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The ADF shifted its attention to the northern DRC, tensions simmer in Ethiopia amid clashes in the Amhara region, and unprecedented offensives rocked Mali.

Authors

Key Developments

The ADF kills between 40 and 70 civilians and burns areas of Bafwakoia

Suspected Boko Haram militants abduct 28 civilians in Kakaye Kirite and Boltoua

Hundreds of protesters demand justice in Bissau after the killing of a civil society activist

President Paul Biya appoints his son as vice president, head of the armed forces, and defense minister

Military forces meet with the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) in Tripoli to strengthen security cooperation

The Wagner Group and allies clash with Taaisha and al-Falata ethnic militias in Karkar town, killing nine people

The Odonget and Esabang communities clash in Obubra, killing at least 61 people

Police arrest 75 Sudanese police and military officers in Ndjamenia

Incumbent President Ismail Omar Guelleh wins the presidential elections with 97.8% of the vote

Major General al-Nour al-Qubba defects from the Rapid Support Forces to join the SAF

Finance Minister Romuald Wadagni secures 94% of the vote to win the presidential elections

Police intervene against hundreds of students protesting in Monrovia demanding economic and governance reforms

The Polisario Front attacks Moroccan forces in the Mahbes area, claiming significant damage

The army regains the Wunkur area of Tonga Payam after clashes with the SPLM/A-IO opposition forces

The TDF and Agew Shengo militias take over Nirak town in Abergele after clashes with security forces

JNIM kills Defense Minister Sadio Camara in a suicide car bomb attack in Kati

Democratic Republic of Congo: The ADF moves northward to Haut-Uele province

For the first time since the Islamic State recognized the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) as an affiliate in 2019, 1 the ADF carried out violence in the northern province of Haut-Uele. The violence began on 30 April in Suka na Mboka, about 50 kilometers north of the border with Ituri, when the ADF clashed with Congolese military forces, displacing numerous civilians. The Islamic State's Amaq outlet claimed the violence continued into early May, reporting this as a strategic operational expansion of the group and a new security challenge for joint Ugandan and Congolese forces.

While the ADF had previously operated in Haut-Uele province, ACLED data show the group has not carried out violence this far north in 15 years. Pressure from Congolese and Ugandan military forces has been pushing the group steadily toward Haut-Uele along the RP430 road since the start of 2026. The shift represents a significant development for Haut-Uele, which tends to be more stable than the restive provinces of Ituri, North Kivu, and South Kivu, and includes the lucrative Kibali gold mine, one of the largest gold mines in Africa. 2 As the ADF begins operating in Haut-Uele, miners will likely come under increasing threat from the ADF, which has been controlling and taxing mining operations in Ituri and North Kivu.

Ethiopia: The TDF clash with security forces in Amhara region

The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)-led Tigray Defense Forces (TDF) and Agew Shengo militias clashed with the Ethiopian National Defense Forces, Amhara regional riot police, and kebele militias in Nirak town in Wag Hamra zone of Amhara region from 20 to 26 April. On 22 April, the TDF and Agew Shengo militias seized control of the town, abducted more than 40 civil servants and local administration leaders, and looted public and private properties. To regain control, security forces used drone strikes alongside ground operations against the TDF and Agew Shengo between 23 and 26 April, but failed to retake the town.

These clashes come amid escalating tensions between the federal government and the TPLF. Following a decision announced on 19 April, the TPLF reinstated Tigray's 2020 regional government on 5 May — the same government that was in place at the outbreak of the northern Ethiopian war, and which was dissolved following the signing of the Pretoria peace agreement in November 2022. The TPLF elected its chair, Debretsion Gebremichael, as the regional government president, parallel to the federally recognized interim regional administration. 3 The move violates the Pretoria agreement, defying the federal government's latest extension on 8 April of the interim regional administration headed by Tadesse Wered.

Mali: JNIM and FLA recapture Kidal in coordinated large-scale offensive

Last month, Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) and the Azawad Liberation Front (FLA) launched an unprecedented, coordinated nationwide offensive targeting Bamako, Kati, Kidal, Gao, Sevare, and Mopti. During the offensive, the JNIM and FLA alliance recaptured Kidal from the Africa Corps and the Malian military. This loss represents a major strategic and symbolic setback for the regime and its Russian partners, especially since the military and Wagner Group's recapture of Kidal in November 2023 was the centerpiece of the regime's narrative of reclaiming lost territory.

