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MONTHLY REGIONAL UPDATES UPDATE

Africa Overview: October 2025

Insurgent violence rose in Nigeria’s Borno state, the US’ first recorded drone strike in the Sanaag region of Somalia killed an elder, and in Sudan the RSF made gains in El Fasher.

3 October 2025

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Africa: September 2025

Political Violence | Demonstrations

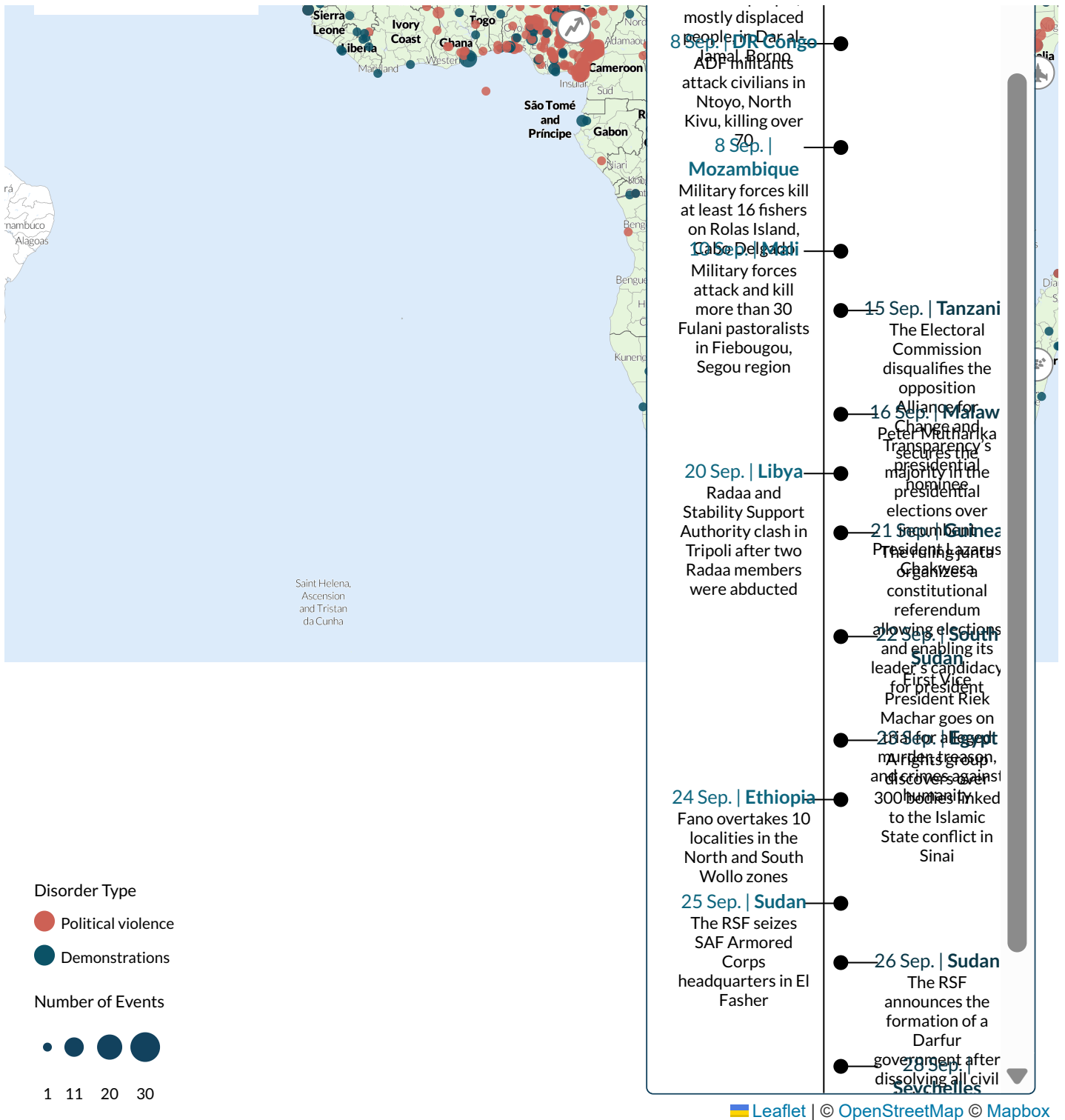
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Key Developments
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- 2 Sep. | Somalia Violent & Military Events
- Demonstrations & Strategic Developments
- 5 Sep. | Nigeria Boko Haram (IAC) in the Borno state killed at least 63 people.



