



## THE EARLY WARNING MONITOR

*GLIC Weekly Report*

*21th February, 2025*

### *Top of the Agenda*

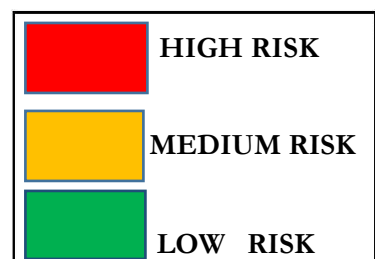
#### **NIGER REPUBLIC BARS NIGERIANS WITH ECOWAS PASSPORT**

The Republic of Niger has begun enforcing restrictions on Nigerians traveling with the ECOWAS passport, barring entry for those without a valid international passport. This move follows the country's recent withdrawal from the Economic Community of West African States alongside Mali and Burkina Faso. Despite maintaining an open border with Nigeria, new immigration measures are being implemented at crossings such as Illela (Nigeria) and Konni (Niger). Cross-border traders and commuters now face difficulties as Nigerien authorities refuse to recognize the ECOWAS passport as a valid means of identification.

Punch News: [Niger Republic bars Nigerians with ECOWAS passport](#) February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

### *Analysis*

The decision of the government of Niger Republic barring Nigerians with ECOWAS passports from entering their country is a significant development in the geopolitics of West Africa. This development presents Nigeria with immediate challenges in the areas of regional security cooperation, diplomatic relations, and cross-border trade. New immigration measures are being implemented at crossings such as Illela (Nigeria) and Konni (Niger) despite the fact that the border remains open. Nigerien authorities are currently refusing to acknowledge the ECOWAS passport as a form of identification, for Nigerians entering the country which has resulted in challenges for cross-border traders and travelers. It is likely that Mali and Burkina Faso may soon join Niger to implement new immigration measures against Nigeria and other member states of ECOWAS using the ECOWAS passport. This is capable of exacerbating diplomatic tensions and deteriorating relationship countries in the region. This will also result in the political fragmentation of West Africa and disruptions in cross-border trade. Strategic diplomatic engagement is therefore crucial at this time in addressing these issues and navigating the changing regional landscape.



## ***NIGERIA***

### **OVER 50 LOCALS SEVERELY INJURED BY GUNPOWDER EXPLOSION IN ZAMFARA**

Over 50 local traders were victims of a gunpowder explosion on Tuesday, Feb. 18, at the Talata-Mafara Central market in Zamfara State, North West Nigeria. The explosion happened around 3:30 p.m. when the local gun manufacturers were displaying their arms, including dangerously identified gunpowder which exploded due to heat pressure amidst a rowdy market session.

Human Angle: [Over 50 Locals Severely Injured by Gunpowder Explosion in Zamfara](#) February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

### **LASSA FEVER KILLS 13 IN EDO**

The Edo Government has confirmed 13 deaths from outbreak of Lassa fever in the state. The Director of Public Health at the state Ministry of Health, Dr Stephenson Ojeifo, gave the update during an interview with newsmen on Sunday in Benin. According to him, three cases of Mpox otherwise known as Monkeypox were also recorded, though with no fatalities. Ojeifo noted that since the outbreak of Lassa fever was declared on December 30, 2024, the state had recorded 83 confirmed cases out of 378 suspected cases. Ojeifo noted that since the outbreak of Lassa fever was declared on December 30, 2024, the state had recorded 83 confirmed cases out of 378 suspected cases.

Health Wise: [Lassa fever kills 13 in Edo](#) February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

### **LEPROSY CASES RESURFACE IN KANO, GOVT URGES EARLY DETECTION**

Kano State Commissioner for Health, Dr. Abubakar Yusuf Labaran, has raised concerns over the resurgence of leprosy in the state. He revealed this while speaking during a press briefing on Monday to commemorate World Leprosy/NTDs and Childhood TB Testing week. He urged residents to remain vigilant and seek early medical intervention.

