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Africa Overview: June 2026

The ADF ramped up violence in Ituri amid the Ebola outbreak, and JNIM launched a deadly campaign against Dozo militias in Mali.

5 June 2026 7-minute read

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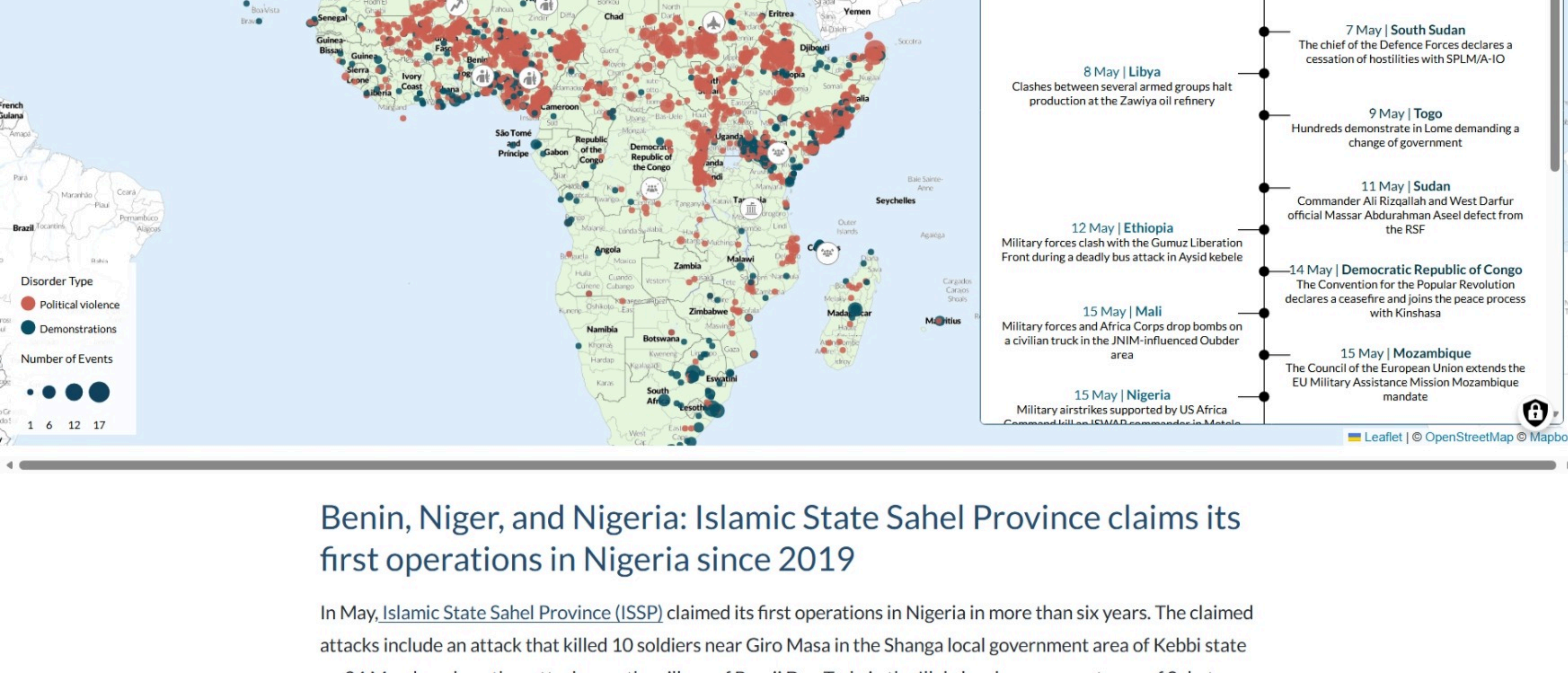
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Benin, Niger, and Nigeria: Islamic State Sahel Province claims its first operations in Nigeria since 2019

