

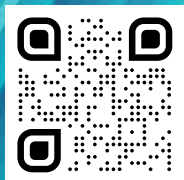
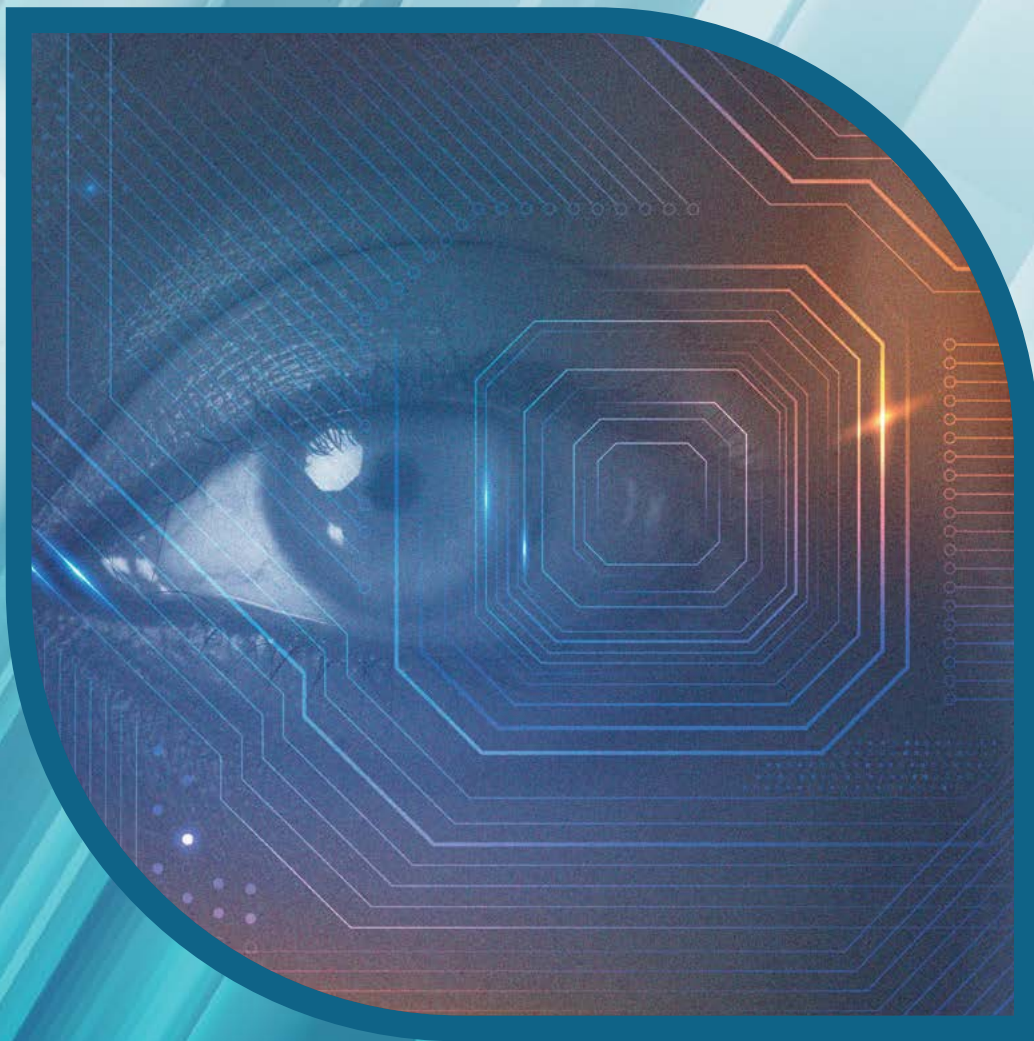


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# MONITOR



DECEMBER 2023

# ETHIOPIA

## MOHAMED HAMDAN DAGLO VISITS TO ETHIOPIA, SUDANESE RSF LEADER VISITS ETHIOPIA DURING RARE TRIP ABROAD

28 DECEMBER 2023

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The leader of Sudan's paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) arrived Thursday in Ethiopia on the second stop of his first trip abroad since war erupted with Sudan's army in April.

Mohamed Hamdan Daglo's visits to Ethiopia and Uganda come as regional diplomats scramble to broker a meeting between the RSF commander and his rival, Sudanese army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan.

The warring generals have not met face-to-face since the outbreak of fighting between their forces that has killed over 12,000 people by some conservative estimates, and forced million to flee.

The RSF leader met in Addis Ababa with Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who said the pair discussed "securing peace and stability" in Sudan.

In a statement on X, Daglo said they "discussed the need to bring a swift end to this war, the historical crisis in Sudan, and how to best alleviate the hardships of the Sudanese people".

It followed another high-level meeting in Uganda on Wednesday when Daglo met with President Yoweri Museveni.

Daglo is also expected to visit Kenya in coming days, a source close to the RSF told AFP.

"After having visited Uganda and Ethiopia, Hemeti will go to Nairobi in order to try to rally the member states of IGAD to his cause before going to Djibouti to meet General al-Burhan," the source said, referring to Daglo by another commonly used name.

IGAD, a bloc representing eight countries in the wider East Africa region, has been trying to bring al-Burhan and Daglo together since war erupted on April 15.

On Wednesday, Djibouti's foreign ministry said a meeting between the rivals planned for

December 28 had been “postponed to early January 2024 for technical reasons”.

The UN Security Council last week voiced “alarm” at the growing violence in Sudan and the spread of fighting to areas previous considered a haven for those displaced by the conflict.

By the end of November, at least 12,190 people had been killed in the fighting, according to a conservative estimate from the Armed Conflict and Location Event Data project.

The United Nations says more than seven million people have been internally displaced by the war, while another 1.5 million have fled into neighboring countries.

Both sides have been accused of war crimes.

Source: <https://www.barrons.com/news>.

## **THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT DEFAULTED-ON THE \$33 MILLION INTEREST PAYMENT OF EURO BONDS.**

28 DECEMBER 2023

### **ETHIOPIA JOINS RANKS OF DEFAULTING NATIONS: A TEST OF FINANCIAL STABILITY AND DEBT MANAGEMENT.**

Marking a distressing turn of events, Ethiopia has joined the ranks of defaulting nations in Africa, after falling short of fulfilling a scheduled interest payment post the termination of a grace period on Monday. The Ethiopian government was due to honor a \$33 million coupon on December 11, a commitment it failed to meet. Ahmed Shide, the Minister of Finance representing the Ethiopian government, affirmed on state television that the decision to withhold the payment was rooted in a policy to ensure equal treatment of all creditors. This development casts a shadow on Ethiopia’s financial stability and its ability to manage debt obligations.

#### **AN EMERGING DEFAULTER**

Ethiopia is following in the footsteps of Ghana and Zambia, defaulting on interest payments within a short span. The collective bill for lower-rated emerging sovereigns is predicted to skyrocket to over \$65 billion in total for 2024 and 2025 combined, a steep climb from just above \$8 billion this year. Meanwhile, investors display optimism due to the U.S. Federal Reserve’s shift away from monetary tightening, but they remain conscious of the risks and challenges ahead.

### A POLICY OF EQUAL TREATMENT

The Ethiopian government's decision to default on the \$33 million interest payment was based on its desire to treat all creditors equally. The government has already reached an agreement with bilateral creditors for the suspension of debt payments. This move situates Ethiopia among an increasing list of developing countries that have defaulted on Eurobonds in recent years

### DEALING WITH DEBT

Ethiopia has been striving to renegotiate its obligations through the Group of 20's Common Framework. The civil war in the northern Tigray region has played a role in affecting investor sentiment and economic growth, leading to an in-principal agreement with bilateral creditors to suspend debt payments. Despite ongoing debt restructuring discussions with creditors since 2020, a satisfactory resolution continues to be elusive. Ethiopia's debt to GDP ratio stands at 46.37, lower than Kenya's 67.94, and significantly lower than that of most advanced countries. Approximately half of Ethiopia's debt is external debt, pushing the nation to the verge of default due to liquidity constraints and high debt repayments relative to its economic capabilities.

Source: <https://bnnbreaking.com>. <https://ethiopiantribune.com/2023/12>.

# UGANDA

## UGANDA OPPOSITION UNITE TO DEMAND JUSTICE FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS

DECEMBER 22 2023

Leaders from Uganda's mainstream opposition political parties on Thursday called out the failure to get justice for persons who have been arrested, abducted or killed for their political views on their lack of unity.