Daily Post: [Leprosy cases resurface in Kano, govt urges early detection](#) February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

## ***WEST AFRICA***

### **MALI, NIGER, AND BURKINA FASO SHIFT MINING ALLEGIANCES AWAY FROM THE WEST**

Following the military coups in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger in 2020, 2022, and 2023 respectively, the three countries have changed how they engage with the West. Among other things, the three Sahel states have reoriented away from Western mining companies, seeking more equitable terms for their vast gold, uranium, and lithium resources. Over the past year, Niger has revoked the mining license for France's Orano to operate the IMOURAREN mine, one of the world's largest uranium mines. Burkina Faso has followed suit, expropriating key British-owned gold mines. Instead of the West, these countries have turned to Russia, China, and Turkey for mining investment. For instance, China's state-owned Ganfeng opened a lithium mine in Mali's southern region last December. While Western influence has waned, experts say it is not lost entirely, as longstanding cultural and linguistic ties could still pave the way for renewed cooperation on more balanced terms.

iAfrica: [Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso Shift Mining Allegiances Away from the West](#) February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

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iAfrica: [Niger Republic bars Nigerians with ECOWAS passport](#) February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

### **GHANA FACES ESCALATING JIHADIST THREAT FROM BURKINA FASO BORDER**

Ghana, which shares its northern border with conflict-ridden Burkina Faso, is increasingly vulnerable to infiltration by extremist groups such as JNIM and ISGS. Some analysts note that Ghanaian citizens may already be joining these groups, motivated by unemployment, poverty, and a sense of duty to protect relatives across the border. According to the director of the West Africa Center for Counter-Extremism, the risk of recruitment is highest along border communities, especially among those marginalized along ethnic lines. Experts believe that existing tribal conflicts in northern Ghana, some resulting from this marginalization, further weaken local cohesion and risk exploitation by jihadists. They advocate the resolution of these conflicts to ensure Ghana remains unattractive to extremist groups looking to take advantage of the situation.

iAfrica: [Ghana Faces Escalating Jihadist Threat from Burkina Faso Border](#) February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

## ***AFRICA***

### **RWANDA-BACKED M23 REBELS ACCUSED OF EXECUTING CHILDREN IN DR CONGO**

The Rwanda-backed M23 rebels are allegedly executing children and committing atrocities, causing massive displacement of persons from Bukavu, a town in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo). The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in a statement on Tuesday, Feb. 18, condemned the violations of human rights such as the summary execution of ...

HumAngle: [Rwanda-Backed M23 Rebels Accused of Executing Children in DR Congo](#). February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

### **UN ISSUES ALARM OVER SURGE IN HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN**

The report on Sudan issued by the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR) said the continued and deliberate attacks on civilians and civilian objects, as well as summary executions, sexual violence and other violations and abuses, underscore the utter failure by both parties to respect the rules and principles of international humanitarian and human rights law. In a recorded statement, Thameen Al-Kheetan said, "Entrenched impunity is fueling gross human rights violations and abuses in Sudan as fighting spreads to more parts of the country and involves additional armed actors." The report issued

by the UN Human Rights Office documents attacks on densely populated areas, as well as IDP camps, health facilities, markets, and schools.

Africa News: [UN issues alarm over surge in human rights abuses in Sudan](#) February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

### **MILITANT ISLAMIST GROUPS IN AFRICA SUSTAIN HIGH PACE OF LETHALITY**

There were an estimated 18,900 fatalities linked to militant Islamist violence in Africa in 2024. A sharp decline in deaths involving al Shabaab in Somalia brought the continental total below the record high levels of 2023 (23,000 fatalities). Nonetheless, the average annual total number of fatalities for the past 3 years was still more than a third higher than the period from 2019-2021. The Sahel remained the most lethal theatre on the continent for the fourth year in a row. There were an estimated 10,400 deaths linked to militant Islamist violence in the Sahel in 2024. This comprises 55 percent of all related fatalities for the continent. The Sahel also accounts for the most prevalence of violence against civilians—a metric of direct targeting of civilians by militant Islamist groups.