Democratic Republic of the Congo: Battles involving ISCAP spike

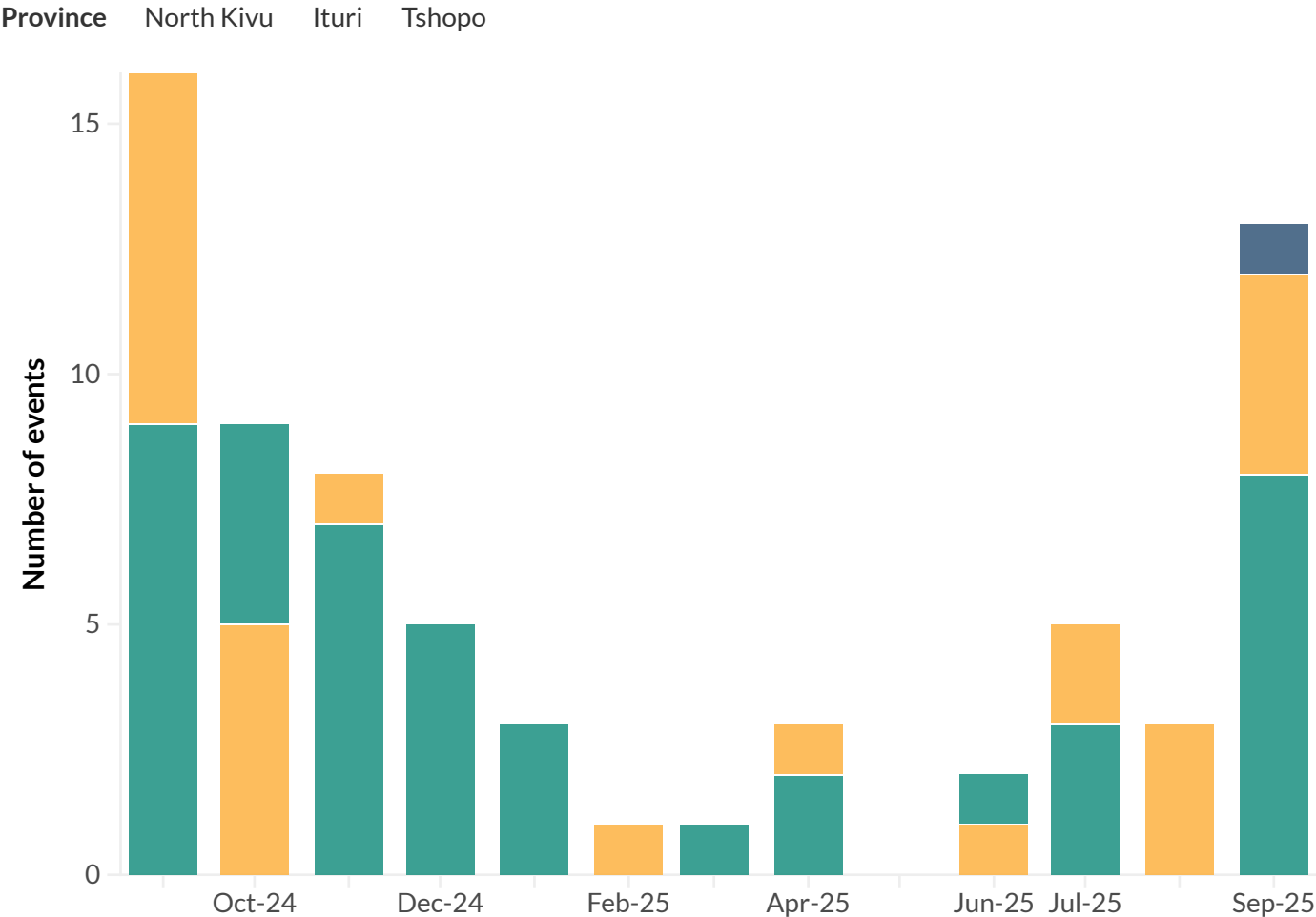
The traditionally battle-shy [Islamic State Central Africa Province \(ISCAP\)](#) – also commonly called the Allied Defense Forces (ADF) – engaged in an increasing number of armed clashes with state forces and other armed groups in September, the most since September 2024. While the majority of these battles involved confrontations with Congolese and Ugandan military forces under bilateral cooperation through Operation Shujaa, several confrontations also took place against