During joint end of year prayers held at National Unity Platform (NUP) headquarters in Kampala, leaders from the Katonga faction of the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC); Alliance for National Transformation (ANT), Uganda People's Congress (UPC) and Conservative Party (CP) committed to back NUP's pursuit of justice for victims of political persecution.

Among these victims are the missing 18 NUP supporters; those in prison without trial and the more than 54, who lost their lives during the violent November 18, 2020 protests against the arrest of NUP presidential candidate, Robert Kyagulanyi. Read: [Remembering Uganda's opposition massacre](#)

peaking at the ceremony, ANT leader Maj Gen (rtd) Mugisha Muntu said "it is very absurd" that human rights matters have been reduced to a mere political issue where victims are defined by their political party affiliation.

"We want to tell all Ugandans that the issue of human rights violations is not a NUP affair. Human rights violations have been [going through] a vicious cycle for decades and it's up to us to either break this cycle or allow the regime to legalese the abnormal into normal," he said.

"It is not by accident that we have people who were abducted, arrested or killed; it is deliberate and part of the dictator's toolbox. Dictatorial regimes use all the methods to instill fear in the people, strategically to keep themselves in power," he added.

The former army commander urged Ugandans who want political change to be strong and ready to face all acts of intimidation by the incumbent regime, including arrests, torture, abductions or death.

Col (rtd) Dr Kizza Besigye, the former FDC president and four-time presidential candidate, urged that if opposition parties cannot unite on political grounds, it is high time they came together for peace and the defence of human rights.

"Human rights abuses are the reasons that bring us together. We may disagree on political grounds, but peace should unite us because it is not a political matter," Dr Besigye said.

Addressing the congregation, Kyagulanyi (Bobi Wine) commended his counterparts for adding their voices to NUP's clarion call for justice for their members who have been missing for almost four years.

"Our coming together is a candle of hope to our people who have been or still are victims of human rights violations. It is also an assurance to the victims that we still remember and dearly love them no matter the situation they are going through," Kyagulanyi said.

The prayers were also attended by Kampala Lord Mayor Erias Lukwago, Conservative Party leader John Ken Lukyamuzi; former leaders of the opposition in parliament, and FDC-Katonga members; Phillip Wafula Ogutu and Winnie Kiiza.

Separately, the opposition leaders criticised leaders of Uganda's religious bodies for not honouring invitations to the function.

"The faith talks about equality of all human beings, but it is sad that we are here praying for ourselves and the victims when those whose responsibility is to pray for us have not answered our request to come and do the praying," Dr Besigye said.

Sources: <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/opposition-unite-to-demand-justice-for-political-prisoners-4472006>.

# KENYA

## JAMHURI DAY CELEBRATION.

DECEMBER 12, 2023

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President William Ruto is expected to lead the nation in celebrating its 60th anniversary of Jamhuri Day at Uhuru Gardens in Nairobi.

At least 30,000 members of the public are expected at the ground in a ceremony that is set to be attended by three heads of state.

Belarus President Aleksandr Lukashenko and his Ethiopian counterpart, Sahle Work Zewde, are already in the country for the historical day.

Eyes will be on Ruto's speech, and the public will most likely be interested in hearing his plans for reducing the cost of living and probably his take on the National Dialogue Committee's (NADCO) report.

### TALANTA HELA FINAL

The Talanta Hela will hit its peak today, with finals set to be played after the Jamhuri national celebrations.

The girls' ultimate duel, pitting Busia and Kisumu counties, is expected to be staged at the Police Sacco Pavillion in South C, while the boys' showdown is between Kisumu and Homa Bay.

The winners of the tournament, spearheaded by the Ministry of Sports, will take home Ksh5 million.

### POWER BLACKOUT

After a national blackout on Sunday, December 9, three counties will be in the dark on Jamhuri Day following a notice from Kenya Power.

Sources; <https://www.pd.co.ke/news/december-12-2023-top-news-events-214136/>.

## KENYA'S ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE STRENGTHENED IN 2023 DESPITE CONTINUED CHALLENGES.

Nairobi, December 20, 2023 Kenya's economic performance strengthened in 2023 despite continued challenges, with real GDP growth accelerating from 4.8% in 2022 to an estimated

5% in 2023. This is according to the 28<sup>th</sup> edition of Kenya Economic Update (KEU) which adds that the improved growth performance is attributed to a strong rebound in agriculture sector in 2023 which had faced a persistent and severe drought as well as a moderate growth in the services sector.

The recovery of agriculture has led to improvements in food supply and coupled with monetary policy tightening has helped reduce inflationary pressures. In 2023, tourism continued to expand, credit to the private sector improved and manufacturing activity is expected to improve from the anticipated growth in agro-processing sector.

The economy however still faces several challenges to sustain its growth momentum such as heightened fiscal and external vulnerabilities manifested through high public debt, elevated cost of living, exchange rate pressures, global economic uncertainties, and tight global financial conditions.

*“The government’s strategy to tap into concessional borrowing prudently helps reduce the accumulation of expensive debt,” said Keith Hansen, World Bank Country Director for Kenya.*

According to the report, debt related vulnerabilities persist, and rising debt costs constrain government’s ability to address development challenges. The country is however making progress and has reduced the primary deficit from 1.6% of GDP in FY2021/22 to 0.8% of GDP in FY2022/23, while the overall deficit decreased from 6.2% to 5.6% during the same period and is expected to reduce further to 5.4% in FY2023/24.

*“Kenya will need to balance the short-term challenges of macroeconomic stability with the need to focus on policies for achieving longer-term growth that includes all in society,” said Naomi Mathenge, World Bank Senior Economist, and author of KEU.*

The KEU projects that the real GDP will grow between 4.5–5.2% in 2024. Improved investor confidence and credit to the private sector—helped by reduced domestic borrowing by the government—will strengthen private investment over the medium term. The outlook is subject to elevated uncertainty because of domestic and external risks. Domestically, droughts and floods would resume inflationary pressures and food insecurity, and coupled with the sustained reform momentum would dampen growth while external risks could stem from global credit markets volatility, lower than anticipated growth in the Euro Zone coupled with elevated commodity prices driven by international conflicts.

Economic growth is a key driver of poverty reduction. At the same time, accelerating the pace of poverty reduction as well as strengthening the relationship between economic growth and poverty reduction remains key to inclusion. In the tight fiscal environment, there is need to focus on longer-term growth and strengthen inclusion for growth to translate into improved well-being for the society. The second part of this KEU delves into ways of making growth more inclusive and looks at factors affecting the inclusiveness of Kenya’s economic growth as well as policies to make growth more inclusive.

Sources; <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2023/12/20/kenya-s-economic-performance-strengthened-in-2023-despite-afe-1223-challenges>.



# RWANDA

## UK HOME SECRETARY SIGNS NEW ASYLUM TREATY IN RWANDA

### JAMES CLEVERLY VISITS RWANDA AFTER A UK COURT RULING DECLARED A DEPORTATION SCHEME TO THE EAST AFRICAN NATION ILLEGAL.

5 DEC 2023

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British Home Secretary James Cleverly has signed a new treaty to send asylum seekers to Rwanda after the United Kingdom's top court declared the deportation scheme unlawful.

The agreement was signed by Cleverly, who travelled to Rwanda's capital Kigali on Tuesday, and Rwandan Foreign Minister Vincent Biruta. The details of the new agreement were not immediately available but British media reports said it would include commitments by Rwanda regarding the treatment of asylum-seekers and other migrants sent there.

Cleverly said he expected migrants to start arriving in the coming months.

"I can see no reason why that should not happen," he told reporters in response to a question about whether a plane would soon be carrying asylum seekers to the African nation.

The Rwanda plan is at the centre of the government's strategy to cut migration and is being watched closely by other countries considering similar policies.

But the UK's Supreme Court last month ruled that such a move would violate international human rights laws enshrined in domestic legislation.

Since that ruling, Britain has been seeking to renegotiate its agreement with Rwanda to include a binding treaty that it would not expel asylum seekers sent there by Britain – one of the court's major concerns. "Rwanda cares deeply about the rights of refugees," Cleverly said as he arrived in Kigali on Tuesday morning. "I look forward to meeting with counterparts to sign this agreement and further discuss how we work together to tackle the global challenge of illegal migration."

Alain Mukuralinda, deputy spokesman for Rwanda's government, said the two countries would "set up a joint tribunal with both Rwandan and UK judges in Kigali ... to make sure that none of the immigrants sent to Rwanda is deported to their country." "This tribunal will have to be approved and voted [on] by parliaments from both countries," he added.

