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# MONITOR



**APRIL** 2025

# SOMALIA

## AL-SHABAB BATTLES SOMALIA'S ARMY FOR STRATEGIC MILITARY BASE

THE ARMED GROUP SAYS IT SEIZES CONTROL OF WARGAADHI TOWN AND ITS MILITARY BASE, BUT THE SOMALI ARMY DENIES THE CLAIM.

24<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2025

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Al-Shabab fighters have battled Somali troops and allied forces for control of a strategic army base in southern Somalia, according to the government and a military official. Capturing the base in Wargaadhi town in the Middle Shabelle region, which houses soldiers, special forces and clan fighters, would enable the al Qaeda-linked group to sever a crucial road between the capital, Mogadishu, 200km (124 miles) to the southwest, and the central Galmudug State as it tries to extend recent gains made in the region.

Al-Shabab has been fighting the Somali government for more than 16 years and frequently targets government officials and military personnel. It said in a statement that its fighters had captured the base and Wargaadhi town – a claim the government denied. The Ministry of Information said in a statement that government forces had killed more than 40 people after they tried to attack the base on Thursday morning. However, army officer Hussein Ali told the news agency Reuters that the armed group had taken the town of Wargaadhi after “fierce fighting”. “Our forces lost 12 men, mostly [clan fighters]. Around 20 al-Shabab fighters were also killed,” Ali said. “But finally al-Shabab got more reinforcements and managed to capture the town.”

He added that Somalia's military was struggling to send reinforcements because it would need to use routes passing through al-Shabab-held areas. Two soldiers quoted by Reuters said government forces, backed by air strikes, had managed to recapture part of the town by midmorning. It was not possible

to independently verify the claims made by either side. Last week, al-Shabab claimed to have seized control of nearby Adan Yabal, a town and logistical hub for government forces about 220km (130 miles) north of Mogadishu. However, Captain Hussein Olow, a military officer in Adan Yabaal, denied the report, telling Reuters government troops had pushed the group back.

Both attacks are part of an offensive launched by al-Shabab last month. The group briefly captured villages within 50km (30 miles) of Mogadishu, raising fears among the capital's residents that the city could be targeted. While Somali forces have since recaptured those villages, al-Shabab has continued to advance in the countryside as the future of international security support to Somalia appears increasingly precarious. A new African Union peacekeeping mission, the AU Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia, replaced a larger force in February, but its funding is uncertain as the United States remains opposed to transitioning to a United Nations financing model.

*Source: News Agencies*

## AL-SHABAB FIGHTERS ATTACK STRATEGIC TOWN IN CENTRAL SOMALIA

16<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2025

The al-Shabab armed group has claimed to have seized control of Adan Yabaal, a town in central Somalia and a logistical hub for the government forces, about 220 kilometres (130 miles) north of the capital, Mogadishu. The fighters launched the raids before dawn on Wednesday, forcing the army to retreat after fierce battles, according to a security officer quoted by the Anadolu news agency. However, the report was disputed by the army. Captain Hussein Olow, a military officer in Adan Yabaal, told the Reuters news agency that government troops had pushed the group back. "The terrorist militants launched a desperate attack on the Somali army positions in the Adan Yabaal district this morning," Somali captain Mohamed Ali told the AFP news agency from a nearby town. "There was heavy fighting still going on in some parts of the town," he said.

### 'Deafening explosion'

Al-Shabab has been fighting the Somali government for more than 16 years and frequently targets government officials and military personnel. Adan Yabaal has strategic military significance and serves as a critical logistical hub connecting Hirshabelle state to the neighbouring central state of Galmudug. It was recaptured from al-Shabab in 2022. "After early morning prayers, we heard a deafening explosion, then gunfire," Fatuma Nur, a mother of four, told Reuters by phone from Adan Yabaal. "Al-Shabab attacked us

from two directions," she added. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, who is from the area, visited the town in March to meet with military commanders there. A new African Union peacekeeping mission replaced a larger force at the start of the year, but its funding is uncertain, with the United States opposed to a plan to transition to a United Nations financing model. Somalia peacekeepers withdrawal: 2,000 African Union troops set to leave

*Source: Al Jazeera and news agencies*

# ETHIOPIA

## CIVILIAN TARGETING INCREASES WHILE FANO-ENDF CLASHES DECLINE IN AMHARA

Two weeks after the four Fano militias – Amhara Fano in Gondar, Shewa, Gojam, and Wello – announced the start of a coordinated operation called Andinet (Amharic for “unity”) to target security force bases in the Amhara region, the number of battles between the militias and government forces has decreased by over 66%, compared to the previous fortnight. This decrease comes after the beginning of operation Andinet drove an increase in battle events.