armed members of local communities. The increasing involvement of local communities in self-defense follows communications from Congolese officials in 2024 that noted the Congolese military (FARDC) lacked capacity and encouraged other armed groups to fill the security vacuum left due to the FARDC’s occupation with the [March 23 Movement \(M23\)](#) and [Rwanda Defence Force violence](#).¹

The majority of violence involving ISCAP took place in North Kivu, but one of these clashes took place as far west as the Bafwasende territory of Tshopo province – an area of infrequent ISCAP operations – when ISCAP fought a local Mayi-Mayi militia on 20 September in Kokoto. Islamic State media outlets claimed the attack and reported that the militants killed five Mayi-Mayi militants, injured others, and were involved in increasing violence in North Kivu province, where they launched numerous attacks on civilians.

Battles involving the Islamic State’s Central Africa Province

1 September 2024 – 26 September 2025



Madagascar: Youth-led demonstrations jump-start governmental changes

In September, demonstrations spiked in Madagascar over deteriorating living conditions, including water and power shortages, eventually leading President Andry Rajoelina to dissolve the government. Mass demonstrations, accompanied by looting, property destruction, attacks on politicians' houses,² and the subsequent violent response by security forces began on 25 September and resulted in more than 20 reported deaths and dozens of injuries by the end of the month.³ Unrest was especially concentrated in the country's capital, Antananarivo, but was also recorded in seven other regions of the country. The youth-led movement drew inspiration from recent events in Nepal and has similarly adopted the One Piece anime-inspired skull and crossbones flag with a straw hat as a symbol for the movement.⁴ Demonstrations in September reached similar levels to [October 2023](#), when protests called for Rajoelina's disqualification from the presidential elections.

In addition to dissolving the government, Rajoelina dismissed the minister of energy and hydrocarbons,⁵ called for prime minister applications, and asked for further dialogue with the population.⁶ However, the movement continued to gain momentum, with collectives such as "We will not compromise" (called Tsy manaiky lembenana) and "Fed up with power rationing" (Leo délestage) calling for further demonstrations. The protests have been driven largely by young people demanding better access to water and electricity.

Mali: Violence surges amid a JNIM-imposed fuel blockade on Nioro du Sahel and Kayes

In early September, the al-Qaeda affiliated [Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin \(JNIM\)](#) imposed a blockade on Kayes and Nioro du Sahel in the Kayes region.⁷ The group announced an embargo on fuel and commercial transportation and targeted road users failing to adhere to the blockade. It also attacked or abducted dozens of civilians and transporters, among them six Senegalese drivers.⁸ As a result, political violence in Kayes surged to the highest level since ACLED began recording data in 1997.

As part of the blockade in Mali's western Kayes region, JNIM also launched a campaign of coordinated attacks across the Koulikoro, Segou, and Sikasso regions, primarily along the main transportation corridors linking the cities of Kayes and Sikasso with the capital of Bamako. Fuel convoys, including those under military escort, were particularly targeted. Notably, militants ambushed a convoy of more than 100 fuel trucks on 14 September, reportedly killing or capturing several soldiers and setting fire to 51 vehicles. JNIM later released images of the destroyed trucks and seized weapons, reiterating its threats against any transport activity linked to the state.

The government responded with a wave of airstrikes and helicopter raids in Diema, Nioro du Sahel, Madina, and Kita. Military forces also increased patrols along the affected roads and claimed to have killed dozens of militants. The effects of the embargo are already being felt far beyond Kayes.