Under the plan, Britain intends to send thousands of asylum seekers who arrived on its shores without permission to Rwanda to deter migrants and refugees from crossing the English Channel from Europe in small boats.

In return, the African nation has received an initial payment of 140 million pounds (\$180m) with the promise of more money to fund the accommodation and care of any deported individuals.

### SUPREME COURT DECISION

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is under intense pressure to cut net migration, which hit a record 745,000 last year, and end the flow of asylum seekers who pay people smugglers for their Channel crossings, often in overcrowded, unseaworthy boats.

The UK Supreme Court decision last month was a major setback for Sunak, who also plans to pass “emergency legislation” in parliament to designate Rwanda a safe country.

Britain’s immigration minister Robert Jenrick said the government had to act because those arriving on small boats were effectively breaking into the country.

“The law says you can’t enter the country illegally. If you or I crossed an international border, we literally broke into another country, we would expect to be treated very seriously,” he told Sky News.

A last-minute European Court of Human Rights injunction prevented any deportations in June 2022. The plan has also been criticized by Human Rights Watch, which urged the British government on Tuesday to “open its eyes to Rwanda’s track record of human rights violations, including against refugees and asylum seekers”.

Sources: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/12/5/uk-home-secretary-set-to-sign-new-asylum-treaty-in-rwanda>.

## THE NEW ‘RWANDA DEAL’ WAS A SHOCK TO RWANDANS. WE KNOW THIS IS NO PLACE FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS

*Victoire Ingabire Umuhoza*

12 DEC 2023

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was sentenced to 15 years’ jail for speaking out about the government in my country. Its human rights record is appalling

Victoire Ingabire Umuhoza is Rwandan opposition leader i came to learn about the scheme to transfer UK-based asylum seekers to Rwanda back in April 2022 when it was announced. Incredibly, the arrangement had not been discussed in public before, and even since it was signed there has been minimal debate on it. I was among the few who publicly disapproved of the scheme, but I could only do so on social media and in foreign publications and channels, as local media would not dare give me the platform.

The policy should be opposed on the basis of the facts. Rwanda is not a free country because political rights are restricted and civil liberties are curbed. Moreover, it remains among the poorest and least developed countries in the world and the most unequal country in the east of Africa region. Anyone transferred to Rwanda will not be offered a real solution because of these constraints. In fact, because of its social and economic conditions, Rwanda also produces refugees.

How would migrants, many of whom have suffered psychological trauma, fare in such an environment and in a country that is still rebuilding itself?

Most Rwandans are indeed sensitive to the plight of those forced to leave their home countries, and would be more than willing to make them feel welcome. At the same time, they are conscious of the reality they are facing in their country. Rwandans I speak to disapprove of the deal, but wouldn't go public about it for fear of the authorities.

I have paid and continue to pay a heavy price for expressing views that challenge the narrative of the government in Rwanda. In 2010, I returned to the country from exile in the Netherlands. I was immediately arrested after openly challenging its reconciliation policy in relation to the 1994 genocide. The then-UK parliamentary undersecretary of state for Africa, Henry Bellingham, declared that I was arrested on trumped-up charges. I was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment by Rwanda's supreme court.

I appealed against this decision to the African human and people's rights court (AfHPR) and was cleared. However, the Rwandan government has refused to recognize the judgment. The African Bar Association has passed resolutions calling on the Rwandan government to obey its international obligations with reference to the AfHPR order on my case, but it has not. I served eight years in prison, including five in isolation confinement. I was finally released by presidential pardon in 2018, with conditions including a ban on leaving the country without permission. I can't exercise my political rights, get my political party approved or meet my supporters – some of whom have been mysteriously killed or have disappeared over the past two decades.

My story and those of others who have been harassed, jailed, forced into exile or worse for challenging the government are tangible evidence of a lack of respect for human rights in Rwanda.

The UK is one of Rwanda's most important development partners, and is clearly aware of the human rights issues here. In January 2021, UK officials raised concerns over Rwanda's continued restrictions to civil and political rights and media freedom. Yet less than a year later the UK government chose to enter into the immigration development partnership with the country.

When the UK supreme court declared the Rwanda policy unlawful in November, it listed the human rights situation in the country among the reasons. The appeal court also stated that it was not convinced by the Home Office's uncritical acceptance of assurances from Rwanda, or that those assurances were enough to wipe away real risks of violations while the institutions that gave rise to past violations remained in place.

After all that, it's shocking that the UK government has opted to revive its refugee partnership with Rwanda. It has converted it into an immigration treaty and is planning to enact a bill that, if adopted by UK legislators, will confirm the country is safe. I find these approaches fruitless. In my view, the best option is for the UK to re-orient its efforts toward supporting Rwanda to improve its human rights situation.

The UK can urge the country to implement concrete actions such as the rehabilitation of politicians who were charged through politically motivated judicial processes, and the release of journalists and YouTubers imprisoned for having challenged the Rwandan government's narrative.

Using its global influence, the UK can also mobilize the international community to endorse and facilitate dialogue between the Rwandan government and its dissenting voices, so that reforms to ensure there is political inclusion, respect for human rights and efficient rule of law are agreed on and implemented.

Through the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group – a group that the UK and Rwanda are presently members of – the UK can advocate for solutions to improve human rights in Rwanda.

The UK already knew about the human rights situation, which has recently been flagged by its highest court. It cannot be simply solved by passing a bill that declares Rwanda a safe country, only by tackling the real issues that make it an unsafe country. Any attempts to transfer asylum seekers to Rwanda must be stopped until the UK has supported the country to improve.

Victoire Ingabire Umuhoza is Rwandan opposition leader, campaigner for governance reform in Rwanda and leader of the Dalfa Umurinzi party.

Sources: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/dec/12/rwanda-deal-rwandans-asylum-seekers-human-rights>.

# SUDAN

## **THOUSANDS FLEE AS WAR REACHES SUDAN'S SECOND-LARGEST CITY, HEAVY FIGHTING REPORTED IN WAD MADANI, WHERE THOUSANDS OF DISPLACED PEOPLE HAD SOUGHT SHELTER.**

17 DEC 2023

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Thousands of displaced people have fled the formerly safe city of Wad Madani in Sudan, as the war between the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) reaches the city.

Paramilitary forces established a base in the east of Sudan's second-largest city and the capital of al-Jazirah state, the AFP news agency reported on Sunday, forcing thousands of already displaced people to escape. The RSF attack has opened a new front in the eight-month-old war, in what had previously been "one of Sudan's few remaining sanctuaries", according to the Norwegian Refugee Council's (NRC) Sudan director William Carter.

Crowds of people – many of whom had taken refuge in the city from violence in the capital Khartoum – were seen packing up belongings and leaving on foot in videos posted on social media.

"The war has followed us to Madani so I am looking for a bus so me and my family can flee," 45-year-old Ahmed Salih told the Reuters news agency by phone.

"We are living in hell and there is no one to help us," he said, adding that he planned to head south to Sennar. Sudan's army, which has held the city since the start of the conflict, launched air strikes on RSF forces as it tried to push back the assault that started on Friday, witnesses told Reuters.

The RSF responded with artillery and RSF reinforcements were seen moving in the direction of the fighting, the witnesses added.

RSF soldiers have also been seen in villages to the north and west of the city in recent days and weeks, residents said.

Sudan spiraled into war after soaring tensions between army chief General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and RSF commander General Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo exploded into open fighting in mid-April

The war broke out due to disagreements over plans for a political transition and the integration of the RSF into the army, four years after former ruler Omar al-Bashir was deposed in an uprising.

More than 12,000 people have been killed, according to a conservative estimate by the Armed Conflict and Event Data Project, while the United Nations says nearly 6.8 million have been forced to flee their homes. The UN on Sunday said 14,000 people have fled Wad Madani so far, and a few thousand had already reached other cities. Half a million people had sought refuge in al-Jazirah, mainly from Khartoum.

Wad Madani alone houses more than 86,000 displaced people, according to the UN, which has suspended all humanitarian field missions in al-Jazirah state.

More than 270,000 of the city's 700,000 residents had been dependent on humanitarian aid, the UN said.

The United States Ambassador John Godfrey urged the RSF to "cease their advance" on al-Jazirah state.

"A continued RSF advance risks mass civilian casualties and significant disruption of humanitarian assistance efforts," Godfrey said in a statement on Sunday.