This recent decline in conflict may be related to internal strife among Fano militias, which has, according to pro-Fano activists, resulted in the killing of a prominent Fano leader from the Amhara Popular Front (APF) in the South Gondar zone on 11 April. The Fano militias’ organizational structure – which is based on birthplace, resulting in groups of Gondar Fano, Gojam Fano, Wello Fano, etc. – is susceptible to internal conflicts as the militias seek to define their identity and assert their claim as the legitimate leaders of the Fano movement. This fragmentation is one of the factors, alongside the lack of common ideology and unification under one leadership, that is affecting the group’s capacity to sustain such operations, as well as the peace talks with the government.

The APF accused the Fano militia behind the killing of one of their leaders of being supported by the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) – the ruling party in the Tigray region. This follows other accusations last month about Fano collaboration with some leaders of the Tigray Defense Forces (TDF), which is based in Tigray. On 19 March, the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) accused General Migbey Hayle, one of the top leaders of the TDF, and some unnamed associates of organizing the Fano militias in initiating their Andinet operation. Migbey, the Tigray Peace and Security Bureau, and a representative of Wello Fano militias refuted the ENDF claim,

denying any connections. There is no concrete evidence of the Fano militias having links with the TPLF or TDF. Despite the decline in battle events, the number of violent incidents targeting civilians has increased compared to the previous two weeks, primarily in western Amhara.

Out of the 24 incidents of violence targeting civilians, 12 were recorded in Amhara, with at least 61 reported fatalities. Both government forces and Fano militias perpetrated this violence. For instance, on 31 March, the ENDF shot and killed at least 40 civilians in Birakat and its surrounding areas: Fita Michael, Senka, and Arsema Giorgis. According to reports, ahead of the killing on the same day, there was a clash between the Amhara state riot police and the ENDF about two kilometers east of Birakat town at Fita Michael Church, during which many police officers and soldiers died. The ENDF killed the civilians in retaliation during house-to-house searches. Fano militias’ attacks on civilians included an incident during the week of 2 April when militia members shot and injured a driver near Gayint area in South Gondar zone. The perpetrators fired several bullets into the truck transporting fuel and abducted two drivers.

Additionally, on 7 April, Fano militias killed three civilians, including a mother and her

child, and wounded an unspecified number of civilians in Debre Yaeqob kebele in Enebe Sarmder woreda, East Gojam zone. The perpetrators fired at a public bus that was transporting passengers from Mertule Mariam to Gindewoin. The Goncha Siso woreda administration head accused the militants of forbidding the movement of any vehicles, enforcing a transport strike in the woreda.<sup>5</sup> Prime Minister Abiy appoints a new president for the Tigray interim administration. On 8 April, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed appointed a new president, General Tadesse Werede, to lead the Interim Regional Administration of Tigray for the next year.<sup>6</sup> This appointment comes at the conclusion of the administration's two-year term and amid an internal dispute within the TPLF. Tadesse previously served as the deputy president of the interim administration and was the head of the TDF.

During the inaugural ceremony held at the prime minister's office in Arat Kilo, Addis Ababa, before representatives from various international diplomatic communities, Tadesse signed a document outlining eight key mandates expected of the interim administration under his leadership, including: the return of internally displaced people, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of fighters according to the Pretoria agreement; halting any activities or relations that violate the constitution, the Pretoria agreement, and the country's sovereignty; and ensuring the region is prepared for an election.

The Debretsion faction welcomed the new president and promised to collaborate with him. However, the faction accused the federal government of not adhering to the principles of the Pretoria agreement by unilaterally making decisions and enacting laws that, according to the faction, are impacting the region. As

a result, the Debretsion faction urged the government to engage in political dialogue to reach a consensus on issues affecting Tigray as per the agreement. Additionally, the faction requested the African Union High-Level Panel overseeing the agreement to hold a meeting soon to discuss its implementation. Tadesse's appointment, along with the appointment of former interim president and leader of the opposing TPLF faction, Getachew Reda, as an advisor to the Prime Minister for East African Affairs, may help reduce tension in the region. Hostility had significantly escalated in March as members of the TDF that support the Debretsion faction began to forcefully control local administrations across the region. However, the tensions between the Debretsion faction and the federal government remain high due to disputes over the interpretation and implementation of the Pretoria agreement.

West Shewa zone in Oromia records a slightly higher number of clashes. From 29 March to 11 April, ACLED records 12 armed clashes between the ENDF and the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) – referred to by the government as the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF)-Shane in the Oromia region. Seven of these armed clashes were reported in the West Shewa zone. In this zone, the armed clashes between the two concentrated in Meta Robi and Abuna Ginde Beret woredas. Since the signing of a peace agreement between the Oromia regional government and a faction of OLA/OLF-Shane on 1 December 2024, political violence has been decreasing in the region.<sup>12</sup> Since December 2024, the highest number of political violence involving OLA/OLF-Shane was recorded in March 2025, with 21 events. Still, compared to the political violence trends in the region before December 2024, this is a low level of violence.

