

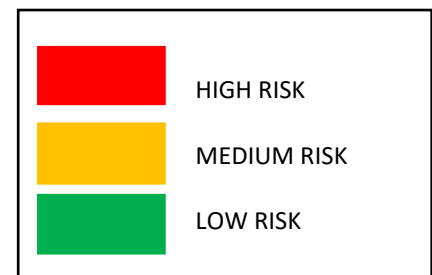


**Gen. LEO Irabor  
Early Warning  
Systems Centre**



**The Early Warning Monitor  
GLIC Weekly Report**

*27th March, 2026*



**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report highlights major security, political, economic, and public health developments with significant early warning implications for Nigeria, Africa, and the wider international system.

ECOWAS has appointed Lansana Kouyaté to revive dialogue with Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger following their withdrawal from the bloc, highlighting ongoing but uncertain efforts to restore regional cohesion amid deepening political divisions. A proposed U.S. strategy under Donald Trump emphasises security-focused, transactional engagement with Sahel juntas to secure influence and resources, raising concerns that competing geopolitical interests and militarised approaches may further complicate stabilisation efforts in the region.

Political tensions in Israel present risks related to economic instability, illegal mining, policy uncertainty, and geopolitical tensions. In Nigeria, banditry and kidnapping in the northwest continue to threaten security, disrupt agriculture and trade, and increase the risk of displacement and food insecurity. Across the Sahel, persistent extremist attacks and political instability raise concerns about the possible spread of insecurity into coastal West African states and increased regional instability. The ongoing conflict in Sudan continues to create a humanitarian crisis with regional security implications, while rising tensions in

the Middle East pose risks to global energy supply, which could contribute to higher fuel prices, inflation, and economic pressure on countries like Nigeria.

Public health risks are also increasing, particularly with the rise of drug-resistant tuberculosis in Lagos, worsening meningitis cases in northern Nigeria, and donor funding cuts affecting Nigeria's disease surveillance systems, which could weaken outbreak detection and response capacity. Overall, the report identifies rising insecurity, public health threats, political instability, and economic uncertainty as key early warning indicators that require close monitoring and proactive policy response to prevent further escalation.

## **ELECTION AND GOVERNANCE**

### **TRUMP'S SAHEL RESET BANKS ON 'SOVEREIGNTY', GUNS + MINERAL DEALS**

According to the Responsible Statecraft article, former US President Donald Trump's new approach to the Sahel is a practical but contentious "reset" that prioritises resource access, security cooperation, and sovereignty over the advancement of democracy. By providing weapons, information, and security support, the strategy places a high priority on mending relations with military-led governments in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso - nations that have distanced themselves from Western allies. In exchange, the United States wants strategic advantages such as influence in a region that is becoming more and more contested by China and Russia, as well as access to vital minerals. The approach is part of a larger "America First" paradigm that prioritises transactional ties over governance issues. Critics question whether greater military cooperation alone can calm the region, pointing out that comparable previous attempts by foreign countries have failed to stop extremist violence.

The early warning implication of this approach indicates a move away from long-term political stability and toward immediate security gains. The United States runs the risk of eroding democratic standards in West Africa and legitimising military authority by interacting with juntas in the absence of robust accountability procedures. Furthermore, depending too much on military solutions may exacerbate local complaints, which could increase rather than decrease the recruitment of extremists. Increased rivalry between international powers in the Sahel and a decline in regional collaboration might further disperse security efforts and provide opportunities for insurgent organisations to emerge.

### **ECOWAS APPOINTS VETERAN DIPLOMAT TO MEDIATE WITH SAHEL STATES**

Lansana Kouyaté, a seasoned Guinean diplomat, has been nominated by ECOWAS as a senior mediator in an effort to resume communication with the breakaway Sahel republics of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. Following disagreements over

sanctions and calls for a return to civilian governance, these nations - all ruled by military juntas—withdrew from ECOWAS and established the Alliance of Sahel States. The former executive secretary of ECOWAS, Kouyaté, has been entrusted with reestablishing confidence and collaboration between the Sahel alliance and the bloc. His nomination comes after previous attempts at mediation, including those spearheaded by the president of Senegal, failed to produce significant results.

The early warning implication of this appointment indicates both urgency and vulnerability in regional diplomacy. The deterioration of ties between ECOWAS and the Sahel states increases the likelihood of worsening regional integration, more political division, and decreased collaboration on security concerns like terrorism. If mediation is unsuccessful once more, the institutional division may widen, strengthening rival coalitions and outside parties while weakening ECOWAS's position. Additionally, this could increase instability and spill over into other coastal states by upsetting trade, free movement, and cooperative security frameworks throughout West Africa.