### **'NOWHERE TO HIDE FROM VIOLENCE'**

Families scrambled on Sunday to once again flee to safety but found bus tickets had quadrupled to \$60 a head, and many had nowhere to go.

"A continuous flow of people, many of them who already ran for their lives just a few months ago, are now rushing towards already heavily burdened and resource-depleted cities in neighboring states," the NRC's Carter said.

"We are also extremely worried for highly vulnerable families in Wad Madani who have been crammed into displacement sites in schools for months and have nowhere to hide from violence, no means to escape and nowhere else to flee," Carter added.

Sudan's doctors' union said on Sunday the situation in the city has become "catastrophic" after pharmacies were forced shut.

The army and RSF last week cast doubt on an East African mediation initiative aimed at ending a war that has triggered the largest internal displacement in the world and warnings of famine-like conditions.

In Khartoum and cities in Darfur that the RSF has already taken, residents have reported rapes, looting and arbitrary killing and detention. The group is also accused of ethnic killings in West Darfur.

The RSF has denied those accusations and said anyone in its forces found to be involved in such crimes would be held accountable.

*SOURCE: AL JAZEERA AND NEWS AGENCIES. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/12/17/thousands-flee-as-war-reaches-sudans-second-largest-city>.*

## WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF: LATEST SUDAN FIGHTING DISPLACES THOUSANDS, SECOND MALARIA VACCINE, RUSSIAN DISSIDENTS ‘DISAPPEARED’

22 DECEMBER 2023

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Wad Madani is located some 140 kilometers southeast of the war-torn capital Khartoum and sits at the heart of Al Jazirah state, known as Sudan’s breadbasket.

Nearly half a million people have fled to the state since war broke out in April between the Sudanese Army and a rival military group known as the Rapid Support Forces.

### IMMENSE ‘HUMAN TRAGEDY’

IOM reported that thousands are again uprooted following clashes that erupted in the outskirts of Wad Madani on 15 December.

“This is a human tragedy of immense proportions, deepening the country’s already dire humanitarian crisis,” said Amy Pope, the agency’s Director General.

People affected by the fighting have sought refuge in other neighboring states and many have also crossed the border into South Sudan.

Some of those on the run reportedly fled on foot and are sheltering in open areas, improvised shelters, schools and with host communities, according to reports.

### SIGNS OF ATROCITY CRIMES

Meanwhile, the UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Alice Nderitu, has expressed grave concern over the intensification of violence in and around Wad Madani as well as in El Fasher, North Darfur, and in Nyala, South Darfur.

Ms. Nderitu was alarmed that the scale-up in clashes includes very serious allegations of ethnically motivated violence as well as deliberate attacks against medical personnel and facilities, which could constitute international crimes.

She reiterated her concerns that the ongoing spread of violence could completely engulf Sudan.

“After eight months of continued fighting and horrific levels of violence, with all the signs of atrocity crimes having been committed, the wheel of violence keeps turning.

“The price continues to be paid by those who are most vulnerable, who are imploring for safety and for justice, and who are receiving neither,” she said.

## **WHO PREQUALIFIES SECOND MALARIA VACCINE**

A second malaria vaccine has been recommended for use by the World Health Organization (WHO), which called the development “a significant milestone in prevention of the disease”.

WHO has added the R21/Matrix-M vaccine - developed by Oxford University and manufactured by Serum Institute of India – to its list of prequalified vaccines.

Prequalification means that countries will have larger access to vaccines that can prevent malaria in children, with the help of the UN Children’s Fund UNICEF and Gavi, the vaccine alliance.

The first malaria vaccine to get WHO prequalification was the RTS, S vaccine, which obtained this status in July 2022.

Both vaccines were shown to be safe and effective in trials at preventing malaria in children and are expected to have a high public health impact when used alongside other recommended prevention measures.

Malaria is spread by mosquitoes and more than 608,000 people in 85 countries died from it in 2022.

The disease places a particularly high burden on children in Africa, where nearly half a million youngsters die from the disease each year.

## **RUSSIA URGED TO END ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE OF JAILED OPPOSITION FIGURES**

A “pattern of enforced disappearances” of imprisoned dissidents in Russia must end, the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in the country said on Thursday.

Independent expert Mariana Katzarova issued a statement expressing concern over the situation of opposition politician Alexey Gorinov who was sentenced to seven years in jail in July 2022 for criticizing Russia’s military actions in Ukraine.

Ms. Katzarova said she received information that his whereabouts and health status have been unknown since 8 December, when he was last seen at the Vladimir Region Penal Colony No. 2 by his lawyer.

Since then, authorities have not allowed him any contact with his lawyer, family or the outside world, according to the expert.



“After his last visit to the penal colony, the lawyer was alarmed that Gorinov was in a life-threatening health condition,” she said.

“I call on the Russian authorities to immediately disclose Gorinov’s whereabouts and his state of health and grant him immediate access to adequate medical care, to his family and his defence lawyers. The practice of enforced disappearance of imprisoned political figures in Russia must end,” she said.

Ms. Katarova issued an alert just on Monday voicing concern over the enforced disappearance of jailed opposition leader and anti-corruption activist Alexei Navalny, whose whereabouts and well-being are still unknown after more than 10 days.

Special Rapporteurs are appointed by the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva to monitor specific country situations or thematic issues.

They are not UN staff and do not receive payment for their work.

Sources; <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/12/1145042>.

## TANZANIA

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### HEAVY RAINS AND LANDSLIDES KILL AT LEAST 65 IN TANZANIA.

4 DEC 2023

Houses, roads and bridges have been destroyed in the East African country, com At least 65 people have been killed in landslides and flooding triggered by heavy rainfall in northern Tanzania, Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa said on Tuesday, revising the death toll of 68 given by regional officials a day earlier.

Torrential downpours over the weekend washed away vehicles and brought down buildings in the hillside town of Katesh, 300km (185 miles) north of the capital, Dodoma.

“Two more bodies were found in the ongoing search and now the death toll has reached 65,” Majaliwa said.

Images broadcast on television showed debris from houses, including furniture, strewn across streets, with key roads, power lines and communication networks disrupted.

“From around five in the morning [on Sunday], I heard loud bangs outside the house. When we tried to escape, it was too late because mud, trees, and stones were rolling from the mountain,” said a man named James, who lost his wife and daughter in the disaster.

Some 5,600 people have been displaced by the landslides, said Mobhare Matinyi, a government spokesperson.

Rashid Ntandu, 24, lost his house in the disaster and found shelter in a school in Katesh which has been turned into a refuge centre.

“I believe there are more bodies covered by mud,” he said. plicating ongoing rescue efforts.

Sources: <https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2023/12/6/heavy-rains-and-landslides-kill-at-least-65-in-tanzania>.

# SOMALIA

## UN SECURITY COUNCIL LIFTS ARMS EMBARGO ON SOMALIA GOVERNMENT.

DECEMBER 1, 2023

UNITED NATIONS, Dec 1 (Reuters) - The United Nations Security Council unanimously voted on Friday to remove the final restrictions on weapons deliveries to Somalia's government and its security forces, more than 30 years after an arms embargo was first imposed on the country.

The council put the embargo on Somalia in 1992 to cut the flow of weapons to feuding warlords, who had ousted dictator Mohamed Siad Barre and plunged the Horn of Africa country into civil war. The 15-member body adopted two British-drafted resolutions: one to remove the full arms embargo on Somalia and another to reimpose an arms embargo on al Qaeda-linked al Shabaab militants.

The resolution lifting the arms embargo spells out "for the avoidance of doubt, that there is no arms embargo on the Government of the Federal Republic of Somalia."

It also expresses concern about the number of safe ammunition storage facilities in Somalia, and encourages the construction, refurbishment and use of safe ammunition depots across Somalia. It urges other countries to help.

"The lifting of the arms embargo enables us to confront security threats," said Somalia's U.N. Ambassador Abukar Dahir Osman. "It also allows us to bolster the capacity of the Somali security forces by accessing lethal arms and equipment to adequately safeguard our citizens and our nation." Al Shabaab has been waging a brutal insurgency against the Somali government since 2006 to try to establish its own rule based on a strict interpretation of Islamic Sharia law.

Somalia's government had long asked for the arms embargo to be removed so it could beef up its forces to take on the militants. The Security Council began to partially start lifting measures Somalia's security forces in 2013.

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud said last week that Somalia has one year to expel al Shabaab, with the deadline for remaining African Union peacekeepers to leave looming in December 2024.