Fuel shortages and sharp price hikes have been reported in central and southern Mali, including Mopti,⁹ Kayes, Koulikoro, Segou, Sikasso,¹⁰ and Bamako.¹¹

Nigeria: Deadly insurgent violence in Borno state increases

On 5 September, Islamist insurgents launched a deadly ambush on a military base in Dar al-Jamal, near the Nigeria-Cameroon border, killing at least 63 people – mostly civilians, alongside five soldiers. The attack sparked a widespread military response across Borno state and led to increasingly fatal violence last month, with at least 250 reported fatalities across the state. The military intensified aerial and ground operations, targeting insurgent positions and pursuing the Ali Ngulde faction of Boko Haram into the Sambisa Forest reserve and Mandara mountains. The latter, which straddles the Cameroonian border, provides insurgents with cross-border mobility to evade confrontation, while the Sambisa Forest's dense, protected terrain has long served as a strategic base for Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) and Boko Haram operations, including as a base for ambushes against security forces and civilians, along with a corridor for smuggling across the region.

In addition to the base in Dar al-Jamal, ISWAP [continued a string of attacks against military bases and outposts](#), including a coordinated offensive against Kumshe and Banki military bases. So far in 2025, ISWAP and Boko Haram have carried out over 20 attempted ambushes against military bases and camps in Borno state, which have permitted the insurgents to loot military supplies and triggered the displacement of numerous locals across the border to Cameroon.

Somalia: First American drone strikes recorded in the new Northeastern state

In September, Somali security forces and the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) carried out a campaign of targeted strikes in Sanaag, Lower Shabelle, Galgaduud, and Hiraaan that reportedly killed several senior al-Shabaab members. Notably, on 9 September, the Somali government confirmed the death of senior al-Shabaab militant Mohamed Abdi Dhiblaawe Afrah in a Lower Shabelle airstrike. Afrah was accused of masterminding the 18 March roadside bombing that targeted President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's convoy en route to the airport at Ceel-gaabta junction in Mogadishu.¹² On 24 September, three members of al-Shabaab, including a senior leader accused of planning attacks in Middle Shabelle and Hiraaan, were also killed in a drone strike conducted by the international forces in coordination with the Somali government in Moqokori.¹³

A US airstrike on 13 September in the newly formed Northeastern state sparked controversy after it killed three people, including a respected Darod-Warsangali elder, his driver, and another person. This was the first recorded US strike in the Sanaag region. Local residents and the new

administration claimed the elder was misidentified, while AFRICOM maintained the strike eliminated an al-Shabaab weapons dealer without disclosing a name.¹⁴ Al-Shabaab rejected the US claim and stated no connection with the elder.¹⁵ Protests against the killing erupted on 15 September in Ceel Buh and Badhan villages in Sanaag, where residents blocked roads with burning tires and stones.

The Northeastern state, which encompasses the Sool, Sanaag, and Cayn regions, was officially established on 31 August following the election of its leadership.¹⁶ Both Somaliland and Puntland reject its legitimacy.¹⁷ Somaliland has been [engaged in fighting local militias since January 2023](#) and claims sovereignty over the regions, while Puntland insists Sanaag and Cayn's capital, Buuhoodle, falls under its control. Military mobilizations in and around the new state by both Somaliland and Puntland were observed in September, heightening the tensions.¹⁸

Sudan: A fight for control in Darfur and Kordofan

Heavy clashes occurred between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in the contested states of North Darfur and North Kordofan. The RSF made notable gains in El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur, which has been [facing an RSF siege for over a year](#). On 18 September, the RSF briefly captured the base of the Darfur Joint Forces — the SAF's ally — after heavy fighting against the SAF, the Joint Forces, and the Sudanese Popular Resistance. The SAF's drone and artillery strikes forced their withdrawal. A week later, on 25 September, the RSF overtook the SAF Armored Corps headquarters after clashing with the SAF and its allies in El Fasher.

