacekeeping forces to protect civilians. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) declared a mediation offer for the deployment of peacekeeping forces. The Sudanese authorities had blamed Kenya for supporting the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Additionally, the Sudanese authorities have declared that they consider the IGAD peacekeeping forces as rivals. ("[Sudan rejects African peace bid and 'enemy' peacekeeping force](#)," *Al Jazeera*, 11 July 2023)

#### WFP boosts support for refugees

On 11 July, BBC reported that the World Food Programme (WFP) stated that it is rapidly improving its support on the Chad-Sudan border to cope with the refugees. It is estimated that more than 250,000 people have fled from Sudan to Chad. Additionally, the WFP stated that several refugees were severely wounded. These refugees have been deliberately

targeted. ("[WFP rapidly boosting support for Sudan refugees, agency says](#)," *BBC*, 11 July 2023)

### ICC prosecutor states conflict in Sudan can be resolved with Justice

On 14 July, BBC reported that International Criminal Court prosecutor Karim Khan stated that there would be no hope for peace in Sudan without justice. Additionally, he stated that there is no willingness from either party to end the conflict. Additionally, Karim Khan stated that his office is launching a public appeal for those who have evidence against war crimes in Sudan. ("[No peace without justice in Sudan - ICC prosecutor](#)," *BBC*, 14 July 2023)

### SOUTH SUDAN

#### South Sudan: Kiir to contest in presidential election

On 5 July, Al Jazeera reported that President Kiir announced that the delayed election is scheduled for 2024 with him as a contest. President Kiir is expected to contest against his rival first Vice President Reik Machar. President Kiir expressed his gratitude for endorsements and support for the party. The opposition has accused the government of delaying the elections. President Kiir stated that he is committed to free and fair elections. ("[South Sudan's Kiir to run in first-ever presidential election](#)," *Al Jazeera*, 5 June 2023)

### ETHIOPIA

#### Addis Ababa applies to BRICS bloc

On 30 June, Al Jazeera reported that Ethiopia has formally requested to join the BRICS bloc of emerging markets. Foreign ministry spokesperson Meles Alem stated that they expect a positive response from BRICS. Additionally, he stated that Ethiopia would continue to work with international organisations to protect its interests ("[Ethiopia applies to join the BRICS bloc of emerging economies](#)," *Al Jazeera*, 30 June 2023)

### UGANDA

#### HRW states oil pipeline devastated livelihoods

On 10 July, Al Jazeera reported that Human Rights Watch stated the oil pipeline to Ugandan export of crude oil has devastated lives. HRW additionally stated that TotalEnergies has a 62 per cent stake and will add emissions that exacerbate climate change. TotalEnergies has rejected the HRW's accusations, stating that it respects the rights of its people. The pipeline is scheduled for completion in 2025. ("[Uganda oil pipeline has 'devastated' livelihoods, says HRW](#)," *Al Jazeera*, 10 July 2023)

### RWANDA

#### British court rules migrant deportation illegal

On 29 June 2023, Africanews reported that the British court of appeal declared the plan to deport migrants from Rwanda unlawful citing that Rwanda cannot be considered a safe third-world country. "Unless and until the deficiencies in its asylum process are corrected, sending asylum seekers to Rwanda will be unlawful," the court stressed in a summary of the judgment. The British Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, has announced that the government will appeal in the supreme court, ("[British court of appeal rules deporting migrants to Rwanda 'illegal'](#)," *Africanews*, 29 June 2023)

#### Rwanda: Women Deliver conference urges for gender rights protection

On 17 July, BBC reported that several countries' authorities and activists who attended the Women Deliver conference in Rwanda, stressed on the need to protect gender equality. The Women Deliver conference was held for the first time in Africa. Rwandan President Paul Kagame stated that political pushback against women's equality would indicate that they are most vulnerable during the global crisis. They urged activists and government authorities to double down

and work in unity. ("[Call for gender rights protection at Rwanda conference](#)," *BBC*, 17 July 2023)

## SOUTH AFRICA

### Opposition to form pact against ANC

On 3 July, BBC reported that South Africa's major opposition, Democratic Alliance (DA), a coalition of six parties, has considered forming a pact to displace African National Congress (ANC) from the government in the 2024 elections. The opposition parties have issued a joint statement declaring that the incumbent ANC would lose its majority next year. The parties intend to present a united front that is stable, viable and effective and are scheduled to meet in August to hold discussions. ("[South Africa opposition plan anti-ANC pact](#)," *BBC*, 3 July 2023)

## CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

### Russia to continue despite Wagner business

On 28 June, Al Jazeera reported that Russian advisors stated that they will continue working in the Central African Republic and consider the Wagner group operations as a separate business. The Kremlin issued a statement regarding the close ties with the Central African Republic (CAR), despite their engagement with the Wagner Group to fight rebel uprisings. Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov stated that the mutiny in Russia would impact its relationship with CAR. Presidential advisor Fidèle Gouandjika stated that CAR had a defence deal with Russia and not Wagner. ("[Russia to continue work in CAR, Wagner business separate: Kremlin](#)," *Al Jazeera*, 28 June 2023)

## MALI

### Ex-rebels reassure Russian envoy

On 4 July, BBC reported that Mali's Tuareg armed group expressed reassurance over peaceful conditions in Mali during discussions with the Russian ambassador. The armed group had warned that the

removal of MINUSMA would impact northern Mali's peace process. Following the Wagner Group deployment of mercenaries in 2022, observers have highlighted doubts on the Malian army's ability to cope with the violence following the UN's withdrawal. ("[Mali ex-rebels 'reassured' after talks with Russian envoy](#)," *BBC*, 4 July 2023)

### Junta reshuffles government

On 2 July, Africanews reported that Mali's junta conducted a partial reshuffle of the government, following the referendum for a new constitution. The government was reshuffled with 16 appointments, 13 ministers and three swaps. A representative of the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad has left the government. Colonel Assa Badialo has joined the Ministry of Health and Social Development. ("[Mali's junta partially reshuffles government after draft constitution vote](#)," *Africanews*, 2 July 2023)

### Islamists kill more than 13

On 29 June, BBC reported that more than 13 civilians have been killed by jihadists in Gao Province amidst Eid celebrations on 28 June. Several casualties were reported but officials have not clarified if the timing was intentional. The UN Security Council was expected to approve Mali's request for the withdrawal of UN peacekeepers. Analysts express fear of the situation leaving the Russian mercenary group Wagner to combat Islamists in Mali. German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius has stated that Germany intends to withdraw its troops from Mali while maintaining order. ("[Islamists kill 13 during Eid celebrations in Mali](#)," *BBC*, 29 June 2023)

## NIGERIA

### Chinese navy fleet visit Lagos

On 4 July, Africa news reported that three Chinese navy vessels made a five-day stopover at Lagos, Nigeria. The Nigerian

Navy spokesman Admiral Ayo-Vaughan stated that the visit to the Gulf of Guinea aimed at improving diplomacy between the two countries. The Chinese ambassador to Nigeria, Cui Jiachun stated that the visit is to improve maritime security and strengthen China-Nigeria and China-Africa relations. ("[Gulf of Guinea: Chinese navy on 'friendly visit' to Nigeria](#)," *Africanews*, 4 July 2023)

### North-East region may face famine, warns UN

On 28 June, BBC reported that the United Nations has warned of the increase in the risk of famine in north-eastern Nigeria. More than 40,000 civilians have been killed and two million displaced due to fighting between the army and jihadist groups. The UN humanitarian coordinator Matthias Schmale has urged the international community to respond swiftly to the situation. Additionally, he pointed out that 500,000 people are facing food insecurity in Kenya. ("[Nigeria's north-east 'one step away from famine' - UN](#)," *BBC*, 28 June 2023)

### More than 800 killed in June according to security report

On 11 July, BBC reported that Beacon Consulting released a security report citing that more than 800 people have been killed in attacks in June 2023 across Nigeria. The report stated that more than 460 incidents and 239 abductions were recorded. Additionally, the report stated that the attack had occurred in 234 local government areas in 36 states across Nigeria. President Tinubu had assured that security will be the top priority of the country. ("[More than 800 killed in Nigeria attacks in June - report](#)," *BBC*, 11 July 2023)

### Nigerian President Tinubu appointed as West Africa bloc chief

On 10 July, Nigerian President Bola Tinubu was appointed as ECOWAS's new chairman. President Tinubu has called for

swift action against insecurity and coups in Guinea-Bissau. President Tinubu has pledged to prioritize political stability, peace and security and the regional economy. President Tinubu is expected to have a one-year tenure. ("[Nigeria's President Tinubu chosen as new West Africa bloc chief](#)," *Al Jazeera*, 10 July 2023)