## OLA/OLF-SHANE RETALIATORY ATTACKS KILL WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN OROMIA

ACLED records several retaliatory attacks by the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) – referred to by the government as the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF)-Shane – in Haro Limu woreda in East Wollega zone from 7 to 12 April, resulting in at least 18 fatalities. These attacks were linked with the killing of an OLA/OLF-Shane senior commander by the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF).

On 4 April, the ENDF killed the head of the OLA/OLF-Shane Wollega zones unit, along with an unspecified number of militants, in Haro Limu woreda. The ENDF said it killed the leader, known as "Shode," after receiving information that he was traveling by motorcycle from the Korma River to Sugi road, accompanied by other fighters.<sup>1</sup> This commander was a key senior figure in the OLA/OLF-Shane who had also participated in the peace talks with the Ethiopian government in Tanzania in 2023. Several days after the commander was killed, members of the OLA/OLF-Shane began targeting the families of former group members, accusing them of helping the government carry out the operation.

On 7 April, OLA/OLF-Shane fighters forcibly removed a former member from his home, along with five of his family members – four men and a 12-year-old boy – and killed them in Dhiba forest, in Garba Gudina kebele of Haro Limu woreda. The former OLA/OLF-Shane member was among the militants who had accepted the Abiy government's repeated calls for militants to surrender and return to their families. Five days after the attack, on 12 April, the militants returned and abducted five more civilians, including the wife and two children of the same former militant, aged 10 and seven, and killed them in Dhiba forest.

A similar attack was conducted in the neighboring Surge kebele, where members of the OLA/OLF-Shane attacked and killed eight family members of another former member on 8 April. On 17 April, the ENDF carried out a drone strike in Gedeb town, located in the Enarj Enawga woreda of the East Gojam zone, that killed over 100 people. Following this strike, government forces moved into the town. A representative of Gojam Amhara Fano militias said the drone strike was a government response aimed at suppressing the Fano movement in the area, as Fano militias had recently begun operations there.<sup>2</sup> However, reports suggest that the town has been under a Fano militia's control since the end of August 2023.<sup>3</sup> Eyewitnesses reported that the drone strike targeted civilians who were volunteering to build a fence for a primary school, and there was no Fano militia movement during the strike. The head of the Enarj Enawga woreda administration claimed that the drone strike was aimed at Fano militias, not civilians.

A pro-Fano media outlet also reported another drone strike in the Awi zone, but this claim has not been corroborated by a third party. Airstrikes are not common in the Awi zone. Since the Fano conflict began in April 2023, ACLED records 73 reported air- and drone strikes in the Amhara region, with the first such strikes being recorded on 12 August 2023 in Bure town, West Gojam zone. Out of these 73 airstrikes, 30 were reported by pro-Fano sources and are not corroborated by other sources. Most airstrikes occurred in the North Shewa, West Gojam, and East Gojam zones, where 21, 18, and 11 airstrikes have been recorded, respectively, since August 2023. One study using ACLED data identified Ethiopia as one of six African countries employing drones in offensive operations.<sup>4</sup> The ENDF began to use drones during the northern Ethiopia conflict. Since then, such strikes have been recorded in the Oromia and Amhara regions.

Source: [www.acleddata.com](https://www.acleddata.com)

# SUDAN

## SUDAN WAR TO ENTER THIRD YEAR AS RSF ASSAULTS IN DARFUR INTENSIFY

RIGHTS GROUPS URGE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS AND AID ACCESS AS MILLIONS OF PEOPLE ARE DISPLACED AND MANY FACE FAMINE

14<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2025

The United Nations and rights groups are calling for an end to the violence in Sudan as the second anniversary of its civil war looms and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has intensified its attacks in Darfur, killing dozens of people in recent days. As representatives from dozens of countries are to meet in London on Tuesday to try to resolve the Sudan crisis, Human Rights Watch urged the international community to “urgently work to protect civilians and guarantee safe, unfettered aid provision” in the country. “For the last two years, Sudan’s warring parties have subjected the population to horrific abuses and suffering, and blocked aid, plunging the country into the world’s worst humanitarian disasters,” Mohamed Osman, Sudan researcher at Human Rights Watch, said in a statement on Monday.

“International leaders should ensure that discussions to improve the humanitarian situation go hand in hand with commitments at the highest level to protect civilians.”