In May, [Islamic State Sahel Province \(ISSP\)](#) claimed its first operations in Nigeria in more than six years. The claimed attacks include an attack that killed 10 soldiers near Giro Masa in the Shanga local government area of Kebbi state on 24 March and another attack near the village of Rumji Dan Tudu in the Illelela local government area of Sokoto state on 16 May, which killed seven soldiers.¹ These claims are significant as ISSP had not made any official claim of violence in Nigeria since October 2019, when it first officially announced having entered Sokoto by carrying out an attack in the town of Balle in the Gudu local government area.² For years, confusion and debate have surrounded the affiliation of militants locally referred to as the Lakurawa and their links to violent Islamist groups operating in the region. However, ISSP's claims of attacks attributed locally to the Lakurawa on both sides of the Niger-Nigeria border increasingly clarify that the Lakurawa are an integral component of ISSP's presence in the borderlands rather than a distinct armed group.

The ISSP claims also come amid parallel violent campaigns by Sahelian jihadist groups in the [Benin, Niger, and Nigeria borderlands](#). While ISSP has publicized its growing presence along the Niger-Nigeria border since last December, its rival [Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin \(JNIM\)](#) has carried out several large-scale attacks elsewhere in the region. Last month in Niger, JNIM overran a National Guard camp in the town of Kirtachi, killing at least 12 soldiers and taking seven others prisoner.³ Meanwhile, in Benin, the group launched a coordinated attack on military positions in Koualou, a border town in an area disputed by Benin and Burkina Faso, killing several soldiers and civilians.⁴ In both attacks, JNIM also seized large quantities of weapons, ammunition, and other materiel. These developments illustrate the deepening entrenchment of Sahelian jihadist groups in the coastal West Africa borderlands, where both ISSP and JNIM are demonstrating their ability to project force, sustain operations, and challenge government forces on multiple fronts.

Comoros and Kenya: Demonstrations surge over rising fuel prices

Amid persistent global concerns over the repercussions of the [United States' blockade of the Strait of Hormuz](#) on energy markets, rising fuel costs triggered demonstrations in both Comoros and Kenya last month. Although fuel-related protests are a recurring feature across Africa, this was the largest rise in fuel-related demonstrations since the blockade went into effect, with both countries experiencing significant outbreaks of violence. ACLED records the largest spike in mobilization in Kenya, where public service vehicle operators organized at least 94 demonstrations across the country. Many involved road blockades, bonfires on motorways, and clashes with security forces as demonstrators demanded the reversal of fuel price increases.

In Comoros, labor unions organized over a dozen strikes and demonstrations against rising fuel costs. Over half of the demonstrations turned violent and were geographically dispersed rather than concentrated in the capital, underscoring the far-reaching impact of rising fuel costs beyond urban areas.

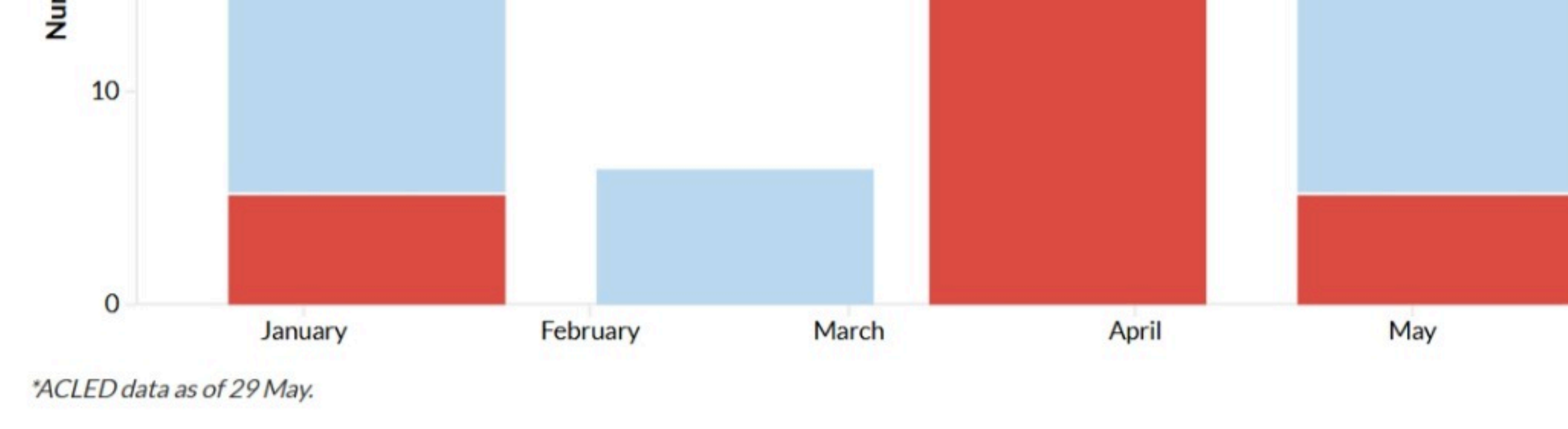
The demonstrations highlight the political sensitivity of fuel prices across Africa, where many states are heavily dependent on imported petroleum products and regulate domestic fuel prices.⁵ While some governments, including those in Namibia, South Africa, and Zambia, have sought to cushion consumers through tax reductions and subsidies, further unrest on the continent remains likely should governments increase fuel prices.