Sources; <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/un-security-council-lifts-arms-embargo-somalia-government-2023-12-01/>.

## **WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF: SOMALIA FLOODS, SUDAN CHOLERA UPDATE, GENOCIDE PREVENTION.**

4 DECEMBER 2023

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Rising waters caused by torrential downpours have affected more than 2.4 million in the east African nation, while UN aid teams are increasingly concerned about the spread of waterborne diseases, said aid coordination office, OCHA.

Suspected cases of cholera have already been reported and humanitarians have highlighted how much of a threat this poses to communities with only limited healthcare support.

UN and partner humanitarian organizations, authorities and locals have assisted at least 820,000 people in need, with at least 37 boats deployed to deliver supplies or evacuate trapped people.

To date, the 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan for Somalia which requires \$2.6 billion to help 7.6 million of Somalia's most vulnerable people is only 42 per cent funded.

### **MAJOR SURGE IN CHOLERA CASES ACROSS SUDAN**

Humanitarians and partners are also scaling up response to the outbreak of cholera across war-torn Sudan, the UN Spokesperson said on Monday, briefing journalists in New York.

Stéphane Dujarric said that this effort included detection and treatment of cases and addressing water, sanitation and hygiene issues.

OCHA is warning that the outbreak continues to worsen, with a 70 per cent surge in reported cases over the past three weeks.

To date, nearly 2.2 million oral cholera vaccinations have been administered in the worst-affected states.

“As of today, nearly 5,200 suspected cases of cholera have been registered, including more than 160 deaths”, according to the World Health Organization and Sudan's health ministry. In all, at least nine states have registered cases since 26 September, added Mr. Dujarric.

The war between the national army and rival militia the RSF, has led to a dramatic deterioration in healthcare, with two thirds of the population now lacking access and more than 70 per cent of health facilities in conflict areas out of service.

“Since the start of the war in April, WHO has verified 60 attacks against healthcare facilities, which is as a reminder, is against International Humanitarian Law”, the Spokesman concluded.

## PREVENTING GENOCIDE, AS ESSENTIAL TO DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AS EVER: TÜRK

“Early warning signals of genocide must compel us to action” said the UN human rights chief Volker Türk on Monday, addressing a meeting on Monday marking the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the crime.

He described it as a “grave and urgent document”, adopted on the eve of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in December 1948, making it the first human rights treaty in UN history.

“Important lessons of the Holocaust, whose indescribable crimes led to the Convention – and the lessons of Cambodia, Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia, and others – made it absolutely clear that preventing genocide, and bringing its perpetrators to account before all humanity, is essential to the work of advancing human rights”, said the High Commissioner. He stressed that preventing genocide was an “overriding principle” for all humanity, not just a point of international law.

The Convention calls on all States and people to maintain vigilance and demands action to **prevent** and to **punish** genocide.

He said genocide was “never unleashed without warning. It is always the culmination of preceding and identifiable patterns of systematic discrimination – based on race, ethnicity, religion or other characteristics – and of gross human rights violations, targeted as a matter of policy against a people; minority; community.”

Genocide often feeds off dehumanizing and demonizing statements in the public sphere, while today, disinformation campaigns on social media can further amplify these statements, until condoning and justifying violence becomes normalized.”

He said it was “absolutely critical” to head off genocidal action in the digital sphere through better governance online.

Secondly, there must be accountability, “not only because it provides justice for victims, but because accountability is central to ending genocide...Impunity is an enabler of genocide. Accountability is its nemesis.”

Mr. Türk urged all States that have not yet ratified or acceded to the Genocide Convention, to do so as a matter of high priority, in order to “protect our common humanity”.

Sources; <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/12/1144357>.

## MF AND WORLD BANK ANNOUNCE US\$4.5 BILLION IN DEBT RELIEF FOR SOMALIA

DECEMBER 13, 2023

**WASHINGTON, DC:** The Executive Boards of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) have approved<sup>[1]</sup> the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative Completion Point for Somalia, which provides total debt service savings for the country of US\$4.5 billion.<sup>[2]</sup> Following HIPC Completion Point, Somalia's external debt has fallen from 64 percent of GDP in 2018 to less than 6 percent of GDP by end 2023. This debt relief will facilitate access to critical additional financial resources that will help Somalia strengthen its economy, reduce poverty, and promote job creation.

Debt service relief has been provided by the IMF (US\$343.2 million), IDA (US\$448.5 million), African Development Fund (ADF) (US\$131.0 million), other multilateral creditors (US\$573.1 million), as well as by bilateral and commercial creditors (US\$3.0 billion). Bilateral creditors include members of the Paris Club, creditors from the Arab Coordination Group, and other official bilateral creditors.

*"Somalia's debt relief process has been nearly a decade of cross governmental efforts spanning three political administrations. This is a testament to our national commitment and prioritization of this crucial and enabling agenda,"* said **Somalia's President, H.E. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud**. *"For Somalia to move forward in the positive economic direction we all needed, we had to reform our laws, systems, policies, and practices. Reaching the HIPC Completion Point is the fruit of these reforms. When my government committed to the reform program nearly a decade ago, this was the result we envisaged."*

*"Somalia's reform journey has been a true national process culminating in the remarkable success of determined economic reform implementation despite external challenges such as painful regular climatic shocks and the ongoing fight against international terrorism. We are proud to have reached the HIPC Completion Point,"* said **Somalia's Minister of Finance, H.E. Bihi Iman Egeh**. *"Through our enabling reforms, we have consistently raised domestic revenue, strengthened public financial management, improved good governance and central banking operations, and enhanced the capacity of our national institutions. We will build on these successes going forward."*

The Executive Directors of both institutions determined that Somalia has made satisfactory progress in meeting the requirements to reach the HIPC Completion Point. Somalia has implemented a poverty reduction strategy for at least one year and maintained a track record of sound macroeconomic management as evidenced by the satisfactory implementation of the Extended Credit Facility (ECF) supported program (see IMF Press Release No. 23/437). This performance was achieved despite Somalia having to face the global Covid-19 pandemic, prolonged and severe drought, a desert locust infestation, the impact of external shocks on food supply and prices, and significant security risks. Somalia maintained steadfast progress

on structural reforms and implemented thirteen of fourteen floating Completion Point triggers, including on public financial and expenditure management, domestic revenue mobilization, governance, social sectors, and statistics. The IMF Executive Board granted a waiver for the adoption and implementation of a single import duty tariff schedule at all ports.

*“Somalia has made significant strides in rebuilding its economy and institutions after a devastating civil war. Reaching the HIPC Completion Point is a testament to the Somali authorities’ strong and sustained policy and reform efforts over the past years, despite numerous challenges, as well as the strong support from international partners,”* said the **IMF’s Director for the Middle East and Central Asia, Jihad Azour**. *“The Completion Point is a momentous achievement that restores debt sustainability and over time offers access to new external financing to support inclusive growth and poverty reduction. Maintaining sound macroeconomic policies and sustaining the reform momentum remain critical after the Completion Point for Somalia to reap the full benefits of the debt relief.”*

*“Reaching the HIPC Completion Point is a historic milestone for which the Somalia Government deserves full credit,”* said the **World Bank Vice President for Eastern and Southern Africa, Victoria Kwakwa**. *“Somalia has implemented critical reforms in support of pro-poor growth, poverty reduction, better public financial management and debt management. These reforms establish the conditions for the effective use of irrevocable debt relief to support the people of Somalia. Deepening structural reforms after the Completion Point will be critical to boost private sector growth and create fiscal space to invest more in human development and infrastructure in support of inclusive and resilient growth.”*

The Somali authorities remain firmly committed to sustaining the reform momentum post-HIPC to build resilience, promote inclusive growth, and reduce poverty. The World Bank and IMF will continue working together to provide the technical assistance and policy guidance the authorities need to achieve these goals. The IMF will continue its engagement with Somalia in the context of the new three-year IMF financial arrangement as well as capacity development support sponsored by the Somalia Country Fund. The World Bank has agreed on a new five-year Country Partnership Framework with Somalia focused on continuing support to state and institution building, infrastructure and jobs, human capital, and resilience. The current World Bank portfolio in Somalia stands at US\$2.3 billion spanning human capital development, access to energy, and action against cyclical climatic shocks such as floods and drought.

Debt service savings of US\$4.5 billion incorporate debt relief of about US\$4.2 billion under the Enhanced HIPC Initiative, US\$115.1 million under the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (US\$96.4 million from IDA and US\$18.7 million from ADF), US\$164.3 million under beyond-HIPC debt relief from the IMF, and commitments from Paris Club creditors to provide beyond-HIPC debt relief to cancel most of their outstanding claims.