This week marks two years since war broke out on April 15, 2023, between the RSF and the Sudanese military. It has killed thousands of people, displaced nearly 13 million people, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and sparked a hunger crisis in parts of the country. In recent weeks, the army has managed to push RSF fighters out of the capital, Khartoum, but the paramilitary

group has been claiming advances in the western region of Darfur, where an already dire humanitarian crisis has been worsening.

On Sunday, the RSF said it took control of the Zamzam camp for displaced people near el-Fasher, the provincial capital of North Darfur state. The assault has killed dozens of people, including 23 children and nine aid workers, according to the UN.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) warned on Monday that the fighting near el-Fasher, which has been under an RSF blockade, is hampering access to humanitarian assistance. “Thousands of displaced people are trapped & cut off from aid,” OCHA Sudan said in a social media post. “Hostilities must stop now. All those engaged in the conflict must ensure safe passage for civilians and humanitarian access.”

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres had condemned the attacks on civilians in and around el-Fasher, urging an end to the fighting. “The Secretary-General emphasizes that attacks directed against civilians and indiscriminate attacks are strictly prohibited under international humanitarian law,” Guterres said in a statement issued via his spokesperson on Sunday.

"Humanitarian relief personnel and medical personnel must be respected and protected. The perpetrators of these attacks must be brought to justice. Safe, unhindered and sustained access to the area, including the Zamzam camp, is urgently needed. Civilians who want to leave must be allowed to do so safely."

In a joint statement on Monday, Egypt and Qatar also expressed "grave concerns over the ongoing armed conflict in the Sudan and emphasized the importance of an immediate cessation of military operations". But the violence continued on Monday. Al Jazeera Arabic quoted local sources in reporting that RSF fighters were shelling the Abu Shouk camp for displaced people outside el-Fasher. Sudan has seen growing instability since longtime President Omar al-Bashir was removed from power in 2019 after months of antigovernment protests.

*Source: Al Jazeera*

In October 2021, the Sudanese military staged a coup against the civilian government of Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, leading to his resignation in early 2022. Sudan's army chief, Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and his rival general Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, who leads the RSF, shared power after the coup but then started fighting for control of the state and its resources in April 2023. Davis Makori, humanitarian policy and advocacy specialist, highlighted the impact of the war on children – including psychological trauma, gender-based violence and inability to attend school – saying minors make up half of the civilians affected by the conflict. "While there are pockets of states in Sudan that are not actually active conflict zones, this humanitarian crisis has spread to almost every facet of life," Makori told Al Jazeera.

## MORE THAN FOUR MILLION PEOPLE HAVE FLED SUDAN AMID WAR, UN SAYS:

**UN OFFICIAL SAYS THE 'DEVASTATING MILESTONE' SHOWS THE DAMAGE OF THE DISPLACEMENT CRISIS AFTER TWO YEARS OF FIGHTING.**

3<sup>RD</sup> JUNE 2025

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More than four million people have fled Sudan since the start of its civil war in 2023, officials with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) say. "Now in its third year, the four million people is a devastating milestone in what is the world's most damaging displacement crisis at the moment," agency spokesperson Eujin Byun said at a Geneva media briefing on Tuesday. "If the conflict continues in Sudan, ... we expect thousands more people will continue to flee, putting regional and global stability at stake." Sudan shares a border with Chad, South Sudan, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Central African Republic and Libya.

In addition to refugees who have left the country, about 10.5 million people have been displaced internally in Sudan, according to UN estimates. Patrice Dossou Ahouansou, a UNHCR official, said 800,000 of the refugees have arrived in Chad, where their shelter conditions are dire due to funding shortages with only 14 percent of funding appeals met. "This is an unprecedented crisis that we are facing. This is a crisis of humanity. This is a crisis of ... protection, based on the violence that refugees are reporting," he said. The war has been raging in Sudan between its military and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitary group. In recent months, the violence has been intensifying in the western region of Darfur, where the RSF has been besieging the city of el-Fasher, compounding hunger in the area. A World Food Programme (WFP) and UNICEF aid convoy delivering food to el-Fasher came under attack this week, according to the UN's

children's aid agency.

"We have received information about a convoy with WFP and UNICEF trucks being attacked last night while positioned in Al Koma, North Darfur, waiting for approval to proceed to el-Fasher," UNICEF spokesperson Eva Hinds said on Tuesday. Sudan has seen growing instability since longtime President Omar al-Bashir was removed from power in 2019 after months of antigovernment protests. In October 2021, the Sudanese military staged a coup against the civilian government of Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, leading to his resignation in early 2022. Sudan's army chief, Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and rival Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, who leads the RSF, had shared power after the coup but then started fighting for control of the state and its resources in April 2023.