Democratic Republic of Congo: The ADF targets civilians in Ituri amidst the Ebola outbreak

As the latest Ebola outbreak continues to spread, civilians in Ituri province — the epicenter of the outbreak — are facing escalating insecurity tied both to the Ebola response and worsening militant activity. Since the Congolese Ministry of Health confirmed the outbreak on 15 May, reported cases in the DRC and Uganda have surpassed 1,000, with more than 200 associated fatalities.⁶ Several violent incidents have also directly disrupted Ebola response efforts. In Irumu and Djugu territories, mobs angered by strict containment measures burned health facilities and threw projectiles at vehicles belonging to health responders.

The Ebola outbreak has coincided with the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), also known as the Islamic State Central Africa Province, carrying out its deadliest campaign targeting civilians in Ituri since May 2022. ACLED records at least 149 civilian fatalities in Ituri province last month, equaling the number of ADF-related civilian fatalities in Ituri province between January and April. As the ADF shifts northward from neighboring North Kivu, Ituri has increasingly emerged as both a hotspot of Islamist violence and the center of the region's Ebola response. The rising insecurity in Ituri province makes it increasingly difficult for humanitarian responders to access civilians in need of treatment, which will limit efforts to contain the Ebola outbreak in the months ahead, especially if responders move into areas where the ADF carries out frequent operations in Irumu or Mambasa territories.

Amid the Ebola outbreak, civilians in the DRC's Ituri province face the highest levels of targeted violence by militants so far this year



*ACLED data as of 29 May.

Mali: A JNIM offensive against Dozo militias drives a surge in violence in central Mali

Following JNIM's coordinated offensive in late April and subsequent announcement of a blockade on Bamako, the group partially shifted its focus toward central Mali in May, launching a deadly offensive against [Dozo militias](#), including the Dan Na Ambassagou movement in the Mopti region. The offensive is linked to growing tensions in areas where villages have entered into local agreements with JNIM, but have come under pressure from Dan Na Ambassagou. These tensions have centered on the establishment of new militia checkpoints, restrictions on mobility, and efforts to challenge arrangements reached between JNIM and local communities.

The campaign has affected several cercles in the Mopti region, including Bandiagara, Bankass, and Djene. JNIM also carried out similar attacks in the neighboring Segou region. JNIM has targeted both militia positions and villages affiliated with Dozo militias through armed assaults and targeted killings. The group assassinated several militia members, including at least one local leader. The deadliest attacks were recorded in Gomossagou, Kori Kori, Dougara, Kouroude, and Bougoula. They drove a deadly spike in violence in the Mopti region in recent years. In the wake of the offensive, JNIM launched a disarmament campaign during which a dozen villages in the Bankass cercle handed over weapons to JNIM.⁷ The attacks also prompted criticism from affected communities and the Dogon civil society organization Ginna Dogon, which called on authorities to strengthen security measures and improve the protection of civilians and their property in vulnerable areas.⁸

