



Daily

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MAX - AFRICA Region Daily Summary - February 16, 2021

The following report reviews current events in the AFRICA region and their possible effect on business continuity and security.

Highlights of the Day

- **DRC:** President Felix Tshisekedi appoints Jean-Michel Sama Lukonde as new Prime Minister on February 15; continued efforts to sideline Kabila
- **Ethiopia & Sudan:** Sudanese Foreign Ministry condemns 'Ethiopian aggression' on February 14; persistent border tension
- **Mali:** PM meets with representatives of political parties as per February 15 reports; to improve interim government's inclusive credentials
- **Rwanda:** Authorities arrest civil society activist Yvonne Idamange in Kigali on February 15; highlights repressive government outlook
- **Sahel:** Chad deploys 1,200 troops to tri-border area between Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso on February 15; unlikely to improve security landscape

Actionable Items

Zimbabwe: President extends national lockdown until March 1; practice increased health precautions

Reports indicate that President Emmerson Mnangagwa extended the national lockdown on February 15 to limit the spread of COVID-19 infection. All departing and arriving travelers have to present a negative COVID-19 PCR test taken at most 48 hours before arrival. All arriving passengers are subjected to strict screening procedures including a mandatory 14-day quarantine. Authorities may seize passports and travel documents for the duration of the quarantine. Travelers are required to provide information that will allow them to be tracked for purposes of contact tracing. Face masks are mandatory in public. There is a nationwide nighttime curfew from 20:00 to 05:30 (local time). Regular business takes place from 08:00 to 17:00 (local time). Only essential services such as pharmacies, hospitals, and supermarkets will be allowed to operate, with only reduced staff allowed to work. These services may only operate between 08:00 and 17:00 (local

time). Zimbabwe has registered 35,222 total cases, out of which 3,053 cases are active and 1,410 deaths have been reported so far.

Those operating or residing in Zimbabwe over the coming weeks are advised to practice increased health precautions due to potential exposure to coronavirus and remain cognizant of authorities' instructions regarding restrictions, quarantines, and health procedures.

Notable Events

Cameroon: Villagers rescue abducted traditional leader following raid on separatist camp in Fundong, Northwest Region on February 14; likely to recur

Reports indicate that Fon Clement Ndi II was kidnapped by separatists for allowing to be guarded by government personnel and visiting the Mayor of Fundong. A crowd of the Kom community reportedly stormed the camp, and separatists released the leader on the condition that he would cease all collaboration with government troops and authorities.

This incident highlights the continuous targeting of traditional leaders as it follows the killing of three traditional rulers by Anglophone separatists in the Lebialem Department of South West Region on February 13. In fact, separatists target rulers who are believed to be cooperating with government entities or who wish to take part in the country's administration. Moreover, it is quite notable that the Kom community raided the separatists' camp to free their leader, as civilians only occasionally fight the separatists. Further, that separatists agreed to release Fon Clement Ndi II is significant and suggests that they likely wanted to avoid clashing with the community. Nevertheless, anglophone separatists are expected to continue targeting and abducting traditional leaders in the near future.

DRC: President Felix Tshisekedi appoints Jean-Michel Sama Lukonde as new Prime Minister on February 15; continued efforts to sideline Kabila

Reports cited the appointed PM, who expressed his intention to reduce the size of the government and to include more youths and women. Lukonde also reportedly stated that one of the new government's priorities will be curbing insecurity in eastern DRC and Haut-Katanga Province.

Lukonde, 43, resigned in 2015 after serving as Minister of Youth under ex-President Joseph Kabila and was appointed by President Tshisekedi as the General-Manager of the state-owned General of Quarries and Mines (Gecamines) in 2019. This measure comes after the former PM, affiliated with Kabila, was forced to resign and it reflects President Tshisekedi's continued efforts to sideline his political rival Kabila. To that end, Lukonde's appointment and the expected new formation of the government with large youth and women influence is likely designed by President Tshisekedi to create a more convenient executive authority that would facilitate the implementation of his policies. The government is also expected to enjoy wide support in the legislative from the Tshisekedi-affiliated "Sacred Union" bloc. Moving forward, the official formation of the new

government is expected over the coming days.

