

## Central Africa 2021

### Italy's Ambassador to DRC killed in an ambush

Italy's ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Congo, Luca Attanasio, his bodyguard Vitorrio Lacovacci and their driver, Mustafa Milambo were killed on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 near Goma, in North Kivu after their convoy was attacked by an unidentified armed group. Reuters, citing the Virunga National Park, reports the convoy was attacked near the town of Kanyamahoro as part of a kidnap attempt<sup>1</sup>.

The ambush occurred as the convoy was traveling from Goma to visit a WFP school project in Rutshuru. The WFP said the attack occurred on a road that had been cleared previously for travel without security escorts, and it was seeking more information from local officials on the attack<sup>2</sup>. Monday's attack happened in the territory of Nyiragongo, in North Kivu, the same area where two British tourists were briefly kidnapped in 2018, leading to a nine-month closure of the park to tourists<sup>3</sup>. Marie Tumba Nzeza, the minister of foreign affairs, said her government would investigate the attack<sup>4</sup>. Italy's Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio issued a statement expressing his "great dismay and immense sorrow" over the deaths of his compatriots<sup>5</sup>.

### Equatorial Guinea : Bata Explosions

On 7 March, a series of explosions occurred at an armory of the Nkuantoma Gendarmerie and military barracks in Bata (the economic capital of Equatorial Guinea).<sup>6</sup> President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo said that fires on farms neighboring military barracks in the city of Bata had detonated dynamite and other munitions being stored there. He blamed "negligence and carelessness" of the unit in charge of the explosives for the disaster.<sup>7</sup>

On Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021, the country's health ministry said that nearly 100 people have been confirmed dead after the blasts, with 615 people injured.<sup>8</sup>

The president also made clear in the statement that the Equatorial Guinean government will seek international aid to help pay for recovery, citing economic hardship due to the fall in oil prices and the Covid-19 pandemic.<sup>9</sup>

### **Chad: post-electoral tensions**

The Independent National Election Commission (CENI) said on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2021 that Deby won a majority in all, but one of the 51 departments announced so far, and secured a plurality in the other.<sup>10</sup> The results from 61 departments are yet to be counted and announced. However,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.voanews.com/africa/italian-ambassador-democratic-republic-congo-killed-ambush-monday-0>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.africanews.com/2021/02/22/italy-s-ambassador-to-dr-congo-killed-in-attack-on-un-convoy/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://news.sky.com/story/luca-attanasio-italian-ambassador-to-dr-congo-killed-after-convoy-attacked-in-attempted-kidnap-12225881>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/feb/22/italian-ambassador-to-dr-congo-dies-in-attack-un-convoy-luca-attanasio>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.voanews.com/africa/italian-ambassador-democratic-republic-congo-killed-ambush-monday-0>

<sup>6</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/disaster/ac-2021-000020-gnq>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/07/world/africa/equatorial-guinea-explosions.html>

<sup>8</sup> <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/03/09/africa/equatorial-guinea-blasts-death-toll-intl/index.html>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/10/equatorial-guinea-seek-independent-inquiry-blast>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/18/chads-deby-takes-early-election-lead-as-rebels-near>

Chadians from abroad did not vote, due to two main reasons. First, the CENI did not set up branches outside the country and the electoral role had not been revised.

Deby, 68, is an ally of Western powers in the fight against armed groups in West and Central Africa. He is one of Africa's longest-serving leaders<sup>11</sup>. Deby has campaigned on a promise of peace and security in a region that has been rocked by jihadi insurgencies. Because of his help in the fight against Islamists in the Sahel, especially in Mali and Niger, the former army chief is held in high esteem in France and by heads of state in the Sahel.<sup>12</sup>

The Front for Change and Concord in Chad (FACT), a Libya-based rebel group is heading towards the capital, according to the UK government. The same group was responsible for an attack on a border post in the north of the country on election day.