Africa Center: [Militant Islamist Groups in Africa Sustain High Pace of Lethality](#) February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

### **UN RIGHTS OFFICE ACCUSES M23 OF SUMMARILY EXECUTING CHILDREN IN DRC**

The United Nations Rights Office is accusing the M23 rebels of summarily executing children in Bukavu. Speaking to journalists in Geneva on Tuesday, the U.N. Human Rights Office spokesperson Ravina Shamdasani voiced concern for journalists, human rights defenders and members of civil society organizations who are seeking protection from reprisals by M23. South of Bunia, Rwanda-backed M23 rebels now control Goma, the capital of North Kivu province and the largest city in eastern Congo.

Africa News: [UN rights office accuses M23 of summarily executing children in DRC](#) February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

### **RWANDA ENDS COOPERATION WITH EU STATE**

Rwanda has suspended a five-year cooperation agreement with Belgium, accusing it of taking sides in an ongoing armed conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo and “politicizing development.” The East African Nation’s Foreign Ministry announced the decision on Tuesday after Belgium accused Kigali of supporting M23 rebels, who have seized two major cities in North and South Kivu provinces in renewed attacks against Congolese forces and peacekeepers. Thousands of people, including children, have been killed in the former Belgian colony in the fighting in recent weeks, according to the UN. “Belgium has led an aggressive campaign, together with DRC, aiming to sabotage Rwanda’s access to development finance, including in multilateral institutions,” the ministry said in a statement. “These efforts demonstrate that there is no longer a sound basis for development cooperation with Belgium. Accordingly, Rwanda is suspending the remainder of the 2024-2029 bilateral aid program,” it added.

RT News: [Rwanda ends cooperation with EU state](#) February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

### **SOUTH AFRICA TO CONSIDER RUSSIAN AND IRANIAN BIDS FOR NUCLEAR PROJECT**

South Africa’s government has confirmed it is open to nuclear energy proposals from Russia or Iran as it seeks to add 2,500 megawatts to its existing Koeberg nuclear plant. Mineral and Petroleum

Resources Minister Gwede Mantashe stressed that no country will be barred from bidding, despite US concerns about Pretoria “reinvigorating” ties with Iran. These allegations surfaced in a new executive order from President Trump, which halted American aid and threatened to complicate negotiations on a long-awaited civilian nuclear pact known as a Section 123 Agreement. That pact, crucial for US exports of nuclear fuel and technology, lapsed in December 2022. Failure to renew it could limit South Africa’s ability to procure reactor fuel for Koeberg’s Unit 1 from Westinghouse, as well as discourage US investors like TerraPower from pursuing nuclear opportunities in the country.

iAfrica: [South Africa to Consider Russian and Iranian Bids for Nuclear Project](#) February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

### **CEASEFIRE MONITORS WARN OF TRUCE COLLAPSE AMID VIOLENCE**

Ceasefire monitors in South Sudan have raised alarms over the potential collapse of the country’s fragile truce, as escalating armed clashes between signatories to the peace agreement threaten to derail efforts to end the nation’s prolonged conflict. The country has been formally at peace since a 2018 agreement ended a five-year civil war that claimed hundreds of thousands of lives. However, political tensions remain high as the nation prepares for its first post-independence elections. Major General Yitayal Gelaw Bitew, Chairperson of the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangement, Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (CTSAMVM), issued the warning during a technical committee meeting in Juba on Tuesday. He reported intensified fighting between two signatory groups near the state boundary of Western Equatoria and Western Bahr El Ghazal.