Sudan: RSF drone strikes in Khartoum escalate tensions between Ethiopia and Sudan

The Rapid Support Forces' (RSF) use of drones continues to inflict serious setbacks to the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF). On 4 May, a drone strike targeted Abu Alama Military Base in al-Markhiat, Khartoum, killing at least 24 SAF troops, in one of the most serious blows to SAF defenses in recent months. RSF drone strikes have picked up in the border town of al-Tina, the last foothold for the SAF and the allied Darfur Joint Forces in North Darfur, and in the Khartoum tri-city area, where they targeted various military camps of SAF and its allies and the Khartoum International Airport. The Sudanese government accused the United Arab Emirates and the Ethiopian government of being involved in the strike, claiming it had "conclusive evidence" that the drones were launched from Bahir Dar, Ethiopia.⁹ The UAE and Ethiopia denied the claim.¹⁰ In return, Ethiopia accused the SAF of using the Tigray People's Liberation Front's mercenaries and supporting the group.¹¹

This is the first time Sudan and Ethiopia have publicly accused each other of supporting rival groups, escalating tensions between the two countries in connection with supporting such groups. Following this accusation, Sudan recalled its ambassador from Addis Ababa, and the SAF mobilized its forces near the Ethiopian border in Gedaref state. However, the risk of a direct war between Ethiopia and Sudan remains low as both countries remain locked in domestic conflicts. Escalating instability within key volatile regions — specifically Ethiopia's Tigray region and Sudan's Blue Nile state — risks provoking intermittent border conflicts between the two countries.

Tanzania: The US sanctions a senior police officer

The US State Department has designated Tanzania's Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police Faustine Jackson Mafwele for "involvement in gross violations of human rights," barring him from entering the United States.¹² The notice cites his involvement in the detention, torture, and sexual assault of activists Agather Atuhaire and Boniface Mwangi one year ago.¹³ The pair had entered Tanzania to observe the trial of opposition leader Tundu Lissu, which is still ongoing.

The designation is the most significant action the US has taken since it announced a review of its relationship with Tanzania last December.¹⁴ The review focuses on obstacles to US investments in critical minerals and natural gas and what the US alleges is repression of religious and democratic freedom. It was prompted by the violent crackdown on demonstrators during and after October's elections. These issues were reiterated during recent Senate hearings to confirm the nominated ambassador to Tanzania, William Trachman.¹⁵ The continued trial of Tundu Lissu and the one-year anniversary of the election violence mean that issues of civic space will not go away. Progress on investments in liquefied natural gas, graphite, and nickel may, however, be enough for the US to hold back on further political sanctions.

Footnotes

- [Jihadology, "New issue of The Islamic State's newsletter: al-Naba' #549," 28 May 2026](#)
- [At the time, the group operated as the Sahelian branch of the Islamic State West Africa Province, before being recognized by the Islamic State as a stand-alone province in March 2022. \[Jihadology, "New issue of The Islamic State's newsletter: al-Naba' #205," 24 October 2019\]\(#\)](#)
- [According to a statement released by JNIM's Al Zallaqa media wing on 22 May 2026, ACLED monitors primary sources of information on armed group activity, including their official channels and accounts, but does not directly link to such sources in order to minimize the risk of amplifying extremist content.](#)
- [Chirpwire@AzZallaqa, 29 May 2026](#)
- [Business Insider Africa, "Kenya fuel prices hit record high as diesel surges amid global oil supply fears," Ayodeji Adebayo, 15 May 2026](#)
- [World Health Organization, "Ebola disease caused by Bundibugyo virus, Democratic Republic of the Congo & Uganda," 29 May 2026](#)
- [X@hairanks008, 2 June 2026; X@SahelAlert, 2 June 2026](#)
- [Facebook@Jeunesse Ginna Dogon, 23 May 2026](#)
- [Sudan Tribune, "Sudan accuses UAE and Ethiopia of involvement in Khartoum airport drone strikes," 5 May 2026](#)
- [Reuters, "UAE denies involvement in Sudan airport attack," 6 May 2026; Facebook@MFAEthiopia, 5 May 2026](#)
- [Facebook@MFAEthiopia, 5 May 2026](#)
- [Marc Rubio, "Designation of Tanzanian Police Force Official for Involvement in Gross Violations of Human Rights," US Department of State, 21 May 2026](#)
- [Steve Otieno, "Boniface Mwangi, Agather Atuhaire: We were sexually assaulted by Tanzanian captors," The East African, 2 June 2026](#)
- [Thomas Piggot, "Review of US bilateral relationship with Tanzania," US Department of State, 4 December 2026](#)
- [The Citizen, "Balancing trade and rights: US envoy nominee faces tough questions on Tanzania," 9 May 2026](#)