"Armed non-governmental groups in northern Chad have moved south and appear to be heading toward N'Djamena," the US Department of State said in a travel alert. "Due to their growing proximity to N'Djamena, and the possibility for violence in the city, non-essential US government employees have been ordered to leave Chad by commercial airline."<sup>13</sup>

Legislative elections – which last took place about 10 years ago – are due after the presidential poll. After several postponements, the date for legislative voting has still not been set. There is a risk that parties that withdrew from the presidential election will refuse to join the legislative race or that parties whose candidates were rejected will be excluded.<sup>14</sup>

### **Niger: Attacks on civilians**

On the 17<sup>th</sup> April 2021, dozens of heavily armed attackers on motorbikes stormed the village of Gaigorou. As a result, at least 19 civilians were killed.

The Tillaberi region is situated on the lawless "three-border" zone where the frontiers of Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso converge and has regularly been the target of armed groups affiliated to the ISIL (ISIS) group<sup>15</sup>. Thirteen people were killed last month when armed men on motorbikes raided

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/18/chads-deby-takes-early-election-lead-as-rebels-near>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.dw.com/en/chad-awaits-presidential-election-result/a-57168317>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/18/chads-deby-takes-early-election-lead-as-rebels-near>

<sup>14</sup> <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/chads-turbulent-presidential-polls-put-democracy-on-the-backburner>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/18/nineteen-civilians-killed-in-new-west-niger-attack>

the villages of Zibane-Koira Zeno, Zibane Koira-Tegui and Gadabo. Attacks against civilians have increased since the beginning of the year — more than 300 people died in three series of attacks in western Niger. No one has claimed responsibility for the attacks so far<sup>16</sup>.

### **Central African Republic: Russian mercenaries accused of rights violations in Central African Republic**

The situation in Central African Republic has been complicated for the past years. Government forces have been trying to fight militia, with the main victims of the conflict being the civilians. Thousands of people have died in the CAR since 2013 and more than a quarter of the population of 4.9 million have fled their homes. Of these, 675,000 are refugees in neighboring countries.<sup>17</sup> The UN has responded by sending almost 12,000 peacekeepers to assist in bringing stability, and support the regular security forces, but the situation remains fragile.<sup>18</sup>

For this reason, the CAR government acquired the services of Russian mercenaries to maintain security<sup>19</sup>. However, in a statement made on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, UN experts reported serious human rights violations, allegedly committed by Russian security companies, including mass summary executions, arbitrary detentions, torture during interrogations, forced disappearances, forced displacement of the civilian population, indiscriminate targeting of civilian facilities, violations of the right to health, and increasing attacks on humanitarian actors.<sup>20</sup>

Russia's Foreign Ministry replied with a statement when DW inquired about the report: "Military specialists from Russia are sent to the country as per the UN Security Council guidelines. «Russian aid is being provided in line with the international community's general efforts to strengthen the Central African Republic's security structures," according to the statement.<sup>21</sup>

### **Chad: Deby's death and subsequent violence**

The army announced on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2021 that President Idriss Deby Itno, 68, died on the frontlines of Chad's battle against rebels. His death came a day after Itno officially won a sixth consecutive term with 79.3% of the vote from the April 11 elections<sup>22</sup>.

Three days later, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April, thousands of Chadians attended the state funeral of President Idriss Déby. The ceremony also saw a military march-past and a speech by Déby's son, Gen Mahamat "Kaka" Déby Itno, who the army has named as the country's new leader. He vowed to "stay loyal to the memory" of his father and pledged to continue the legacy of "dialogue, forgiveness, peace, unity" that the late president was "admired for"<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.trtworld.com/africa/many-civilians-killed-in-fresh-west-niger-attack-46008>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/812881-reports-of-grave-abuses-by-russian-mercenaries-in-central-africa-un-experts>

<sup>18</sup> <https://allafrica.com/view/group/main/main/id/00077547.html>

<sup>19</sup> <https://allafrica.com/view/group/main/main/id/00077547.html>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/SP/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26961&LangID=E>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.dw.com/en/russian-mercenaries-accused-of-rights-violations-in-central-african-republic/a-57201150>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/chads-president-idriss-deby-dies-of-injuries/2214682>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-56857563>