Ethiopia & Sudan: Sudanese Foreign Ministry condemns ‘Ethiopian aggression’ on February 14; persistent border tension

Reports citing an official press release indicate that Sudan did not specify the immediate trigger for the accusation that Ethiopia is violating Sudanese sovereignty. Sudan also reportedly described these violations as an escalation and warned of possible dangerous repercussions. Meanwhile, Ethiopia reportedly welcomed the offer by South Sudan to mediate between the disputed sides.

This follows unconfirmed reports in recent days suggesting that Ethiopia deployed additional troops to the border region and that the Sudanese military regained control over five unspecified areas near al-Fashaga, al-Qadarif State. While the Sudanese statement did not specify the exact trigger, it was likely motivated by a reported Ethiopian ambush on a Sudanese reconnaissance mission on Jebel Halawa, located between Sudan’s Sennar and al-Qadarif states, on February 8. The Sudanese accusations regarding Ethiopian violations are indicative of the entrenched military tensions and the terse statements represent a potential for further limited military escalation. In light of this, the South Sudanese mediation initiative is unlikely to have a significant impact, and further cross-border clashes are poised to recur over the coming days and weeks.

Mali: PM meets with representatives of political parties as per February 15 reports; to improve interim government’s inclusive credentials

Reports indicate that PM Moctar Ouane met with the representatives of the June 5 Movement – Rally of Patriotic Forces (M5-RFP), along with representatives from political parties to discuss political and institutional reforms. Separately, the National Council of Civil Society (CNSC) organization denounced the exclusion of civil society and political parties from the transitional process.

This meeting is notable given that the interim government has sidelined political parties and civil society organizations in the transitional process. Therefore, it was likely held to bolster the interim government’s inclusive credentials and hedge against criticism of the military-dominated nature of the transition as observed with the CNSC’s criticism. The M5-RFP has been particularly critical of its exclusion from the transitional process and therefore its participation can likely be linked to a desire to increase its role in the transition and shape future political and electoral institutions. However, given the outsized role of the military in the transitional process, such political participation is likely to be limited with the military expected to be the main driver of policy and reform prior to the 2022 elections.

Mauritius: Thousands of citizens march in Port Louis to demand general election on February 13; tensions likely to persist

Reports state that the protesters marched to the office of Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth to denounce alleged corruption within the government, as well as an endemic crime and drug problem. The protesters reportedly demanded the resignation of the government and a general election. Sources indicate that the protest transpired peacefully.

This incident denotes rising political tensions in Mauritius due to perceived corruption and a lack of transparency within the government, underscored by the scale of the protest and the fact that this is the second such demonstration in less than a year. This perception is likely exacerbated by the forced resignation of Trade Minister Yogida Sawminaden over an alleged bogus employment case on February 10, following the resignation of Foreign Affairs Minister Nando Bodha in protest over the current state of the government. While it is unlikely that the government will immediately resign in response to the protest, the evident disillusionment with the country's leadership means that tensions are likely to remain high and further demonstrations are likely in the coming months.

Nigeria: At least four killed in suspected herdsmen attack in Ebute Igboro, Yewa North LGA, Ogun State on February 14; likely to recur

Reports indicate that northern states' governors, including that of Zamfara, called on President Muhammadu Buhari to act on inter-ethnic conflicts, and condemned the open grazing policy, which they claim to have fuelled insecurity. Further reports indicate that Buhari guaranteed that the government will act to stop the spread of violence, and called on religious leaders to promote peace among communities.