COUNTRIES

- Benin Nigeria Democratic Republic of Congo Ethiopia Mali Tanzania
- Sudan Niger Comoros Kenya

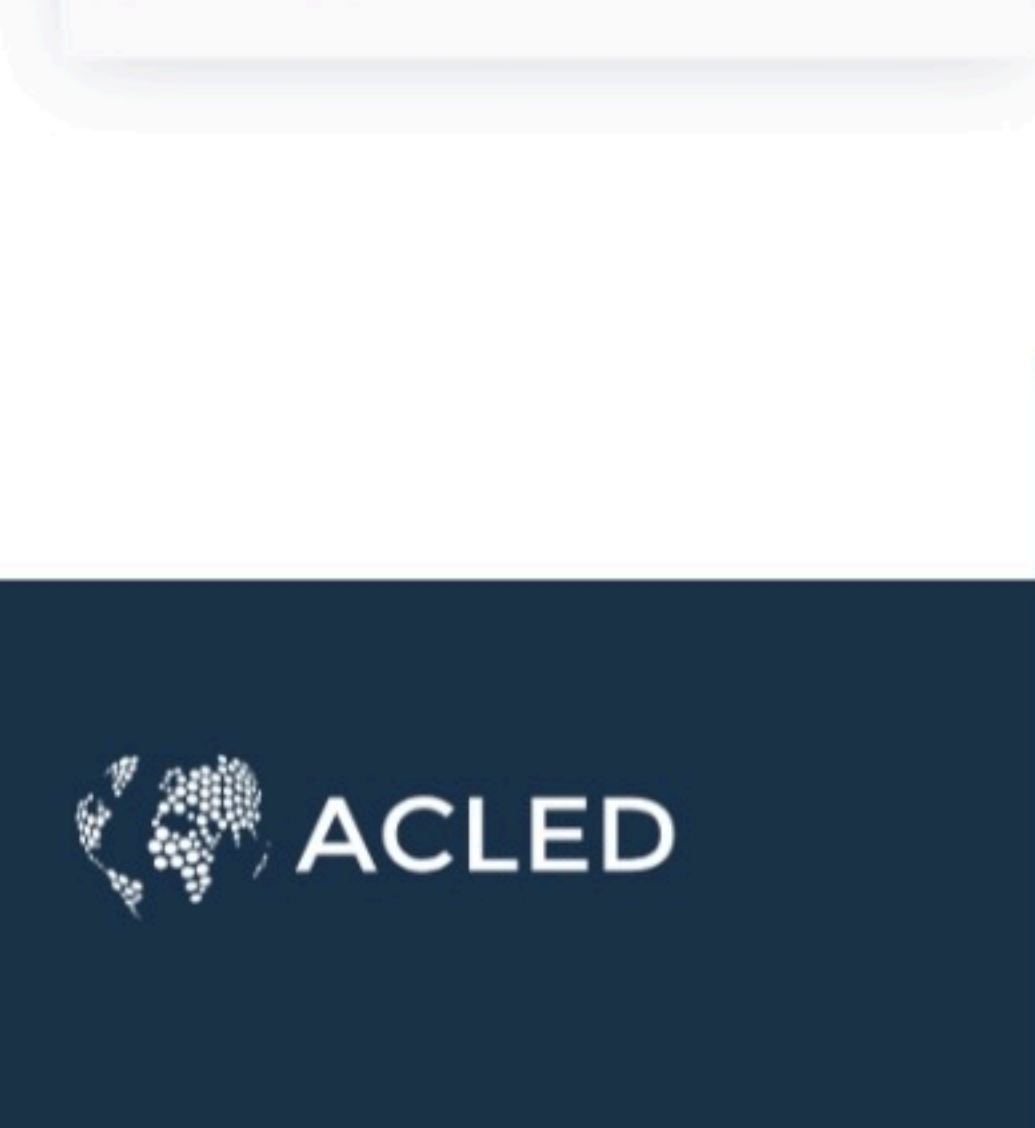
REGIONS

- Africa Conflict in the Horn of Africa Conflict in the Sahel

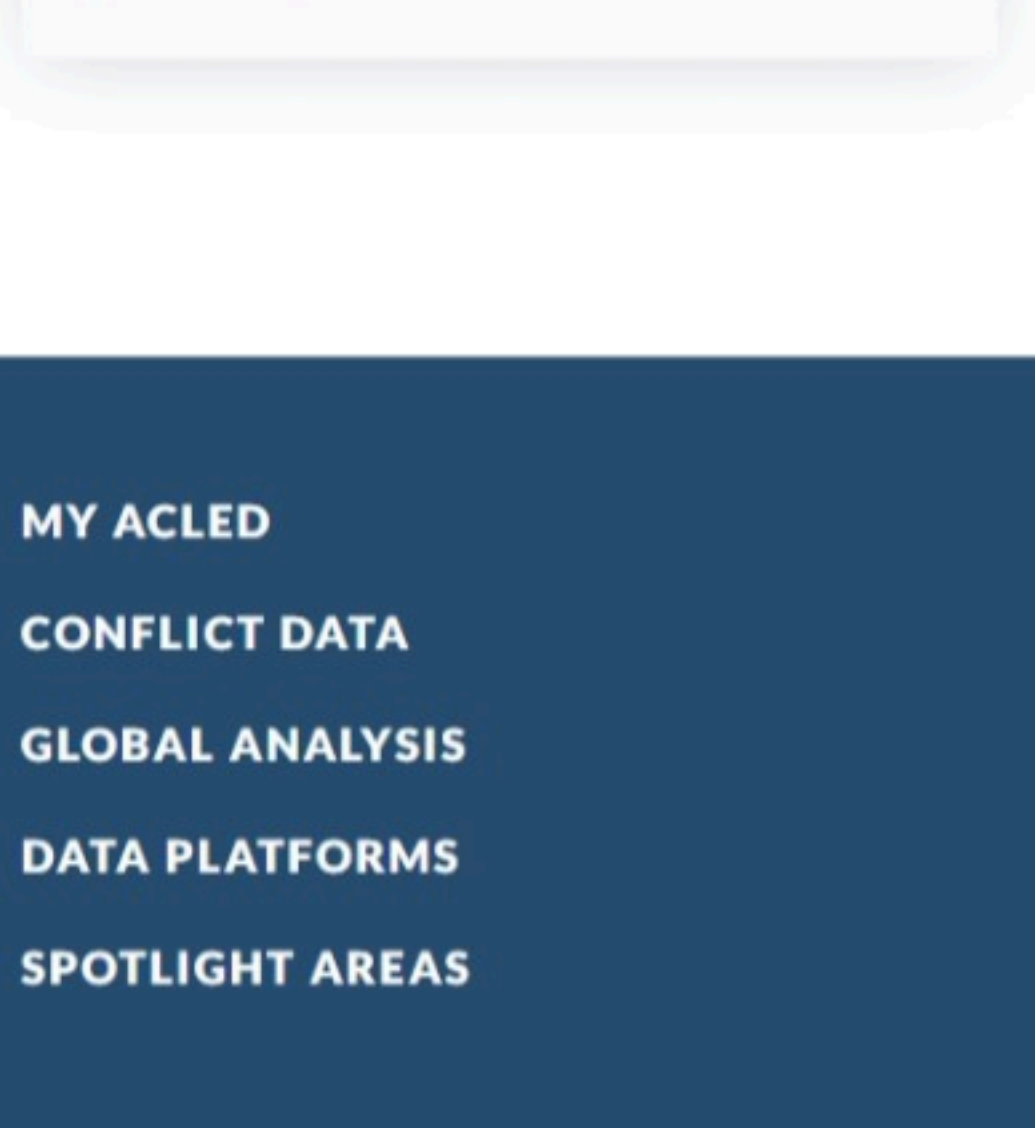