News of his shock death on Tuesday was met with tributes from numerous presidents - France's Emmanuel Macron called him a "brave friend", Cameroon's Paul Biya said he served "tirelessly", DR Congo's Felix Tshisikedi called it a "a great loss for Chad and for all of Africa", Mali's President Bah Ndaw lamented his "brutal" death and South Africa's Cyril Ramaphosa called it "disturbing". President Déby was a key player in security strategy in the Sahel region - and Chad is reputed for having one of the best-trained and best-equipped armies in West Africa, which is battling militants link to both al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group<sup>24</sup>.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of April 2021, Chad's ruling military council rejected an offer from northern rebels for a ceasefire and talks, calling them "outlaws" who needed to be tracked down and arrested for their role in the battlefield death of President Idriss Deby<sup>25</sup>. The rebels, known as the Front for Change and Concord in Chad (FACT), announced on Sunday that they were ready to discuss a political settlement. "FACT is ready to observe a ceasefire for a political settlement that respects the independence and sovereignty of Chad and does not endorse a coup d'état," FACT spokesman Kingabe Ogozeimi de Tapol told Reuters on Sunday<sup>26</sup>.

After Deby's death, a military council headed by his son, Mahamat Idriss Deby, seized power and said it would oversee an 18-month transition to elections. Opposition politicians called this a coup. The rebels said they would not accept a "monarchy" and vowed to march on N'Djamena before meeting resistance.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> April 2021, thousands protested, and two people were killed in Chad Tuesday in demonstrations against the rule of a transitional military council headed by the son of the late President Idriss Deby Itno, who died last week<sup>27</sup>. The opposition coalition called for the demonstrations despite a ban on protests. Police fired tear gas to disperse protesters in Chad's capital, N'Djamena, and there were also demonstrations in other parts of the nation.

Clashes continued on the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021 between Government troops and rebels in a region of western Chad where the late president Idriss Deby was killed earlier in April 2021, according to military officials. Chad has remained tense since Deby's death, with the military saying that six people were killed last week during demonstrations in N'Djamena and the south against what the opposition has branded an "institutional coup d'état". A local non-governmental organization has put the death toll from the demonstrations at nine. More than 650 people were arrested during the protests, which had been banned by the authorities<sup>28</sup>.

France, the former colonial power, initially backed the military transition authorities before calling for the formation of a civilian unity government in the face of protests against the apparent dynastic transfer of power<sup>29</sup>.

## Democratic Republic of Congo: state of siege in the East

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<sup>24</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-56857563>

<sup>25</sup> <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2021-04-26/Chad-military-refuses-talks-with-rebels-ZLDpAZmDsY/index.html>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-chad-deby/chad-military-refuses-talks-with-rebels-as-opposition-presses-for-civilian-rule-idUSKBN2CC057>

<sup>27</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/idriss-deby-ndjamena-africa-france-chad-8a08c0dbfb0107bd478546301adf9f41>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/2/chad-military-council-lifts-curfew-imposed-after-deby-death>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20210430-chad-army-in-fresh-clashes-with-rebels-hundreds-quizzed-over-protests>

Congolese President Felix Tshisekedi on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021 declared a state of siege over the worsening violence in the eastern provinces of Ituri and North Kivu that has killed hundreds this year and displaced more than 1.5 million<sup>30</sup>.

A surge in attacks by armed militias and inter-communal violence in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo have killed over 300 people since the start of the year as government troops and U.N. peacekeepers struggle to stabilize the mineral-rich territory.

Announcing Tshisekedi's decision late on Friday, government spokesman Patrick Muyaya said: "The objective is to swiftly end the insecurity which is killing our fellow citizens in that part of the country on a daily basis."<sup>31</sup>

North-Kivu governor Carly Kasivita thanked the president for a decision which he said, "responds to our expectations", stressing he had repeatedly urged a "national mobilization" to deal with attacks in the Beni region of the province near the Ugandan border which has borne the brunt of local unrest<sup>32</sup>.

### **Cameroon: IEDs and separatists**

Cameroon authorities say anglophone separatists have been increasing their use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), which killed 24 people in the past two weeks. Cameroon's military held an emergency meeting on the issue Monday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

Joseph Beti Assomo, Ministry of defence says as the number of separatist fighters is reducing, the few groups of rebels remaining have resorted to IEDs to fight government troops. Assomo says the military has destroyed many separatist camps, weapons, and fighters, while some have surrendered. He says the military seizes or destroys IEDs on a daily basis, adding that Cameroon's troops will never stop protecting civilians<sup>33</sup>.