This attack highlights the entrenched tensions between farmers and herders in the country's southwestern states and comes after six individuals were killed in a Fulani herdsmen attack in Owode Ketu, Ogun State on February 11. Moreover, it denotes the government's inability to deploy adequate security outfits in order to prevent herdsmen from conducting additional attacks. President Buhari's call for decisive action is likely intended to appease the ongoing tensions and resist criticism over his government's perceived failure. In this context, Buhari will likely push for peace agreements to cease hostilities. While this initiative is expected to temporarily diffuse the condemnations, insecurity stemming from entrenched intercommunal tensions is poised to persist, with reciprocal violence taking place in the near future.

Nigeria: At least 20 commuters abducted, three vigilantes killed in Niger States's Rafi LGA on February 14; entrenched insecurity

Reports indicate that unidentified gunmen abducted commuters along the Tegna-Zungeru highway on their way back from a wedding in Rijau Local Government Area (LGA). Three members of a local vigilante group were killed while trying to prevent the abduction.

This follows a similar incident that took place in January when bandits kidnapped 17 people from Shiroro LGA in the state. These latest abductions along the Tegna-Zungeru

highway, which was considered relatively safe, highlight the growing influence of banditry across Niger State, particularly the LGAs bordering the northern states that already suffer from entrenched banditry. The involvement of a local vigilante group notably illustrates the locals' awareness of the increasing security concern due to banditry and the willingness to take up arms to defend themselves. This likely stems from distrust towards the security forces' ability to prevent such violence in light of the general absence of local security presence in rural areas as well as highways. While this incident may prompt a short-termed security operation, banditry incidents can be expected to recur in the state's northern LGAs in the near term.

Rwanda: Authorities arrest civil society activist Yvonne Idamange in Kigali on February 15; highlights repressive government outlook

Reports indicate that authorities arrested Idamange on February 15 and she has been charged with inciting public disorder, resisting lawful arrest, and aggravated assault against a law enforcement officer. She was reportedly arrested for using social media to call for demonstrations against the President, in addition to using the same platforms to criticize the government's management of the COVID-19 pandemic. She also reportedly drew attention to the government's repression of political opposition through her media activity.

The arrest is illustrative of the government's extremely low tolerance of any form of political dissent, aligning with the authorities' strict monitoring and surveillance of media platforms to censor content perceived as damaging government credibility or challenging authority. In this context, Idamange's role as an outspoken critic of the government had become increasingly visible since January through a relatively popular following on social media, and to this point, the response indicates wariness over the potential for Idamange to incite anti-government sentiment. Going forward, the government is likely to maintain legal pressure, and utilize the current case to intimidate other prospective political and civil society opponents.

Sahel: Chad deploys 1,200 troops to tri-border area between Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso on February 15; unlikely to improve security landscape

Reports indicate that the Chadian government deployed 1,200 counter-militancy forces to the tri-border area following calls for a greater military presence during the annual G5 Sahel Summit in N'Djamena. In a statement at the summit on February 15, Chadian President Idris Deby, who now serves as Chair of the G5 Sahel, appealed to regional and Western partners to mobilize additional resources and funding required to bolster security and Sahel Alliance development programs.

The deployment of Chadian forces is notable, especially as the deployment was initially proposed and authorized at the previous G5 Summit in Pau, France in early 2020. The year-long delay in mobilizing Chadian troops was likely due to a combination of resource limitations, bureaucratic issues within the G5 Sahel institution, and Chad's preoccupation with ongoing counter-militancy operations in the Lake Chad Basin Region. While the G5

Sahel may launch new operations in the tri-border area with Chadian assistance, the latest deployment will likely only have a limited, short-term effect as more capable forces like the French Barkhane Operation continue to struggle to contain the militant threat.

Upcoming Notable Dates

February 18, 2021

- **The Gambia:** Independence Day
- **Sierra Leone:** Armed Forces Day

February 21, 2021

- **Zimbabwe:** Robert Mugabe National Youth Day
- **Niger:** Second round of general elections

February 22, 2021

- **Zimbabwe:** Robert Mugabe National Youth Day