Amid the fighting, RSF strikes and shelling on civilian targets resulted in several high-fatality incidents. On 1 September, RSF artillery shelling killed between 18 and 27 civilians and injured at least 70 more. On 19 September, RSF drone strikes hit a mosque in al-Daraja al-Ula, killing between 30 and 84 worshipers, including the head of the native administrations of the Abu Shouk internally displaced persons camp and the Dar Sowoni. As the conflict intensified in mid-September, the United Nations International Organization for Migration reported that around 7,500 people had been displaced from Abu Shouk in the north of El Fasher and the city itself between 17 and 19 September.¹⁹

In North Kordofan, fighting escalated amid an SAF push into the state. The state, a key corridor linking Darfur with central and southern Sudan that the SAF is pushing to capture, recorded in September the highest number of battle events since the conflict started in April 2023. The RSF redeployed reinforcements in North Kordofan from Darfur and West Kordofan to defend its positions.²⁰ On 11 September, SAF troops gained control of Bara, a strategic city along a vital supply route connecting western Sudan with Omdurman in Khartoum. Following this advance, RSF convoys with dozens of vehicles were reported in Jirejikh, Um Dayoga, and Sarraj villages north of Bara, signaling further escalation. The conflict continued throughout the month as both conflicting

parties fought to control strategic locations in the state, notably around the capital, El Obeid. Both sides gained control of various locations.

Footnotes

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- 17 [Hiiraan, "Puntland VP warns Somalia risks return to 1991-style collapse," 22 September 2025](#)
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- 19 [Reliefweb, "DTM Sudan Flash Alert: Al Fasher \(Al Fasher Town\), North Darfur \(Update 096\): 21 September 2025," 22 September 2025](#)
- 20 [Sudan Tribune, "Heavy fighting rocks Sudan's Kordofan as army advances, RSF reinforces," 15 September 2025](#)