Anglophone rebels on social media posts deny that their numbers are dropping and say the IEDs are targeted at the military, to chase them from the western regions<sup>34</sup>.

But, Assomo said at least 24 troops and civilians were killed by IEDs within the past two weeks.

### **DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: EASTERN CONGO MASSACRES**

President Felix Tshisekedi declared a state of siege in Congo's North Kivu and Ituri provinces on May 1 in an attempt to curb increasing attacks by militant groups<sup>35</sup>

Despite these efforts, at least 55 people were killed overnight in two attacks on villages in eastern Congo, the United Nations said on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2021. The army and a local civil rights group blamed the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), an Islamist armed group, for

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<sup>30</sup> <https://www.voanews.com/africa/congo-declares-state-siege-over-eastern-bloodshed>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.africanews.com/2021/05/01/dr-congo-declares-state-of-siege-in-emergency-anti-insurgency-efforts/>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.africanews.com/2021/05/03/state-of-siege-brings-mix-of-hope-uncertainty-to-dr-congo/>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.muhabarishaji.com/cameroon-military-says-rebels-turning-to-ieds-as-numbers-fall-muhabarishaji-news-agency/>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.muhabarishaji.com/cameroon-military-says-rebels-turning-to-ieds-as-numbers-fall-muhabarishaji-news-agency/>

<sup>35</sup> <https://zeenews.india.com/world/at-least-55-killed-in-eastern-congo-massacres-united-nations-2365756.html>

raiding the village of Tchabi and a camp for displaced people near Boga, another village<sup>36</sup>. The ADF is believed to have killed more than 850 people in 2020, according to the United Nations, in a spate of reprisal attacks on civilians after the army began operations against it the year before. In March the United States labelled the ADF a foreign terrorist organisation. The group has in the past proclaimed allegiance to Islamic State, although the United Nations says evidence linking it to other Islamist militant networks is scant<sup>37</sup>. Uganda announced earlier this month that it had agreed to share intelligence and coordinate operations against the rebels but that it would not be deploying troops in Congo.

### CHAD- CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: WAR CRIMES?

On Monday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021, the Chad government accused the Central African Republic (CAR) of killing six of its soldiers in an attack on an outpost in the south of the country<sup>38</sup>.

“The Central African armed forces attacked the outpost of Sourou in Chad on Sunday morning ... killed a Chad soldier, injured five and kidnapped five others who were then executed in Mbang on the Central African Republic side,” Chad’s Foreign Minister Cherif Mahamat Zene said in a statement<sup>39</sup>.

Chad's embassy in the CAR capital of Bangui was told by the head of CAR's military police to collect the bodies of the five soldiers executed by CAR forces, it said in a statement.

CAR's communications minister Ange Kazagui said a firefight had broken out by mistake when CAR troops pursued a rebel group near the Chadian border, resulting in the deaths of troops on both sides.

He said the government in Bangui remained committed to peace with its northern ally and would establish a joint fact-finding mission to investigate the incident<sup>40</sup>. Subsequently, both countries called on the United Nations and African Union to investigate. A delegation

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<sup>36</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/least-50-killed-eastern-congo-massacres-research-group-2021-05-31/>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/7277650/at-least-50-killed-in-dr-congo-massacres/>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20210531-chad-accuses-central-african-republic-of-war-crime-after-attack-on-outpost>

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/31/chad-accuses-car-of-killings-six-of-its-soldiers>

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/chad-accuses-central-african-republic-troops-war-crime-2021-05-31/>

from CAR met with Chad's interim President Mahamat Idriss Deby on Tuesday in response to the incident, which has threatened to sour diplomatic relations.

"The two parties have recognised the gravity of the situation and stress the urgency of clarifying the circumstances in which this attack was carried out," their foreign ministers said in a joint statement late on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021<sup>41</sup>.

### **CAMEROON: USA IMPOSES VISA RESTRICTIONS OVER THE COUNTRY'S SEPARATIST CRISIS**

The United States announced on Monday visa restrictions against "leaders" and "accomplices" of violence in western Cameroon, the scene of a four-year bloody conflict between armed Anglophone groups and the army<sup>42</sup>.