*Source: Al Jazeera, Reuters*

## SOUTH SUDAN

### SOUTH SUDANESE CHILDREN DIE AS US AID CUTS SHUTTER MEDICAL SERVICES:

#### NGO

#### US AID CUTS FORCE SOUTH SUDANESE CLINICS TO CLOSE, AS CHILDREN DIE WHILE ON A DESPERATE TREK FOR MEDICAL CARE.

9<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2025

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Eight people, including five children, have died after walking for three hours in blistering heat to seek treatment for cholera in South Sudan's eastern Jonglei state, as United States aid cuts forced local health facilities to close. The United Kingdom-based global charity Save the Children revealed last month's deaths on Wednesday, saying they were among the first directly linked to cuts ordered by US President Donald Trump, who slashed funding for global health programmes under his "America First" policy after taking office on January 20. Save the Children had supported 27 health centres in Jonglei State until this year, when US cuts forced seven to close entirely and 20 to scale back operations, laying off about 200 staff of almost 600 nationwide.

A US-funded transport service that took patients to hospital was also shut down due to a lack of funds, forcing the eight cholera patients to walk for hours in nearly 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) heat to reach medical care. "There should be global moral outrage that the decisions made by powerful people in other countries have led to child deaths in just a matter of weeks," said Christopher Nyamandi, Save the Children's country director in South Sudan.

Experts have warned that the funding cuts – including the cancellation of more than 90 percent of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) contracts – could lead to millions of deaths from malnutrition, AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria in the years ahead.

The US State Department said it had no information about the reported deaths. A spokesperson insisted that many US-funded humanitarian projects in South Sudan remained operational but accused the country's leadership of misusing foreign aid. "While emergency lifesaving programmes continue, we will not, in good conscience, ask the American taxpayer to provide assistance that effectively subsidises the irresponsible and corrupt behaviour of South Sudan's political leaders," said the spokesperson cited by the Reuters news agency. South Sudan's government has admitted to widespread corruption but denies specific allegations of graft, including against President Salva Kiir's family. Due to corruption concerns, humanitarian aid is mostly delivered through nongovernmental organisations. Besides US funding cuts, declining contributions from other donors have further weakened South

Sudan's humanitarian response. Save the Children's budget for the country is expected to drop to \$30m this year from \$50m last year.

More than a third of South Sudan's 12 million people have been displaced by conflict or natural disasters. The United Nations has warned that fighting in the northeast could push the country towards a new civil war. A cholera outbreak was declared in South Sudan in October last year, with about 40,000 cases

and 700 deaths recorded between September to March, according to the UN Children's Fund, UNICEF. About half of those stricken by the disease are children under 15, UNICEF has said. Cholera is an acute form of diarrhoea that is treatable with antibiotics and hydration, but can kill within hours if left untreated. It is caused by a germ typically transmitted through a lack of access to sanitation. People become infected when they swallow food or drink water carrying the bug.

## 2025 NASIR CLASHES

3<sup>RD</sup> MARCH 2025

Clashes broke out in the South Sudanese town of Nasir between members of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF) and the Nuer White Army on 3 March 2025, resulting in the capture of the town's army barracks by the White Army. During an SSPDF evacuation attempt on 7 March, helicopters belonging to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan came under fire, resulting in significant

casualties. The clashes have had major political consequences, leading to arrest of dozens of politicians affiliated with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition, and have raised concerns that the country might return to civil war. In cooperation with the Uganda People's Defence Force, the SSPDF has conducted airstrikes in and around Nasir.

### BACKGROUND

The town of Nasir is located on the Sobat River in Upper Nile State, 26 km (16 mi) from the border with Ethiopia. The Nuer people are the primary inhabitants, and the town was a stronghold of the Nuer-majority Sudan People's Liberation Army-in-Opposition (SPLA-IO) during the South Sudanese Civil War. The town was largely destroyed when captured by government forces in May 2014; the town was retaken by SPLA-IO forces in July 2014. Even after the signing of the R-ARCSS—the agreement that ended the civil war—in 2018, tensions in Nasir remained high. On 10–11 February 2024, clashes broke out

between White Army members and soldiers with the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF) after a dispute involving fishing nets, leaving several dead.

The White Army has protested the SSPDF presence in the town, calling for Necessary Unified Forces (NUF) to replace the soldiers, who are perceived as partisan. On 14–15 February 2025, four SSPDF soldiers were killed when White Army members attacked a group collecting firewood; at least 10 civilians were injured in the resultant shelling.