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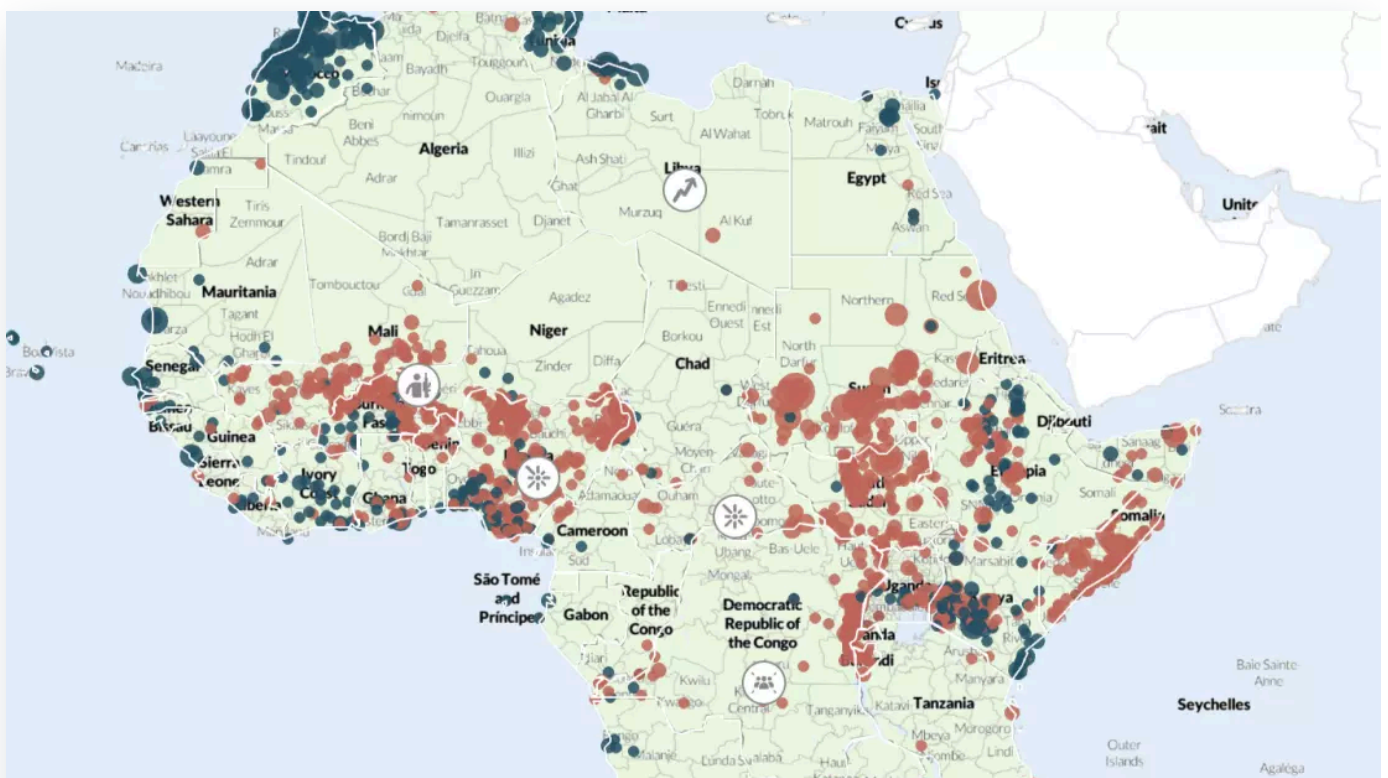
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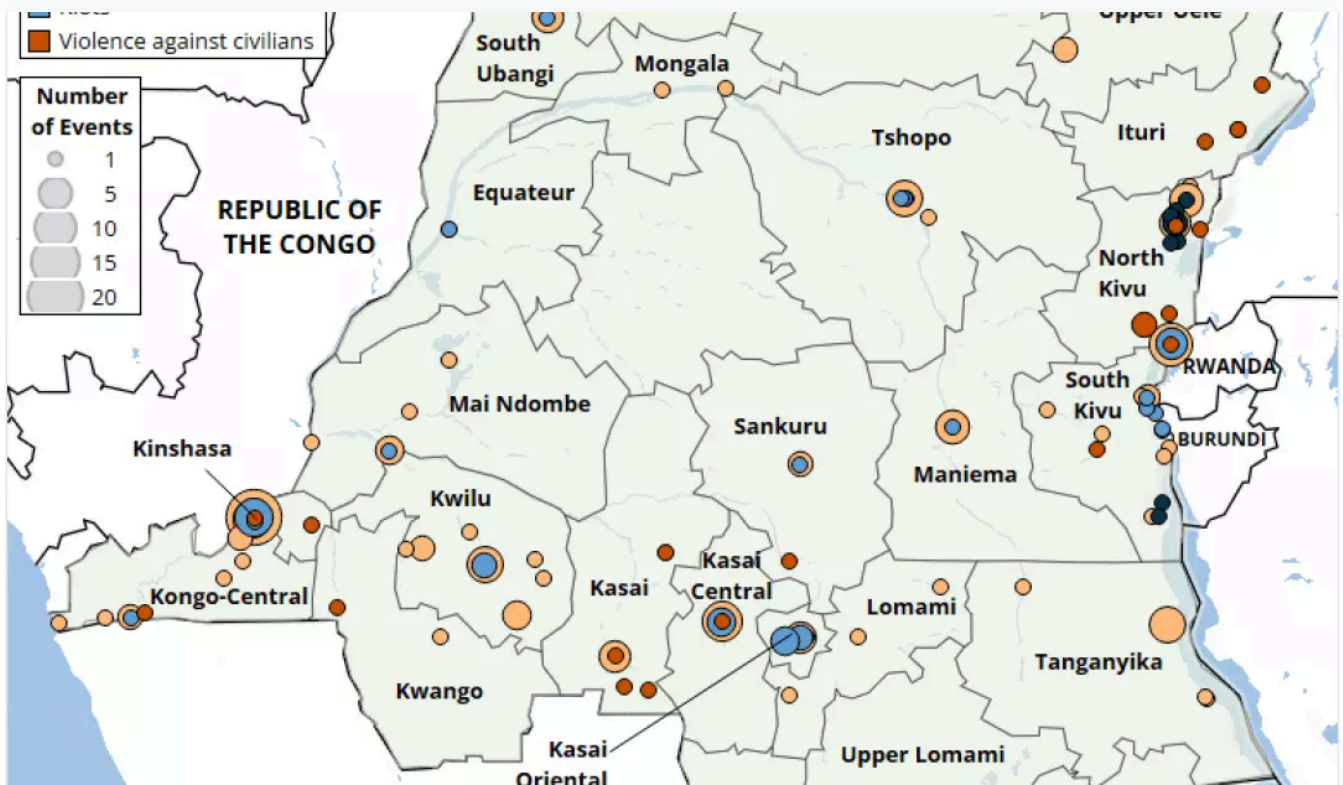