### **ZIMBABWE LITHIUM EXPORT BAN TRIGGERS MAJOR CRACKDOWN**

In February 2026, the government of Zimbabwe announced a sweeping ban on the export of raw minerals, with particular emphasis on lithium, a critical resource used in electric vehicle batteries and energy storage systems. As Africa's largest producer of lithium, Zimbabwe's decision marked a significant policy shift aimed at strengthening domestic value addition and curbing long-standing revenue leakages in the mining sector. The ban, initially planned for implementation in 2027, was abruptly accelerated after authorities detected a surge in production and export applications by mining firms attempting to move stock ahead of the deadline. This sudden policy enforcement triggered a major crackdown on mineral smuggling and export malpractices. The government has since tightened regulations, introduced stricter monitoring mechanisms, and announced plans to deploy advanced scanning technologies at border posts to detect undeclared minerals.

The early warning implications of Zimbabwe's lithium export ban are that the ban could lead to the risk of increased illegal mining and smuggling activities as stricter controls are enforced. Also, illicit networks may adapt by finding new routes or methods to bypass regulations, potentially escalating security challenges along border regions. The mining sector is a major source of foreign exchange for Zimbabwe; this policy could create short-term economic instability. The global lithium supply chain may experience volatility, while the policy aims to attract investment in local processing, sudden regulatory changes may raise concerns about policy unpredictability, potentially discouraging some investors or prompting calls for stronger legal safeguards.

## **NETANYAHU SEEKS TO AVOID SNAP VOTE AS IRAN WAR FAILS TO BOOST POLLS**

The ongoing war between Israel and Iran has created an unexpected political dilemma for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Recent opinion polls indicate that the conflict has not significantly improved Netanyahu's domestic standing. This development is shaping his current political strategy, particularly his efforts to avoid a snap election. At the centre of the issue is Israel's national budget. Under Israeli law, failure to pass the budget by the stipulated deadline would automatically dissolve the government and trigger early elections. As a result, Netanyahu is prioritising the swift passage of the budget to maintain political continuity. His reluctance to call or risk a snap vote reflects the fragile balance of power within Israel's political system and the uncertain electoral advantage posed by the war.

The early warning implications of a snap election in Israel is that policy paralysis in wartime could be detrimental as a weakened or transitional government may struggle to maintain a coherent military and diplomatic strategy, potentially affecting the trajectory of the conflict with Iran. There is a risk that political leaders may intensify military actions to generate public support, which could lead to broader regional escalation. Also, a prolonged conflict combined with fiscal pressure may trigger domestic unrest, protests, or declining trust in government institutions. Instability in Israel's political leadership could affect its relationships with key allies, including the United States, and alter the broader geopolitical dynamics of the Middle East.

## **NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY**

### **NIGERIA: BANDITRY AND KIDNAPPING CONTINUE IN NORTHWEST**

Reports indicate that banditry and kidnapping activities continue to pose serious security challenges in northwestern Nigeria, particularly in Zamfara, Kaduna, Katsina, and Sokoto States. Armed groups have continued to carry out attacks on rural communities and along major roads, often involving kidnapping for ransom, cattle rustling, and destruction of property. In some areas, local communities have reportedly been forced to pay protection fees to armed groups to avoid attacks. Although the Nigerian security forces have carried out several military operations and air strikes in affected areas, the attacks continue to occur, showing that these armed groups still have mobility and operational capability. The continued insecurity has also affected farming activities and local trade, as many residents are afraid to travel or return to their farms due to fear of attack or abduction.

The early warning implications is the likelihood of continued insecurity in the northwest region if the activities of these armed groups are not effectively controlled. It is also plausible that banditry and kidnapping may spread to neighbouring states, further worsening insecurity in the country. The reduction in

farming activities may also lead to lower food production, which could result in higher food prices and increased economic hardship for many households. There is also the possibility that communities may begin to form local vigilante groups for protection, which may lead to further violence and retaliation between armed groups and local communities. If the situation continues, it may result in increased internal displacement and put more pressure on government resources and humanitarian organizations.

### **SAHEL REGION: INSECURITY AND POLITICAL INSTABILITY**

The security situation in the Sahel region, especially in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, remains unstable due to continued attacks by extremist groups linked to Al-Qaeda and Islamic State affiliates. These groups have continued to attack military bases, villages, and government facilities, particularly in rural and border areas where government control is weak. The region is also experiencing political instability due to the presence of military governments and changing international alliances. Some Sahel countries have reduced cooperation with Western countries and are forming new security partnerships, which is gradually changing the political and security structure of the region. Weak governance, unemployment, poverty, and porous borders continue to make it easier for armed groups to recruit members and expand their activities across borders.

The early warning implications is that there is increased risk of increased extremist activities and possible expansion of these groups into coastal West African countries such as Ghana, Benin, Togo, and Côte d'Ivoire. There is also a risk that extremist groups in the Sahel may strengthen their connections with insurgent groups operating in northern Nigeria, which could increase the overall security threat in the region. Political instability in the Sahel may also weaken regional cooperation through organisations such as ECOWAS, making it more difficult for countries to work together to address security challenges. If the situation continues, the region may experience prolonged instability, which could affect trade, migration, and economic development.