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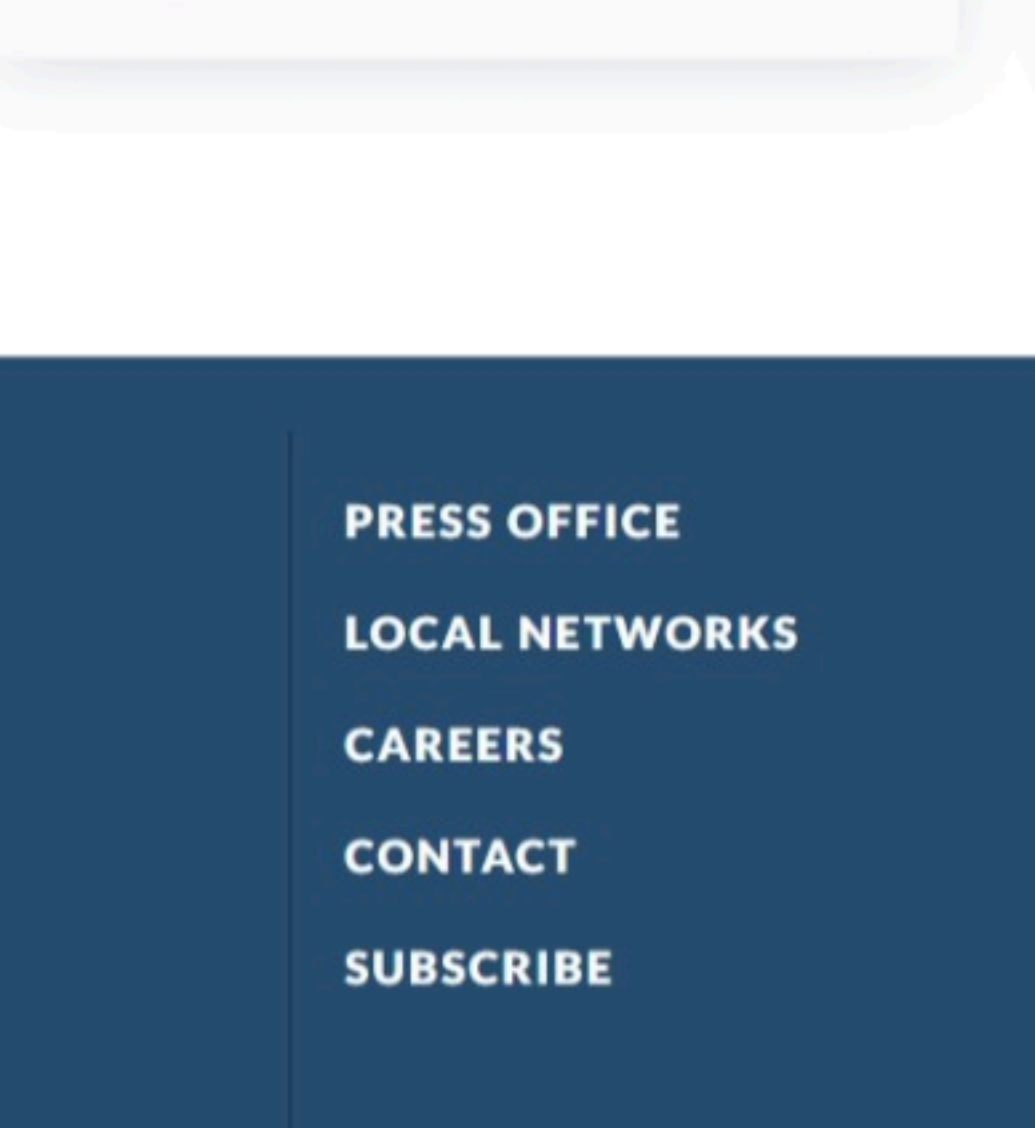