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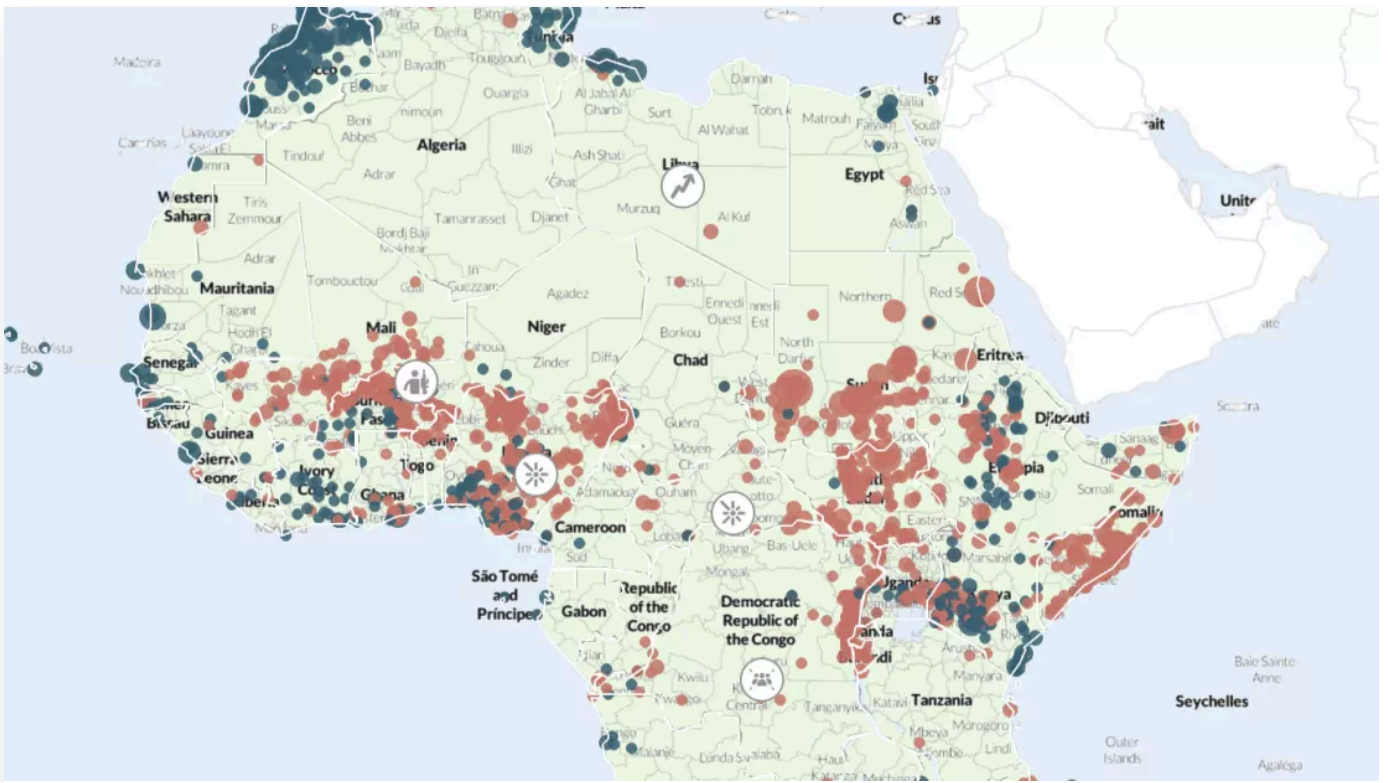
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