## THE HEAVILY INDEBTED POOR COUNTRIES (HIPC) INITIATIVE

In 1996, the World Bank and IMF launched the HIPC Initiative to create a framework in which all creditors, including multilateral creditors, can provide debt relief to the world’s poorest and most

heavily indebted countries to ensure debt sustainability, and thereby reduce the constraints on economic growth and poverty reduction imposed by the unsustainable debt service burdens in these countries. Somalia is the 37<sup>th</sup> country to reach Completion Point under the HIPC Initiative.

### THE MULTILATERAL DEBT RELIEF INITIATIVE (MDRI)

Created in 2005, the aim of the MDRI is to further reduce the debt of eligible low-income countries and provide additional resources to help them reach their development objectives. Under the MDRI, three multilateral institutions—the World Bank’s IDA, the IMF, and the African Development Fund—provide 100 percent debt relief on eligible debts to qualifying countries, at the time they reach the HIPC Initiative Completion Point.

Sources; <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2023/12/13/pr23438-imf-and-world-bank-announce-us-4-5-billion-in-debt-relief-for-somalia>.



## DRC

### DR CONGO: ELECTORAL VIOLENCE THREATENS VOTE

#### AUTHORITIES SHOULD DETER ATTACKS, PRIORITIZE ACCOUNTABILITY

DECEMBER 16, 2023

- Election-related violence across the Democratic Republic of Congo risk undermining general elections scheduled for December 20, 2023.
- Congolese authorities need to act urgently to prevent violence around the election to stop a dangerous situation from getting even worse.
- Political parties and candidates should publicize their anti-violence stance and help to ensure that people have the opportunity to vote for the candidates of their choice.

(Kinshasa) – Election-related violence across the Democratic Republic of Congo risks undermining general elections scheduled for December 20, 2023, Human Rights Watch said today. Congolese authorities should urgently and impartially investigate violent incidents linked to the elections and prosecute those responsible, regardless of their political affiliation.

Since early October, Human Rights Watch has documented clashes across the country between supporters of rival political parties that have resulted in assaults, sexual violence, and at least one death. Supporters of the ruling Union for Democracy and Social Progress Party (Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social, UDPS) have been implicated in threats and attacks against opposition party leaders and journalists. Opposition supporters have also been implicated in violence. Incidents of political violence continue to be reported.

“Congolese authorities need to act urgently to prevent violence before, during, and after the vote, to stop a dangerous situation from getting even worse,” said Thomas Fessy, senior Congo researcher at Human Rights Watch. “Political parties and candidates should publicize their anti-violence stance and help ensure that people have the opportunity to vote for the candidates of their choice.”

The elections are for president, members of national and provincial parliaments, and local offices. More than 1.5 million people will not be able to vote in areas of active conflict, mainly in the eastern North Kivu province but also in the western province of Mai-Ndombe. Millions of internally displaced people may also not be able to cast their ballots.

Human Rights Watch interviewed 36 people by phone, including victims of violence, their family members, activists, political party members, journalists, medical staff, judicial and security sources, United Nations staff, and election observers.

In one major incident on November 7, supporters of President Félix Tshisekedi's UDPS party clashed with supporters of Moïse Katumbi's opposition party, Together for the Republic (Ensemble pour la République, known as Ensemble), at a rally in Kasumbalesa, in southeastern Haut-Katanga province. Katumbi's supporters ransacked a local UDPS chapel's office and UDPS supporters attacked and injured six people, raped at least two women, and sexually assaulted three others, according to witnesses as well as security, medical, and UN sources. Five police officers were injured. The authorities are not known to have investigated the attacks, including the reports of physical and sexual violence.

On November 13, the Independent National Electoral Commission (Commission Électorale Nationale Indépendante, CENI) invited presidential candidates to adopt a code of conduct ahead of the official election campaign, which began on November 19. The code of conduct outlines the candidates' "determination to combat all forms of violence in the pre-electoral, electoral, and post-electoral periods." By signing it, candidates would also commit to "respect[ing] the results of the ballot box and only use the legal channels ... to contest the results." However, none of the main presidential candidates have signed it, some citing a lack of confidence in the electoral commission and its commitment to a free and fair election.

The violence and heightened tensions have also had an impact on media and journalists. On November 9, national intelligence agents arrested Raphael Ngoma, a journalist from the Moanda Community Radio in Moanda, Kongo Central province. He was detained on orders of the territory administrator, Amina Panda, who accused him of broadcasting false information about an opposition rally. He was released the next day without charge.

On December 7, Congolese group Journalist in Danger (Journaliste en Danger, JED) said that John Kanyunyu Kyota, a freelance journalist who collaborates with German broadcaster Deutsche Welle, had been receiving threats by phone for his reporting on the election campaign. Fearing for his safety, Kanyunyu went into hiding.

Addressing the UN Security Council on December 11, the head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Congo (Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en République démocratique du Congo, MONUSCO), Bintou Keita, said that "violent clashes between supporters of rival political parties [were] occurring in many provinces." She also said that women political leaders and candidates were experiencing "intimidation as well as physical and verbal misogynistic attacks." She said she was "alarmed by the proliferation of mis- and disinformation as well as hate speech, online and offline, in the context of the electoral campaign."

Under international human rights law, authorities are obligated to take all reasonable steps to create and maintain an environment in which candidates, citizens, election officials, journalists, and civil society activists can operate free from violence and intimidation. Democratic elections require the protection of freedom of expression and access to information. The UN Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of opinion and expression has issued detailed guidance on how to ensure freedom of opinion, expression, and access to information during elections.

The Congolese authorities should ensure the security and safety of all election observers operating in the country. Elections officials should publish the results

by polling place, both at voting centers and on its website, as required by law, to deter any post-election violence and abuses, Human Rights Watch said.

“Congolese citizens across the country should be able to exercise their right to vote safely,” Fessy said. “With the credibility of the electoral process at stake, Congolese authorities should put in place comprehensive plans to protect voters, candidates, election officials, observers, and journalists.”

The Violence in Kasumbalesa On November 4, a ruling UDPS official known as “Lion’s Heart” warned Katumbi, the Ensemble presidential candidate, that he would risk “getting beaten up” if he campaigned in Kasumbalesa, a border town in southeastern Haut-Katanga province. “If he gets to Kasumbalesa, he’ll face the biceps of ... Fatshi béton’s children,” the official said, using President Tshisekedi’s nickname. The threatening speech, filmed during a UDPS rally, was widely circulated.

The following day, a provincial youth movement supporting Katumbi responded with heinous ethnic-based statements aimed at UDPS supporters, whose strongholds are in the Kasai provinces. “We followed the UDPS communication that forbids a son of Katanga, the son of a Katangan native to enter his house,” the youth movement said. “If they want to challenge us at home [in Katanga], we’ll also have to show that we’re natives. We will be going to Kasumbalesa next week and we want to see who can stop us.”

Human Rights Watch previously documented ethnic tensions fueled by leaders of the neighboring Katanga and Kasai provinces during the 2011 elections, using hate speech and incitement to violence. These tensions have their roots in historical migration movements between the provinces. In the early 1990s, the then-Katangan authorities forcibly expelled hundreds of thousands of Kasaians from the province and thousands died.

On November 7, Ensemble supporters held a rally in Kasumbalesa. Rival UDPS supporters attacked the rally armed with wooden sticks. As the rally grew in numbers, crowds fought off the UDPS supporters.

After the rally, Ensemble supporters ransacked the local UDPS headquarters, triggering scuffles between the two groups. “Angry UDPS supporters attacked those of Ensemble, in particular the women,” a witness said. “I saw two women ... They were stripped naked, beaten up, and groped. If the police hadn’t intervened, their situation would have been worse.”

A Congolese police officer deployed at the scene said that the police helped two women who had been stripped naked and sexually assaulted to escape the attackers. The officer said the police were understaffed and lacked adequate equipment to contain violent crowds. “If protesters use rocks, we also use rocks,” he said. “If they use sticks, we do the same.”

A 51-year-old woman told Human Rights Watch that she had been beaten and raped: My comrades and I were wearing T-shirts bearing the Ensemble insignia. After the rally, I was on my way to buy things to sell when I encountered a group of UDPS supporters who rushed at me and started beating me with sticks. I regained consciousness in the hospital, where I found myself with torn clothes. The doctor told me that I had been penetrated with a stick into my vagina.”