Radio Tamazuj: [Ceasefire monitors warn of truce collapse amid violence](#) February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

### **NO EU LIFELINE: AFRICA FORCED TO FIND ALTERNATIVES AFTER USAID CUTS**

The European Union has stated it cannot make up the shortfall caused by the US’s suspension of aid across sub-Saharan Africa. Although the EU remains committed to its own humanitarian programs, officials admit that the scale of the deficit—left by the Trump administration’s 90-day halt of USAID spending—far exceeds their capacity to respond. This abrupt freeze has already forced the closure of HIV clinics, immunization efforts, and reproductive health programs in countries like Uganda, Nigeria, and Kenya, putting millions of lives at risk. In response, some African governments are scrambling to fill budget gaps, with Nigeria allocating \$200 million in its 2025 budget. Observers stress that this crisis requires coalition-building among traditional donors, multilateral lenders, philanthropic bodies, and middle-income nations. Yet analysts warn that lower-income countries remain especially vulnerable, lacking the fiscal resources to replace American aid.

iAfrica: [No EU Lifeline: Africa Forced to Find Alternatives After USAID Cuts](#) February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

### **UGANDA DECLARES EBOLA UNDER CONTROL AFTER DISCHARGING FINAL PATIENTS**

Ugandan health officials have announced that the country’s latest Ebola outbreak has been contained, discharging the final eight patients initially diagnosed in January. According to the World Health Organization, this marks a significant milestone and reflects Uganda’s swift response measures. The outbreak claimed one life: a male nurse who died a day before the government declared the outbreak an epidemic. More than 265 contacts were identified, and 90 of them have already completed quarantine without showing any symptoms. Although there is no approved vaccine for the Sudan

strain, the authorities have begun clinical studies to determine the safety and effectiveness of a trial vaccine. Uganda's last Ebola outbreak, which began in September 2022, claimed at least 55 lives.

iAfrica: [Uganda Declares Ebola Under Control After Discharging Final Patients](#) February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

### **RESIDENTS SAY RWANDA-BACKED REBELS ARE ADVANCING ON A THIRD CITY IN EASTERN CONGO**

Rwanda-backed rebels appeared to be heading toward a third major city in eastern Congo, residents said Tuesday, as international pressure rose over the M23's expansion in a mineral-rich region that's critical for global technology. The M23 rebels on Tuesday attacked all the main Congolese army positions on the road to Butembo, a city of 150,000 people, and the situation was rapidly deteriorating. Butembo is about 210 kilometers (130 miles) north of Goma, the city of over 2 million people that the M23 rebels seized last month as about 3,000 people were killed. The advance on Butembo means the rebels are spanning out both north and south of Goma.

AP News: [Residents say Rwanda-backed rebels are advancing on a third city in eastern Congo](#) February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

## ***THE GLOBE***

### **UK IS READY' TO PUT TROOPS ON GROUND IN UKRAINE TO PROTECT PEACE**

UK prime minister Sir Keir Starmer has said he is "ready and willing" to put UK troops on the ground in Ukraine to help guarantee its security as part of a peace deal. Writing in the Daily Telegraph, the UK prime minister said securing a lasting peace in Ukraine was "essential if we are to deter Putin from further aggression in the future". Sir Keir said UK troops could be deployed alongside soldiers from other European nations alongside the border between Ukrainian-held and Russian-held territory.

Nairaland: [UK is Ready' to Put Troops on Ground in Ukraine to Protect Peace - Foreign Affairs](#). February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

### **SUSPECTED SOMALI PIRATES SEIZE A NEW YEMENI FISHING BOAT IN SECOND RECENT ATTACK**

Suspected Somali pirates have seized another Yemeni fishing boat off the Horn of Africa, authorities said. In a statement late Tuesday, a European naval force known as EUNAVFOR Atalanta said the attack targeted a dhow, a traditional ship that plies the waters of the Mideast, off the town of Eyl in Somalia. It said the attack Monday remained under investigation. It comes 10 days after another pirate attack on another Yemeni fishing boat which ultimately ended with the pirates fleeing and the mariners on board being recovered unhurt. Piracy off the Somali coast peaked in 2011 when 237 attacks were reported. Somali piracy in the region at the time cost the world's economy some \$7 billion — with \$160 million paid out in ransoms, according to the Oceans Beyond Piracy monitoring group.

AP News: [Suspected Somali pirates seize a new Yemeni fishing boat in second recent attack](#) February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025.