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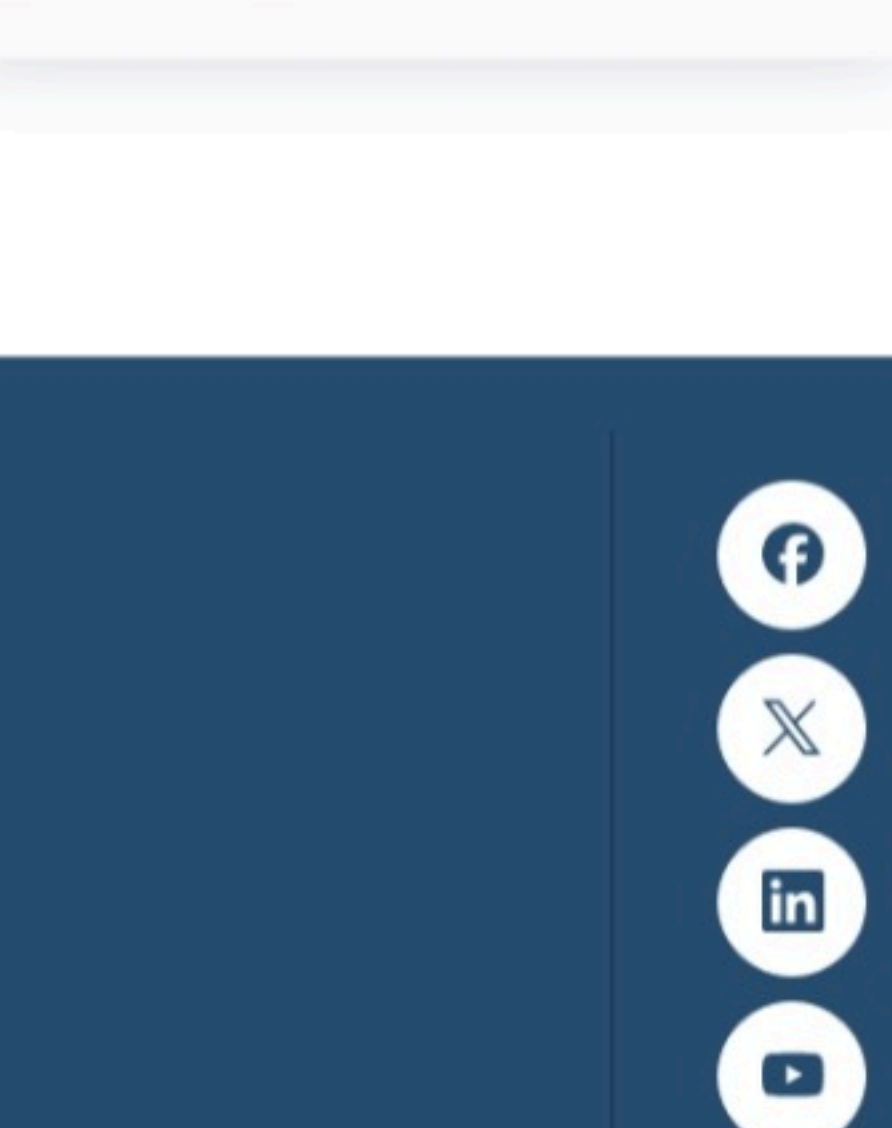
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