During the incident, assailants raped at least one other woman and stripped and groped three more, according to a witness and security, medical, and UN sources.

The authorities should promptly and impartially investigate the attacks and sexual violence and appropriately prosecute those found responsible. The authorities should ensure victims of sexual violence receive adequate medical and psychosocial care.

## OTHER ELECTION-RELATED CASES

On November 28, in the city of Kindu, an SUV apparently owned by Provincial Governor Afani Idrissa Mangala's campaign team struck and killed Dido Kakisingi, 38, Katumbi's youth league president for the eastern Maniema province. UDPS supporters initially attempted to block Katumbi's convoy and a crowd of his supporters on one of the city's main thoroughfares, and Kakisingi requested assistance from security forces to clear the path. UDPS supporters then threw rocks at the convoy, injuring Kakisingi. A white SUV bearing the governor's campaign ads and a UDPS flag then hit him, killing him. The police fired warning shots to disperse the crowds as tension escalated among rival supporters.

The authorities made two arrests in connection with Kakisingi's death, according to judicial sources, but the investigation is stalling because of alleged political interference. "The public prosecutor's office requested an autopsy," a family member said. "But they refused to share the results with us."

On November 4, people believed to be UDPS supporters attacked the convoy of the opposition presidential candidate Martin Fayulu. Fayulu and his supporters were heading to a pre-campaign rally in Tshikapa, Kasai province. At least two people and one policeman were injured by rocks thrown at them. President Tshisekedi's spokesperson, in a statement, condemned such "antidemocratic acts" and "regrett[ed] the political intolerance" that led to the incident.

On October 24, the provincial governor of Kasai-Central, John Kabeya, a UDPS member, said at a rally that "if you want to get votes, go to other provinces, but here in Kasai-Central, it is Tshilombo's," a reference to President Tshisekedi, who comes from the province. The government's Communication and Broadcasting Board (Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel et de la communication, CSAC), which ensures press freedom as well as equal media access to candidates, said that Kabeya's statement was a "speech of shame" that "incit[ed] ethnic-regional hatred, exclusion, and discrimination," banning its broadcast.

On November 18, police arrested Abel Amundala, Ensemble's deputy youth leader and parliamentary candidate along with six members of his campaign team during a political meeting in Lubumbashi, Haut-Katanga province. Amundala said that they were taken to the police station and interrogated about their meeting. The police released them two hours later without charge.

On November 20, in Ngandajika, Lomami province, UDPS supporters attacked an Ensemble campaign convoy of trucks and motorcycles. UDPS supporters burned the motorcycle of Pierre Kaneka, Ensemble's senior local official. Kaneka said that the police stationed nearby did not intervene. He said that almost simultaneously, another group of UDPS supporters attacked his

residence, forcing his wife to flee. Later that night, UDPS supporters ransacked Ensemble's local headquarters. Kaneka said he has filed a complaint and that one person allegedly involved in the attack had been arrested. Kaneka went into hiding for fear of reprisals.

## INTERNATIONAL CONCERN

The African Union and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have both deployed electoral observation missions to Congo. The Southern African Mission reiterated the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections that “emphasize the implementation of measures to prevent political violence, intimidation, and intolerance.”

In a November statement issued just days before the start of the official electoral campaign, the United States government called for a peaceful electoral process and said it would consider imposing targeted sanctions “against those who undermine democracy in [Congo].”

On December 8, the European Union warned it would impose targeted sanctions against “any person obstructing a consensual and peaceful solution towards the upcoming elections, including by acts of violence, repression or inciting violence, or by undermining the rule of law or involved in serious human rights violations or abuses.” The EU cancelled its countrywide observation mission after the Congolese authorities did not authorize the use of satellite equipment for its deployment. Some Congolese civil society groups said the government's decision “[gave] the impression of a hidden agenda during the elections.” The EU deployed an eight-person expert mission to the capital, Kinshasa, instead.

Sources: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/12/16/dr-congo-electoral-violence-threatens-vote>.

# PRESIDENT FELIX TSHISEKEDI DECLARED WINNER OF DRC ELECTION

## DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

31 DECEMBER 2023

**CONGO'S PRESIDENT FELIX TSHISEKEDI WON REELECTION WITH MORE THAN 70% OF THE VOTE, THE COUNTRY'S ELECTION COMMISSION SAID SUNDAY.**

The preliminary results of the Dec. 20 election were announced in the capital, Kinshasa, amid demands from the opposition and some civil society groups for the vote to be rerun due to massive logistical problems that put the validity of the outcome into question.

Tshisekedi was followed by businessman Moise Katumbi, who received 18% of the vote, and Martin

Fayulu, who received 5%. Nobel Peace Prize winner Denis Mukwege, a physician renowned for treating women brutalized by sexual violence in eastern Congo, got less than 1%.

The election had **more than a 40% turnout with some 18 million people voting**. The results will be sent to the constitutional court for confirmation, election chief Denis Kadima said.

Opposition candidates opposing the results have **two days to submit their claims, and the constitutional court then has seven days to decide**. The final results are expected on January 10, and the president is scheduled to be sworn in at the end of that month.

Congo has a history of disputed elections that can turn violent, and there's little confidence among many Congolese in the country's institutions. Before the results were announced Sunday, opposition candidates, including Katumbi, said they rejected the results and called on the population to mobilize.

The logistical problems included many polling stations being late in opening or not opening at all. Some lacked materials, and many voter cards had smudged ink that made them illegible.

Voting in the election had to be extended into a second day— something local observers and civil society organizations have called illegal — and parts of the country were still casting ballots five days after election day.

*“If a foreign country considers these elections to be elections, there’s a problem,” Fayulu said at a news conference in the capital Sunday before the results were announced. “It’s a farce, don’t accept (the results).”*

Earlier this week, clashes erupted between some of Fayulu’s supporters and police officers who fired tear gas at protesters who threw rocks and barricaded themselves inside the opposition headquarters.

Sources: <https://www.africanews.com/2023/12/31/president-felix-tshisekedi-declared-winner-of-drc-election/>.

# SEYCHELLES

## SEYCHELLES DECLARES EMERGENCY AFTER EXPLOSION AND FLOODING

DECEMBER 7, 2023

NAIROBI, Dec 7 (Reuters) - A blast at explosives store wrecked buildings and caused massive damage to an industrial zone on the Seychelles' main island Mahe, officials said, prompting the president to declare a state of emergency on Thursday.

The blast shook the island as heavy rains triggered flooding which killed three people, the president told reporters on Thursday, calling for a minute of silence.

Footage broadcast on national television showed streets covered in deep mud and strewn with debris and uprooted trees. "Following an explosion at the CCCL explosives store that has caused massive damage to the Providence Industrial area and the surrounding areas and major destruction caused by flooding due to heavy rains, the President has declared a State of Emergency for today the 7th December," President Wavel Ramkalawan's office said in a statement.

"Everyone is being asked to stay at home. All schools will be closed. Only workers in the essential services and persons travelling will be allowed free movement." The government's official Visit Seychelles account on X said the international airport and ferries between its islands remained operational for tourists.

The Seychelles, a major tourist destination, is made up of 115 islands and is the least populous country in Africa with about 100,000 people.

Sources: <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/seychelles-declares-state-emergency-after-explosion-flooding-2023-12-07/>

## MAURITIUS FINANCIAL CRIME COUNTRY DASHBOARD 2023 BY FCN

DECEMBER 15, 2023

Today Financial Crime News is publishing a Financial Crime Country Dashboard for Mauritius. This December 2023 Dashboard includes, for example approx. 150 data points which have been collected and are represented over 2 pages. It informs as to the nature of the financial crime threats, the main vulnerabilities, how resilient Mauritius is to these threats and its overall level of

response, with important KRI and KPI data, all from publicly available sources albeit assessed and analyzed for accuracy and relevance by FCN. For a copy of the Mauritius Dashboard see [HERE: Mauritius Dashboard Dec 2023 PUBLD](#)

Mauritius is often described as an island paradise, especially for tourists and is located in the southern hemisphere, in the south-eastern part of the Indian Ocean, and is part of southern Africa.