### **DONALD TRUMP SAYS ZELENSKY 'DICTATOR' WITHOUT ELECTIONS**

President Donald Trump called Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky a "dictator" due to the lack of elections in the war-torn country. In a Truth Social post on Wednesday morning, President Donald Trump called Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky a "dictator" due to the lack of elections in the war-torn country. Zelensky was elected as Ukraine's president in 2019. Ukraine's next presidential election was originally set for 2024, but it was not conducted due to the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, which began on February 24, 2022. The imposition of martial law, which legally prohibits elections, has prevented the vote from taking place.

Nairaland: [Donald Trump Says Zelensky 'dictator' Without Elections - Foreign Affairs](#) February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

### **EU APPROVES NEW SANCTIONS AGAINST RUSSIA**

EU diplomats have imposed a fresh round of sanctions against Russia, as Brussels vows to ramp up pressure on Moscow despite US-led negotiations aimed at ending the Ukraine war. The bloc's 16th package of sanctions will target Russia's aluminium industry, oil exports and individuals and companies deemed to be fuelling Russia's war against Ukraine. They will hit 13 more banks and 73 more "shadow fleet tankers" used by Moscow to export crude oil. A "phased-in" ban on EU countries buying certain types of Russian aluminium products will also be brought in, according to officials briefed on the package. The package is set to be formally approved by EU foreign ministers on Monday, on the third anniversary of the Kremlin's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Nairaland: [EU Approves New Sanctions Against Russia - Foreign Affairs](#) February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

### **UK COULD DEPLOY FIGHTER JETS OVER UKRAINE**

The British government is debating the possibility of an air policing mission over Ukraine, The Times reported on Tuesday. The potential deployment of Typhoon fighter jets from bases in Poland is viewed as an alternative to stationing a significant number of ground troops and would require Moscow's consent, the report says. UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer has stated that the UK is "ready and willing" to station troops in Ukraine as part of a security arrangement following a potential truce with Russia. A senior government source told the newspaper that an air patrol initiative involving British military aircraft and anti-aircraft systems protecting them could complement a small number of troops inside Ukraine.

RT News: [UK could deploy fighter jets over Ukraine](#) February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

### **THE AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND MILITARIES ARE MONITORING 3 CHINESE WARSHIPS OFF AUSTRALIA**

The Australian and New Zealand militaries were monitoring three Chinese warships moving unusually far south along Australia's east coast on an unknown mission, officials said Thursday. The Australian government revealed a week ago that the warships had traveled through Southeast Asia and the Coral Sea and were approaching northeast Australia. Defense Minister Richard Marles said Thursday that the Chinese ships — the naval frigate Hengyang, cruiser Zunyi and replenishment vessel Weishanhu — were "off the east coast of Australia." Marles said Australian navy ships and air force planes were monitoring the Chinese ships' movements through international waters that are in Australia's exclusive economic zone, the area beyond its territorial waters where a nation has exclusive economic rights.

“They’re entitled to be where they are; Australia is also entitled to be prudent and we are monitoring very closely what the activities of the task group are,” Marles told reporters.

AP News: The Australian and New Zealand militaries are monitoring 3 Chinese warships off Australia February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

### **AS THE UKRAINE WAR REACHES ITS 3-YEAR MARK, RUSSIA SEEMS TO HAVE TIME ON ITS SIDE AS TALKS START**

Putin’s key goals remain much the same — that Ukraine renounce joining NATO and enforce the use of the Russian language to keep the country in Moscow’s orbit — but now wants Kyiv to withdraw its forces from the four regions Moscow has seized but doesn’t fully control. He said a peace agreement could be broadly based on a draft negotiated early in the war that obliged Ukraine to declare neutrality, scale down its military and protect Russian language and culture. Those talks collapsed in April 2022 with no deal. Putin ruled out a truce, arguing it would benefit Kyiv. But some Kremlin-watchers believe he could accept it if Kyiv agrees to hold elections after a ceasefire.

AP News: As the Ukraine war reaches its 3-year mark, Russia seems to have time on its side as talks start February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025.