### INITIAL CLASHES AND THE SSPDF EVACUATION

Around 4 p.m. on 3 March, a White Army member was killed by the SSPDF, sparking clashes which continued until Tuesday

evening. White Army members secured the town of Nasir as well as part of the Wec Yar Adiu army barracks located around 3 km

(2 mi) west of the town. On 5 March, the White Army and the government agreed to allow the SSPDF troops to be airlifted out of Nasir using UNMISS helicopters; however, the evacuation was delayed until 7 March, and the SSPDF soldiers took refuge in armed vehicles. When the two helicopters arrived,

## AIRSTRIKES

In response to the clashes, Uganda deployed special forces to Juba on 9 March. Muhoozi Kainerugaba, the Ugandan Chief of Defence Forces, announced the deployment on X, stating, "We the UPDF, only recognise ONE President of South Sudan, H.E. Salva Kiir ... Any move against him is a declaration of war against Uganda!" Muhoozi ordered the UPDF to halt its attacks on 1 April. On 16 March, at 11:40 p.m., the SSPDF conducted airstrikes around the Nasir airstrip, killing 21 residents. The day after the airstrike, information minister Michael Makuei Lueth ordered civilians to evacuate the military zone. Around

## POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES

In the aftermath of the clashes, several politicians associated with the SPLM-IO were put under house arrest. On 4 March, General Gabriel Duop Lam, the chief of staff for the SPLM-IO, was arrested on unspecified charges, and around midnight on 5 March, Puot Kang Chol, the minister of petroleum, was also arrested in Juba. SSPDF soldiers also surrounded the home of First Vice President Riek Machar.

## REACTIONS

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) expressed concern over the clashes, urging the parties to reaffirm their commitment to the R-ARCSS peace agreement.

On 9 March, the United States Department

of State ordered all non-essential personal to leave South Sudan due to the clashes and increased political tension. On 22 March, Germany announced that it would temporarily close its embassy in the country.

an exchange of fire with the White Army led to the death of one of the UNMISS helicopter operators and around 27 SSPDF soldiers. In the aftermath of the evacuation attempt, the remaining SSPDF soldiers fled to surrounding areas, with 15 soldiers going to Ulang County.

3:30 a.m. on 19 March, additional airstrikes targeted the town, including the Nasir market, injuring two civilians.

Airstrikes also occurred in the surrounding areas. The village of Mathiang in Longechuk County was struck on 16 March, leaving one dead and eight injured. On March 18, airstrikes occurred on the road between Akobo and Walgak. One person was killed and 12 were wounded in Kuich, Ulang County, after airstrikes around 8:30 p.m. on 21 March.

[32] On 6 March, Stephen Par Kuol, the minister of peacebuilding, was arrested in his office; he was released on the morning of 7 March. On 19 March, President Salva Kiir Mayardit appointed Lt. Gen. James Koang Chuol as the governor of Upper Nile State, replacing James Odhok Oyai, who had been governor since 26 January 2023.

of State ordered all non-essential personal to leave South Sudan due to the clashes and increased political tension. On 22 March, Germany announced that it would temporarily close its embassy in the country.

Source: [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)

# TANZANIA

## TANZANIA'S MAIN OPPOSITION CHADEMA PARTY BARRED FROM UPCOMING ELECTIONS

### A TREASON CHARGE AND THE EXCLUSION OF THE MAIN OPPOSITION DRAW ATTENTION BEFORE OCTOBER POLLS IN TANZANIA.

12<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2025

Tanzania's electoral commission has barred the main opposition party, Chadema, from contesting presidential and parliamentary elections due to take place later this year. The Independent National Elections Commission (INEC) announced the decision on Saturday, stating that the party failed to sign a mandatory code of conduct agreement by the required deadline for the polls expected to take place in October. "Any party that did not sign the code of conduct will not participate in the general election," said Ramadhani Kailima, the commission's director of elections, adding that the disqualification extends to all by-elections until 2030. There was no immediate response from Chadema. The announcement comes days after Chadema leader Tundu Lissu was charged with treason, accused of inciting rebellion and attempting to stop the elections from going ahead.

Prosecutors claimed he urged the public to take action against the vote, though he was not permitted to enter a plea. The charge carries the possibility of a death sentence. Lissu, a former presidential candidate, has long been a vocal critic of the governing Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM) party and its leader, President Samia Suluhu Hassan, who is seeking a second term. Chadema had already warned it would boycott the polls unless meaningful electoral reforms were introduced. Earlier on Saturday, the party confirmed it would not attend the signing ceremony for the electoral code of conduct, describing the move as part of its broader campaign to push for changes in how elections are conducted. The disqualification of Chadema and the treason

case against its leader are expected to raise new questions about the state of democracy in the East African nation.

Human rights organisations and opposition groups have accused the government of clamping down on dissent, citing a pattern of unexplained abductions and killings of political activists.

President Hassan's government has denied any role in these alleged abuses and maintains it is committed to upholding human rights. CCM has repeatedly rejected accusations of undermining the opposition or manipulating the electoral process.