In addition to retaking Kidal, the offensive forced withdrawals from most of the Kidal region and parts of the Gao region. Reports of Malian soldiers surrendering and the Africa Corps negotiating safe corridors for evacuation, along with the killing of Defense Minister Sadio Camara by a suicide car bomb in Kati, illustrate declining morale, failed regime protection, and a partial collapse of Malian military presence in several strategic locations.

Following the offensive, JNIM announced a blockade on Bamako to further intensify pressure on the regime. In response, Bamako is expected to concentrate forces and prioritize securing the capital and Gao — northern Mali's largest city and military hub — while conceding territory in the periphery. While Africa Corps forces likely prevented a more rapid collapse of the regime, the Malian regime's future remains uncertain and is closely tied to Russia's military presence, which is essential to regime survival.

Mozambique, Tanzania, and the DRC: Twenty die in witchcraft-sparked mob violence

At least 19 people were killed in April in Mozambique and Tanzania in outbreaks of mob violence related to witchcraft allegations. In each case, the violence was sparked by accusations by men that their genitals had disappeared or shrunk after being touched by another, often on the shoulder. The phenomenon has been seen across East Africa, with isolated incidents recorded in Burundi, DRC, and Zambia.

In Tanzania, the killings started on 2 April in Tunduma town on the Zambia border, when five people were killed in one incident. The police's response was rapid, characterizing such behavior as driven by "superstition and mob emotions" as well as misinformation.⁴ The last recorded incident in Tanzania was on 10 April. However, killings continued in DRC, where one person was killed in Goma on 19 April, and in Mozambique, where at least 12 men were killed between 20 and 27 April.

Belief in the supernatural is widespread in East Africa, and is at times a significant aspect of civil unrest, particularly when combined with misinformation and potential disinformation. Attacks on public health workers addressing cholera outbreaks are common in northern Mozambique. Driven by a mix of supernatural belief, political alienation, and distrust of the state, people sometimes claim that cholera treatment is a deliberate attempt by elites to kill them.⁵ Such attacks hindered public health activities in Mozambique in March, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).⁶

Nigeria: Attacks against civilians highlight rising insecurity in Plateau state

On 9 April, suspected Fulani pastoralists attacked a village in the Kwatas ward in Bokkos, killing at least 20 people during an attack that lasted for several hours with no response from security forces. The incident is representative of the rising insecurity in the Plateau state, where attacks against civilians represent almost 60% of violence incidents in April. Moreover, these attacks happened despite calls for more security intervention after a Palm Sunday attack in Plateau's capital city of Jos that left at least 33 people dead. 7

In April, ACLED records the highest number of political violence incidents in the state since ACLED began coverage in 1997. While intercommunal farmer and herder violence has long plagued Plateau state, 8 the April uptick in violent activity in the state's northernmost LGAs hints at a possible more significant spillover of banditry activities from neighboring Kaduna state, where banditry activity is pervasive. 9

In 2025, political violence in Plateau rose more than 70% compared to 2024, as Plateau state officials recruited more than 1,400 new fighters at the end of the year. The new recruits joined Operation Rainbow, a local security force of hunters and local self-defense militants formed in 2010. 10 Fulani communities fear that the new security outfit may target suspected collaborators of bandits based on ethnic profiling. Further, the formation of local militias will likely result in more civilians targeted during raids by bandits, as all civilians may be suspected Operation Rainbow militants.

South Africa: Tensions against irregular migration continue

In late April, the March and March (MAM) movement, backed by Operation Dudula and ActionSA, held demonstrations in Pretoria and Johannesburg against irregular migration. 11 Protesters called for tighter border controls, mass deportations, job and business protections for citizens, stricter regulation of foreign-run shops, and asylum reforms. 12 These demands reflect enduring economic strain in South Africa, where unemployment stands at 31% (over 40% among youth) and utility costs have risen sharply since 2020. 13 Since 2018, ACLED has recorded at least 218 fatalities in attacks on migrants — committed by either state forces, rioters, or unidentified perpetrators.

These demonstrations come at a time when migration policy is increasingly becoming the focus of political competition, in South Africa and across the globe. Multiple political parties have pushed anti-irregular migration platforms, including ActionSA, Patriotic Alliance, Democratic Alliance, and uMkhonto weSizwe Party, with some African National Congress party leadership also adopting more restrictive rhetoric, linking irregular migration to crime and unemployment. 14 At the same time, South Africa's migration policy is shifting toward security-focused measures, including reforms to limit asylum claims and tighten residency rules. 15 These changes occur alongside administrative backlogs, changes in visas, and corruption that hinder migrants' efforts to secure legal status. With local elections approaching in November, anti-immigration rhetoric in campaigns could intensify risks for foreign nationals.