**FCN Country Risk Scores & Ratings:** Mauritius is rated 16/100 and having a “Low” Threat level, with a “Moderate – High” Response at 37/100, resulting in an overall Risk of Low at 26/100, using the FCN Methodology. Whilst there is always room for improvement (for example on drugs and corruption) the rating is better for example than that for FATF Members, China (77), Turkey (80), China (77) & Russia (78), and is comparable to FATF Members such as Australia (26) and Denmark (26). In Africa it’s scores are much better than African Regional Giants, Nigeria (69), South Africa (63) & Kenya (63) and is comparable, though still favorable to the Seychelles (33).

**Threats:** According to the National ML/TF Risk Assessment 2019, the overall ML risk was rated “Medium High”. Main Domestic ML related internal and external threats for Drug Trafficking, Fraud, Illegal Bookmaking rated as “High”, High Value Larcenies, Tax Crimes as “Medium High” & Corruption as “Medium”. External Threats are from Fraud (incl tax fraud) and corruption. TBML was rated as “Medium”. Terrorism Financing was rated at “Medium”.

**Organized Crime:** According to the Organized Crime Index updated in 2023, *“Mauritius has a pervasive heroin market. Traffickers mostly from South Africa, import large quantities of the drug from Madagascar and distribute it using planes, fast boats and commercial ships. The expansion of the trade is a major concern, as the police have reportedly failed to stop these activities in some areas and corruption within law enforcement has been alleged”*.

**Sector Vulnerabilities:** Overall National Vulnerability to ML is “Medium High” due to a high vulnerability rating of “High” in the Gambling, Real Estate, Jewellery sectors, “Medium-High” vulnerability rating in Trust and Company Service Provider, Securities & Legal Professions, and Financial Institutions under supervision of FSC respectively. The Banking sector, Other Financial Institutions – under BoM Supervision, Insurance sector and Accountancy Sectors were all rated as “Medium”. Other Financial Institutions include those activity related to Hawala transactions, MVTs, NBDTIs, and Cash Dealers – all rated “Medium High” risk. Other FIs under supervision of the FSC include Payment Intermediaries Services (PIS), Distribution of Financial Products (CFP), Credit Finance (CF), Leasing (LEA), Treasury Management with a residual risk vulnerability of “Medium”. The overall TF risk in Mauritius is “Medium” given that the TF threat is rated “Medium Low” and the TF vulnerability is rated “Medium High”, according to the NRA ML/TF 2019.

**Response:** Mauritius is often described as Africa’s most developed country, but this didn’t prevent it from being placed on the FATF’s grey list in February 2020, though it was also able to respond very quickly and was in fact removed in October 2021. Mauritius has just on “Partially Compliant” rating out of 40 FATF Recommendations and no Non-Compliant Ratings. The PC rating is R15 New Technologies, relating to regulating virtual assets.



**Latest Developments:** In December, 2023, the Mauritius government announced the establishment of a Financial Crime Commission, which is to become the, “apex agency in Mauritius to detect, investigate and prosecute financial crimes such as corruption offences, money laundering offences, fraud offences, the financing of drug dealing offences and any other ancillary offence connected thereto”. With this, “the Commission will take over the functions and powers of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) under the Prevention of Corruption Act, the Asset Recovery Investigation Division (ARID) of the Financial Intelligence Unit under the Asset Recovery Act and the Integrity Reporting Services Agency (IRSA) under the Good Governance and Integrity Reporting Act. In addition, the Commission will henceforth be the depository of all declarations made under the Declaration of Assets Act”. Furthermore, “to provide for more accountability and oversight in respect of case investigation and case management by the Commission, opportunity is being taken to reintroduce the Operations Review Committee, a committee which was set up under the Prevention of Corruption Act but later removed”.

Sources: <https://thefinancialcrimenews.com/mauritius-financial-crime-country-dashboard-2023-by-fcn/#:~:text=Latest%20Developments%3A%20In%20December%2C%202023,fraud%20offences%2C%20the%20financing%20of.>

## **SOUTH SUDAN: RESPONSE TO THE SUDAN CRISIS SITUATION REPORT.**

22 DECEMBER 2023

This update is produced by OCHA South Sudan in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It covers the two-week period from 9-22 December 2023.

### KEY MESSAGES

- Humanitarian partners in Renk are scaling up preparedness efforts to respond to the anticipated increase in arrivals from Sudan due to the escalation of the conflict, including cholera preparedness capacity and onward transportation of refugees and returnees. Onward transportation assistance (OTA) remains the most critical need in the response to reduce overcrowding and the need for shelter, water and food in key transit locations.
- Safe onward movement of new arrivals from border locations remains a critical challenge, exacerbated by generalized insecurity, threat of kidnap/attack and poor road conditions. Two refugees were reported dead following an attack on a UNHCR convoy transporting refugees from Abyei to the Wedweil refugee settlement on 13 December. New arrivals continue to report abuse, looting, harassment and human rights violations during their journey.

## SITUATION OVERVIEW

- The conflict in Sudan continues to force thousands of people to enter South Sudan, where resources to respond to their needs remain limited.
- As of 22 December, 454,956 people were recorded crossing the border from Sudan to South Sudan since 15 April. Some 83 per cent of the arrivals were South Sudanese, 15 per cent were Sudanese refugees and asylum-seekers and the rest were of other nationalities. Of the total arrivals, 176,827 people moved to destinations of choice, with 48 per cent assisted by humanitarian partners. A total of 410,078 people received high-energy biscuits, in-kind food or cash assistance to meet their immediate food and nutrition needs.
- Some 22,968 people arrived during the reporting period, averaging 1,641 arrivals daily. An increase in the arrival numbers was observed towards the end of the reporting period, with 7,275 people arriving between 20 and 22 December, averaging 2,425 arrivals daily.
- In Renk, partners will provide one-off assistance cash amount to approximately 38,000 people following the endorsement by the Humanitarian Country Team. The Food Security and Livelihoods Cluster is coordinating the harmonization of cash programming among partners.
- Almost 71,803 refugees and asylum-seekers have sought asylum in South Sudan. More than 26,000 refugees are hosted in Renk, followed by 17,312 in Maban, 12,497 in Juba and 11,242 in Aweil. UNHCR has biometrically registered 91 per cent (more than 65,000 people) of the refugees and asylum-seekers

Sources: <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/south-sudan/south-sudan-response-sudan-crisis-situation-report-no-23-22-december-2023>.

## **SOUTH SUDANESE'S JUSTICE IS DELAYED, DENIED FOR A DECADE.**

DECEMBER 15, 2023

Ten years ago today, just two years after independence and following decades of conflict with the North, South Sudan descended into an armed conflict pitting forces loyal to President Salva Kiir Mayardit against his then Vice President Dr. Riek Machar Teny Dhurgon.

In the decade-long conflict, estimated to have claimed 400,000 lives and displaced millions, Amnesty International has documented violations of international humanitarian law and gross human rights abuses by all sides. These include mass killings, rape and other conflict-related sexual violence, abduction, the recruitment of children into armed forces and groups as well as the burning and looting of civilian infrastructure.

Despite the signing of peace pacts to end the conflict, first in 2015, followed by the 2018 Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS), and most recently, the 2022 Roadmap to extend the transitional period, each including a commitment to hold perpetrators to account, the wait for justice continues. This lack of accountability has led to near total impunity for serious human rights abuses as witnessed in conflicts in Upper Nile and Unity States and the two administrative regions of Abyei and Pibor, where thousands of people have been displaced and hundreds killed due to the fighting between different armed groups.

A year after the conflict began, the African Union Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan, created to investigate human rights violations following the outbreak of violence, recommended the establishment of a hybrid judicial mechanism to bring those responsible for human rights abuses since December 2013 to justice. The recommendation was later adopted in the 2015 Peace Agreement and again in the 2018 R-ARCSS.

Nine years later, the court is yet to be set up. Neither the African Union nor the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity seem keen on making progress on the hybrid court. Accountability and justice for victims and survivors remain elusive.

As South Sudan prepares for the country's first elections in December 2024 to end the transition period, it is essential that justice and accountability are addressed. The same protagonists, President Salva Kiir and First Vice President Dr. Riek Machar, whose forces began the fighting 10 years ago, are likely to be leading electoral contenders.

Experience in the last decade has shown that the continued failure to put in place mechanisms to address past crimes and human rights abuses has led to new cycles of violence and abuse. Regional and international actors must keep a close eye on South Sudan over the coming months.

This is the time to demand political will to implement justice and accountability mechanisms, especially the Hybrid Court for South Sudan, because victims and survivors of atrocities cannot wait another ten years for justice and accountability.

Sources; <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/12/south-sudanese-justice-is-delayed-denied-for-a-decade/>

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