Cameroon's two western Anglophone regions have been gripped by fighting since 2017 as the rebels try to break away from the predominantly Francophone government. More than 3,500 people have died and 700,000 have been displaced in the violence<sup>43</sup>.

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#### **Cameroon: Anglophone separatist 'supporters' in US charged with gun smuggling**

Three US-based Anglophone Cameroonians have been charged with gun running and conspiracy following the seizure of a weapons cache by US authorities. The suspects, some who appear to support the Anglophone separatist movement in their country of origin, could be implicated to supply high-grade weapons and ammunition to fighters battling Cameroonian government forces<sup>44</sup>.

The US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) seized military-grade weapons and military equipment from two shipping containers and two different homes between May and August 2019.

According to the affidavit from an ATF agent, 131 orders from two online gun retailers were shipped to a home in Rosedale, Maryland in the US between March 2018, and March 2019. The large number of items was flagged by ATF, along with other information, leading to a search of the premises.

Tamufor Nchumuluh St Michael, the resident and homeowner, was not present during the search, but turned himself in less than a week later in 2019.

Another defendant in a related case, detailing the same exhibit list of 39 firearms, 45-gun magazines of various calibres and at least 39,000 rounds of ammunition, will go in front of the judge at the end of June.

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<sup>41</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/chad-central-african-republic-call-international-investigation-into-border-2021-06-02/>

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.africanews.com/2021/06/08/u-s-imposes-visa-restrictions-on-perpetrators-of-violence-in-cameroon/>

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/united-states-imposes-visa-restrictions-over-cameroon-separatist-crisis-2021-06-07/>

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.rfi.fr/en/africa/20210618-cameroon-anglophone-separatist-supporters-in-us-charged-with-gun-smuggling>

Edith Ngang, an Anglophone Cameroonian, and naturalised US citizen has also been hit with exporting guns without a license charges and conspiracy.

The third related case of gun running without a license and conspiracy involves Alambi Walters Muma, who identifies as a member of Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC), an Anglophone Cameroonian political organisation.

### **CAMEROON: MILITARY RAIDS SEPARATIST-HELD ROADS**

On Friday 20<sup>th</sup> August 2021, Cameroon said its military has killed seven self-proclaimed separatist generals who blocked traffic for a month on roads in the central African state's English-speaking western regions. The military says during a two-week operation, it recovered 70 vehicles the fighters had seized from civilians and rescued several women and children held hostage in separatist camps<sup>45</sup>.

However, Twenty-four-year-old truck driver Innocent Njikong says it is the sixth time since 2015 that the government is assuring travellers that roads in the North-West region are safe. He says he is very certain that the fighters will not drop their weapons.

"How do you meet and convince them [fighters] when they are still staying outside? They [the military] have burned their [fighters'] houses," Njikong said. "We are pleading to the government, let them [the military] drop their guns. We need to sacrifice to bring peace." Njikong said by sacrifice, he means that the government should declare a cease-fire<sup>46</sup>.

### **CHAD AND SUDAN AGREE TO BOOST SECURITY, FIGHT CROSS-BORDER TERROR THREATS**

On 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021, Africanews website reported that The Chairman of the Chadian Transitional Military council Mohammed Idriss Derby Monday visited Sudan in a bid to solicit regional support in rebuilding the north-central Africa African state.

In a statement, Derby said his visit was also meant to strengthen the cooperation and relations between Sudan and Chad.

Faced with related security issues, the two countries embraced the integration, concerted efforts, and cooperation with the African Union in the field of border security, the fight against terrorism and the fight against cross-border security violations. Deby further stated that they will intensify efforts to reinforce the

### **CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: RUSSIAN MERCENARIES' PROBLEMS**

An article published on the 21<sup>st</sup> of September 2021 on the website humanglemedia.com reported that Beina Town in the Gamboula sub-prefecture to the west of the Central African Republic has been thrown into shock and anger. This due to the discovery of the lifeless bodies of the President of the

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<sup>45</sup> <https://www.voanews.com/africa/cameroon-military-raids-separatist-held-roads-kill-seven-self-proclaimed-separatist-generals>