### Chinese navy offers protections to Nigeria

On 5 July, BBC reported that the Chinese naval visit at Lagos was aimed to improve security in the waters of West Africa and East Africa. Officials stated that the Chinese Navy aimed at offering security from piracy and oil theft. The Nigerian ambassador stated that the Nigerian navy can benefit from the Chinese partners in exchange for technology and experience. Nigeria is a major oil supplier to China and a Chinese-built deep-sea port costing USD one Billion in Lagos. ("[China navy wants to protect dangerous seas off Nigeria](#)," *BBC*, 5 July 2023)

### BURKINA FASO

#### More 34 killed in attack

On 28 June, BBC reported that more than 31 soldiers and three Homeland Defence Volunteers have been killed by unidentified assailants. The army stated that more than 40 assailants were killed. The attack took place on 26 June in the Northern Province of Bam, Central-Northern region. ("[Dozens of soldiers killed in Burkina Faso attack](#)," *BBC*, 28 June 2023)

### CAMEROON

#### Amnesty states that atrocities are committed

On 4 July, Africa News reported that Amnesty International has accused the security forces, separatists and militia for committing atrocities in the North-West region. The violations include executions, torture and sexual assault. Civilians retaliating against the clashes are often violated in the region. Amnesty

International stated that the clashes have claimed more than 6,000 lives and displaced more than a million people. ("[Rampant atrocities committed in Cameroon - Amnesty](#)," *Africanews*, 4 July 2023)

### ANGOLA

#### African leaders discuss DRC tensions

On 28 June, *Africanews* reported that African leaders under the mediation of African Union President Azali Assoumani met in Luanda, Angola, to discuss the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in an effort to stabilise the country. Representatives from the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the East African Community (EAC), the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICRGL) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS ) were part of the summit. The strategic objectives of

the meeting are mainly to adapt a joint framework for the implementation of peace initiatives in DR Congo. ("[African leaders meet in Angola to discuss East DRC tensions](#)," *Africanews*, 28 June 2023)

### INTERNATIONAL

#### Iranian President to visit African countries

On 11 July, *Al Jazeera* reported that Iranian President Raisi is scheduled to visit Africa. President Raisi is expected to visit Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe. The foreign ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani stated that Iran wishes to expand its political and economic relations with Africa. Additionally, he stated that Iran considers Africa to be a continent of opportunities. ("[‘Continent of opportunities’: Iran’s Raisi to go on Africa tour](#)," *Al Jazeera*, 11 July 2023)

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#### About the Authors

Anu Maria Joseph is a Research Assistant at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore. Jerry Franklin is a Postgraduate Scholar from Madras Christian College, Chennai. Ryan Marcus is an Undergraduate Scholar at Kristu Jayanti College, Bangalore.



### [About NIAS Africa Studies](#)

As a part of the area studies initiatives, the Institute started a focussed study on Pakistan in 2020. In 2021, it expanded the area studies to include Europe Studies, China Reader, and Maritime Studies. In 2022, the Science, Technology and International Relations (STIR) programme at the Institute is further expanding its area studies, to include Africa.

The primary focus of NIAS Africa studies would be on the following five verticals: contemporary political issues, colonial legacies, problems of governance, civil-military equations, and the rise of radical Islamic groups. The primary objective is to study Africa from an internal prism. ,

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

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### [About the team](#)

#### *Apoorva Sudhakar*

Apoorva Sudhakar is an Independent Scholar based in Kerala. Her areas of interest include peace and conflict in Africa and South Asia. She has previously worked on the conflict over the Nile Dam and the abductions in Nigeria.

#### *Anu Maria Joseph*

Anu Maria Joseph is a Research Assistant at the School of Conflict and Security Studies at the National Institute of Advanced Studies. Her areas of interest include peace and conflict in Africa, Afro-European and Afro-China relations.

#### *Jerry Franklin*

Jerry Franklin is a postgraduate scholar at Madras Christian College, Chennai. His interests include governance in North and Central Africa, and insurgency in Sahel.

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Editor: D. Suba Chandran

Assistant Editor: Anu Maria Joseph