*Source: Al Jazeera and news agencies*

## TANZANIA OPPOSITION PARTY LEADER TUNDU LISSU CHARGED WITH TREASON

**LISSU'S LAWYER RUGEMELEZA NSHALA SAID THE CHARGES AGAINST HIS CLIENT WERE POLITICALLY DRIVEN.**

10<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2025

A court in Tanzania has charged opposition party leader Tundu Lissu with treason after his arrest at a public rally in which he called for electoral reforms. The charges against the chairman of the Chadema party will bring new scrutiny to President Samia Suluhu Hassan's bid for re-election in October as critics accuse the government of cracking down on the opposition. The opposition leader was forced into a police vehicle late on Wednesday after he had finished addressing a public rally in Mbinga in southern Tanzania.

"I came here, we held a peaceful meeting and now I understand the tactics of the police. We are now clear on the situation. I will not enter the vehicle. There is no need for that. We will sleep here. What is the problem?" Lissu asked the police, moments before his supporters were tear-gassed. Lissu on Thursday afternoon arrived at the Kisutu Resident Magistrate's Court in the commercial capital Dar-es-Salaam, appearing in high spirits and in the company of his lawyers and opposition party politicians. He was, however, not allowed to enter a plea on the treason charge. He did plead not guilty to a separate charge of publishing false information and is due back in court on April 24.

Lissu's lawyer Rugemeleza Nshala said the charges against his client were politically driven. "You cannot separate these charges from politics," Nshala told the Reuters news agency. "He was doing campaigns to educate Chadema supporters, but they have turned it into charges."

Source: [www.newsagency.com](http://www.newsagency.com)

According to the charge sheet, Lissu, who survived being shot 16 times in an assassination attempt in 2017, made the comments in question in Dar-es-Salaam on April 3. The charge sheet quoted him as saying: "It is true we say we will prevent the election. We will inspire rebellion. That is the way to get change." "So we are going to spoil this election. We are going to really disrupt. ... We are going to spoil it very badly," the charge sheet accused him of saying.

Hassan won plaudits after coming to power in 2021 for easing repression of political opponents and censorship of the media that proliferated under her predecessor John Magufuli, who died in office. But she has faced mounting criticism from human rights activists over a series of arrests and unexplained abductions and killings of political opponents. Hassan has said the government is committed to respecting human rights, and she ordered an investigation into reported abductions last year.

# UGANDA

## MILITARY COURTS: THE FRONT LINE OF UGANDA'S WAR ON DISSENT

**USED TO PROSECUTING CIVILIANS, UGANDA'S MILITARY COURTS HELP ENTRENCH REPRESSION AHEAD OF THE 2026 ELECTIONS.**

TIGERE CHAGUTAH

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA**

18<sup>TH</sup> APR 2025

Uganda is gearing up for general elections in January 2026 – the seventh since President Yoweri Museveni came to power in 1986. As in the lead-up to previous polls, repression is on the rise. This time, however, it has extended beyond Uganda's own borders. On November 16, 2024, opposition politician Kizza Besigye and his aide Obeid Lutale were abducted in Nairobi, Kenya. Four days later, they resurfaced in Uganda's capital Kampala arraigned in a military court on security charges. Rendered to Uganda, in clear violation of international laws prohibiting extraordinary rendition and due process, the two civilians faced military justice. Outraged by this militarisation of justice, Besigye and Lutale attracted a 40-strong defence team led by Martha Karua, Kenya's former minister of justice. If the state antics were intended to silence dissenting voices, they have done just the opposite. Far from dissuading others from speaking up, these trials have sparked a national conversation on human rights and the role of the military.

Uganda's Chief of Defence Forces (CDF), General Muhoozi Kainerugaba, Museveni's

son, has regularly commented on Besigye's case on X. Widely seen as a potential successor to his ageing father, Kainerugaba heads a political pressure group, the Patriotic League of Uganda (PLU), despite legislation currently prohibiting serving military officers from involvement in partisan politics. Since 2016, Uganda's Supreme Court had delayed ruling on a case, brought by Michael Kabaziguruka, a former member of parliament, challenging the trial of civilians before military courts. Kabaziguruka, who was accused of treason, argued that his trial in a military tribunal violated fair trial rights. As a civilian, he contended he was not subject to military law. Besigye and Lutale's case gave renewed impetus to this. On January 31, 2025, the Supreme Court ruled that trying civilians in military courts is unconstitutional, ordering that all ongoing or pending criminal trials involving civilians must immediately stop and be transferred to ordinary courts.