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.voanews.com/africa/cameroon-military-raids-separatist-held-roads-kill-seven-self-proclaimed-separatist-generals>

youth movement in the town and three other youths who disappeared since Monday, Sept. 13<sup>47</sup>. Families of the deceased are alleging that they were killed by the Russian mercenaries. “There are no rebels in the Beina center. It was the Russians who have just arrived in the locality with their racketeering. Before the murder of the four, the Russian had earlier killed two youths in the same town,” Marc-Vivien, a close family member of one of the murdered youths said<sup>48</sup>. “The Russians suspected the youths of collaborating with the rebels. Concerning the murder of the president of the Beina youths and his three friends, there is no doubt, it is the Russians who have also assassinated them.<sup>49</sup>”

### **CAMEROON: 8 GOVERNORS OF LAKE CHAD REGION BASIN TO DISCUSS REGIONAL SECURITY**

Eight state governors from the five countries sharing the border with the Lake Chad basin met in Cameroon on Monday, Oct. 4 to discuss issues about regional security cooperation.

Hosted by the Cameroonian Government in collaboration with the Lake Chad Governors’ Forum, the meeting was organised by the Lake Chad Basin Commission, with technical support from the African Union, the United Nations Development Programme, and the Crisis Management Initiative<sup>50</sup>. Cameroonian Prime Minister, Joseph Dion Ngute, declared the meeting open, as participants brainstormed on “security issues with a focus on terror attacks and humanitarian impacts in the region.” Isa Gusau, a spokesman to Zulum, and six governors including governor Zulum from Borno, Issa Lamine of Diffa in the Niger Republic, Midjiyawa Bakari of Far North of Cameroon, Abate Edii Jean from North Region of Cameroon, Mahamat Fadoul Mackaye from Lac Province of Chad, and Amina Kodjyana Agnes – Hadjer Lami also from Chad, as well as Governors of Adamawa and Yobe States in northeast Nigeria, were all in attendance<sup>51</sup>.

The governors and other stakeholders had also “reviewed the implementation of strategies for regional stabilisation, which were adopted in 2019, during a similar meeting in Niamey, Niger Republic<sup>52</sup>.” The Regional Strategy seeks a comprehensive and multi sector with national and cross border effort including collaboration with humanitarian, development, and peace for long term stabilisation.

The executive Secretary of Lake Chad Basin Commission and Head of Mission of the Multinational Joint Task Force Ambassador Mamman Nuhu said the RSS is now available is operational in all eight affected regions that to the support of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and international partners, traditional and religious leaders, and the media<sup>53</sup>.

### **CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC UNILATERAL CEASEFIRE**

Central African Republic President Faustin-Archange Touadera has declared a unilateral cessation of fighting against armed groups on television on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021. “It is to give peace a chance that I am here to announce to you this evening the end of military

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<sup>47</sup> <https://humanglemedia.com/russian-mercenaries-accused-of-killing-beina-youth-president-3-others-in-central-african-republic/>

<sup>48</sup> <https://humanglemedia.com/russian-mercenaries-accused-of-killing-beina-youth-president-3-others-in-central-african-republic/>

<sup>49</sup> <https://humanglemedia.com/russian-mercenaries-accused-of-killing-beina-youth-president-3-others-in-central-african-republic/>

<sup>50</sup> <https://von.gov.ng/2021/10/05/8-governors-meet-in-cameroon-on-lake-chad-security/>

<sup>51</sup> <https://humanglemedia.com/8-governors-of-lake-chad-region-basin-discuss-regional-security-in-cameroon/>

<sup>52</sup> <https://humanglemedia.com/8-governors-of-lake-chad-region-basin-discuss-regional-security-in-cameroon/>

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.crtv.cm/2021/10/lake-chad-basin-governors-forum-on-regional-cooperation-for-stabilisation-recovery-opens/>

operations and all armed action on the whole of the national territory,” said Touadera, stating that the move would take effect at midnight<sup>54</sup>. He strongly defended his decision to ask Russian instructors and Rwandan forces to help counter rebels threatening the government, a move that sparked strong Western opposition<sup>55</sup>. Despite this, the Secretary-General of the UN commended the development, describing it as a “critical step” which is in line with a roadmap for peace adopted in September by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, an intergovernmental organization of 12 African countries. Some leaders of the main rebel alliance, the CPC, have reportedly welcomed the ceasefire<sup>56</sup>.

### CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: RUSSIAN MERCENARIES REPORTEDLY KILLED CIVILIANS

The growing presence of Russian private companies in Africa, especially Mali and CAR has been a hot topic for western countries, which have expressed their concern for human rights violations and uncontrolled violence.

At least 19 civilians were reportedly killed on Sunday, Nov. 14, during an attack by Russian mercenaries on a mining site in the locality of Kouki in the Central African Republic. According to sources which have been corroborated by administrative authorities, shortly before the attack on the mineral site, a patrol of Russian mercenaries fell into an ambush by Sudanese poachers about 20 km from Kouki, resulting in the death of four Russians. “In retaliation, the Russians assaulted the mineral sites in the locality killing at least 19 miners and burning down several houses and shops,” a local source said<sup>57</sup>.

The Russian troops, however, claimed that 19 persons they killed were rebels and their accomplices working in the Kouki mining sites<sup>58</sup>.

### UGANDA AND DRC COOPERATION AGAINST VIOLENT GROUPS IN EASTERN REGION OF DRC

The two eastern provinces of North Kivu and Ituri have been under a “state of siege” since May, in a bid to step up a military offensive against the rebels, with soldiers replacing civil servants in key positions. Despite this measure, the news is still marked by violent events, kidnappings and attacks carried out by rebel and terrorist groups in the region.

A local chief and a civil society leader confirmed the two deaths and said eight other Chinese people were missing after Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2021 attack. They also blamed CODECO, one of an array of armed groups active in the area.

The attack took place in Djugu, in Ituri province, where Chinese nationals have informal gold mining operations. “We confirm that CODECO elements attacked one of our positions in Djugu territory. They also attacked a base of our Chinese brothers, unfortunately killing two of them and kidnapping others,” said Lieutenant Jules Ngongo, spokesman for the army in Ituri<sup>59</sup>. The United Nations says repeated attacks by CODECO have killed hundreds of civilians in Djugu territory since 2017 and forced thousands to flee their homes.

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<sup>54</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/15/central-african-republic-declares-unilateral-ceasefire-with-rebels>

<sup>55</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/europe-africa-russia-united-nations-central-african-republic-bccb39262fa0d29301bf28b98aa56413>

<sup>56</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/10/1103282>

<sup>57</sup> <https://humanglemedia.com/russian-mercenaries-kill-19-civilians-on-mining-site-in-central-african-republic/>

<sup>58</sup> <https://humanglemedia.com/russian-mercenaries-kill-19-civilians-on-mining-site-in-central-african-republic/>

<sup>59</sup> <https://www.voanews.com/a/two-chinese-nationals-killed-others-kidnapped-in-eastern-congo---army/6328048.html>

About 20 people were killed in an attack on displaced civilians in Djugu territory Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2021, at night, which the government also blamed on CODECO<sup>60</sup>.

An article published on the website France24.com on the 29<sup>th</sup> November 2021 reported that “President (Felix) Tshisekedi had raised the option of allowing Ugandan troops to enter Congolese territory to chase ADF terrorists together with” UN troops, a presidential adviser told AFP on condition of anonymity<sup>61</sup>.

The deadliest of scores of armed groups operating in the mineral-rich eastern DR Congo, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) has been blamed for dozens of attacks.

However, the decision to allow Ugandan troops into the country does not sit well with many Congolese who resent the role played by their Ugandan and Rwandan neighbours over the past nearly 30 years.

“If Ugandan troops enter the DRC, Rwanda will also send its own troops into our territory,” said Beni resident Augustin Kambale. “And my fear is seeing the two countries settling scores again on our turf.”<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> <https://www.voanews.com/a/two-chinese-nationals-killed-others-kidnapped-in-eastern-congo---army/6328048.html>

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20211129-dr-congo-authorises-ugandan-troops-to-hunt-rebel-group-on-its-soil>

<sup>62</sup> <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20211129-dr-congo-authorises-ugandan-troops-to-hunt-rebel-group-on-its-soil>