Despite this ruling, President Museveni and his son have vowed to continue using military courts in civilian trials. Besigye went on hunger strike for 10 days in protest against

delays in transferring his case to an ordinary court. The case has now become a litmus test for Uganda's military justice system ahead of the 2026 elections. Besigye and Lutale are not the only opposition politicians to face military justice. Tens of supporters of the National Unity Platform (NUP), led by Robert Kyagulanyi, popularly known as Bobi Wine, have been convicted by military courts for various offences. These include wearing NUP's trademark red berets and other party attire that authorities claimed resembled military uniforms, despite their distinct differences. Numerous lesser-known political activists are facing charges in military courts, too.

Over 1,000 civilians have been prosecuted in Uganda's military courts since 2002 for offences such as murder and armed robbery. For context, in 2005, the state amended the UPDF Act to create a legal framework which allowed the military to try civilians in military courts. It was no coincidence that these amendments happened as the military was trying civilians arrested between 2001 and 2004, including Kizza Besigye. Military trials of civilians flout international and regional standards. They open possibilities of a flurry of human rights violations, including coerced confessions, opaque processes, unfair trials and executions. Trying civilians in military courts violates Article 7 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the 2001 Principles and Guidelines on Fair Trial and Legal Assistance in Africa. The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the region's premier human rights body, has long condemned their practice in Uganda.

Opposition to military justice has not just come from the usual quarters. Religious leaders expressed concern about Besigye's continued detention after the Supreme Court ruling, as did Anita Among, speaker of Uganda's Parliament and member of the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM), who remarked: "Injustice to anyone is injustice to everybody. Today it is happening to Dr Besigye, tomorrow it will happen to any one of us". Following the court order and widespread outcry, Besigye and Lutale were transferred to a civilian court on February 21. Besigye called off his hunger strike. They remain in detention, as does their lawyer. However, their transfer without release, in a process begun by an illegality, remains flawed.

Despite the transfer of their case, scores of more civilians have their cases still pending before military courts, with little hope that they will be transferred to civilian courts. For this reason, 11 groups including Amnesty Kenya, the Pan-African Lawyers Union, the Law Society of Kenya, the Kenya Human Rights Commission and Kenya Medical Practitioners, Pharmacists, and Dentists Union (KMPDU) call for their immediate release. As Uganda approaches elections, it is evident that the military courts are now a tool in President Museveni's shed for use to silence dissent. It is time for Uganda to heed the Supreme Court ruling – for now though, military justice is on trial, too.

The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect Al Jazeera's editorial stance.

*Source: Tigere Chagutah Amnesty International's Regional Director for East and Southern Africa*

# RWANDA

## DR CONGO AND RWANDA SIGN DRAFT PEACE AGREEMENT

### PROVISIONAL AGREEMENT AIMED AT ENDING FIGHTING IN EASTERN DRC EXPECTED TO BE FORMALLY SIGNED ON JUNE 27.

19<sup>TH</sup> JUN 2025

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The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Rwanda have signed a provisional agreement aimed at stopping the conflict in eastern DRC, according to a joint statement from the two countries and the United States Department of State. The development late on Wednesday in Washington, DC, came after "three days of constructive dialogue regarding political, security, and economic interests", the statement said. The draft agreement contains provisions on issues including disarmament, the integration of non-state armed groups and the return of refugees and internally displaced people.

Eastern DRC has been riven by conflict for decades, with armed groups competing for access to natural resources. Fighting in the region escalated in January when the Rwanda-backed M23 rebel group captured Goma, the mineral-rich area's largest city. A few weeks later, the group seized the strategic town of Bukavu. Rwanda denies supporting the rebels. Thousands of people have been killed in the region and hundreds of thousands of others displaced since the conflict intensified earlier this year. Several of the parties to the conflict have been accused of carrying out human rights abuses. In a report published in May, Amnesty International accused M23 of torturing and killing civilians. "These acts violate international humanitarian law and may amount to war crimes," Amnesty said at the time.

On Monday, Volker Turk, the UN high commissioner for human rights, said that the rebels, DRC troops and allied armed groups had all carried out human rights abuses. The US hopes to bring an end to the fighting and to unlock billions of dollars of Western investment in the eastern DRC, which has large mineral reserves including cobalt, copper, gold and lithium.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has described the twin aims of peace and investment as a "win-win". As part of the diplomatic efforts, Massad Boulos, the US envoy to Africa, travelled to the DRC and Rwanda in April. During his visit, he urged Kigali to end its support for the M23 rebels. Although the African countries have agreed to at least six truces since 2021, none has lasted. Angola stepped down in March from its role as mediator, with the US and Qatar

currently leading efforts to secure peace in the eastern DRC. The draft agreement is due to be formally signed on June 27 by ministers

from the DRC and Rwanda in the presence of Rubio.

*Source: Al Jazeera and news agencies*

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