### **SUDAN: CONTINUED CIVIL WAR AND HUMANITARIAN CRISIS**

The conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces continues to cause serious humanitarian and security problems in Sudan. Fighting has continued in Khartoum and other parts of the country, leading to the destruction of homes, hospitals, and markets. Many civilians have been displaced from their homes, and a large number of people have fled to neighbouring countries such as Chad, South Sudan, and Egypt. Humanitarian organisations have reported shortages of food, clean water, and medical supplies, and there are concerns about the spread of diseases in displacement camps due to poor living conditions. The conflict has also disrupted economic activities, making it difficult for people to earn a living.

The early warning implications is that there is a possibility of a prolonged humanitarian crisis if the conflict continues without a political solution. Additionally, the movement of refugees into neighbouring countries may create economic and social pressure on those countries, which could lead to instability in the region. There is also a risk that armed groups may take advantage of the conflict to gain more territory and influence, which could complicate the conflict, making it harder to resolve. Continued conflict in Sudan may also affect regional security in East Africa and the Red Sea region, especially if external actors become more involved in the conflict.

### **MIDDLE EAST: RISING TENSIONS AND THREAT TO GLOBAL ENERGY SECURITY**

Tensions in the Middle East remain high due to ongoing political and military rivalry involving Iran, Israel, and the United States. There have been concerns about possible attacks on strategic infrastructure such as oil facilities, shipping routes, and military bases. The Middle East is a very important region for global energy supply, and any major conflict in the region could affect global oil prices and international trade. Military activities such as missile tests, drone attacks, and military exercises have increased in the region, raising concerns about the possibility of escalation.

The early warning implications is the risk of disruption to global oil supply if the conflict escalates into a wider regional war. This could lead to an increase in fuel prices and transportation costs in many countries, including Nigeria. Higher fuel prices could also lead to inflation and an increased cost of living. There is also a risk that a wider regional conflict could affect global trade routes, especially maritime routes used for oil transportation. Continued tensions in the Middle East may therefore have economic and security consequences not only for the region but for the global economy.

### **PUBLIC HEALTH**

#### **EXPERTS WARN OF DRUG-RESISTANT TUBERCULOSIS IN LAGOS AS SANWOLU STRESSES GRASSROOTS MOBILISATION**

Experts have raised concerns over the rising threat of drug-resistant tuberculosis (TB) in Lagos State, stressing the importance of grassroots mobilisation and community awareness. Health officials, civil society partners, and the state government marked World TB Day 2026 with an awareness walk and symposium, highlighting that TB is preventable and curable but continues to affect thousands due to undetected and untreated cases. Currently, only about 16,000 of an estimated 30,000 TB cases in Lagos have been identified, leaving a significant portion of the population vulnerable. TB treatment requires strict adherence for four to six months, but incomplete or delayed treatment can result in drug-resistant TB, which is more difficult, longer, and costlier to manage. Efforts are

being made to improve patient support, expand detection, and strengthen community engagement.

The early warning implication is clear: the large number of undiagnosed and untreated cases could allow TB to spread silently through communities, increasing the prevalence of drug-resistant strains. This hidden transmission threatens to escalate the public health risk, especially in densely populated areas, underscoring the need for intensified surveillance, timely treatment, and widespread awareness campaigns.

### **NCDC RAISES THE ALARM OVER WORSENING MENINGITIS CASES IN NORTH**

Nigeria is confronting a worsening outbreak of meningitis in the northern states, with the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) warning that cases are rising at a time when current vaccines may not fully protect against the dominant *Neisseria meningitidis* serogroup C strain now circulating. Health officials have noted that the disease, a serious bacterial infection of the protective membranes around the brain and spinal cord, can progress rapidly and is a perennial threat in the “meningitis belt” that includes much of northern Nigeria. The surge in infections has coincided with the dry season’s dusty and crowded conditions, which historically increase the risk of transmission and outbreaks.

The early warning implication of this situation is that without intensified vaccination efforts, improved surveillance, and rapid case detection, the meningitis outbreak could expand further across vulnerable communities, overwhelming local health services and increasing severe illness and deaths. Because many existing vaccines do not cover the current strain effectively, experts stress the need for tailored immunisation strategies and heightened preventive measures. Given these dynamics and the speed at which meningitis can spread, especially in dry-season conditions, the outbreak’s risk level is high and escalating, necessitating urgent public health action.

### **DONOR FUNDING CUTS EXPOSE NIGERIA’S DISEASE TRACKING SYSTEMS – EXPERTS**

Experts and health stakeholders have raised the alarm that cuts in donor funding are exposing serious weaknesses in Nigeria’s disease detection and surveillance systems, threatening the country’s ability to monitor and respond to outbreaks. According to officials, long-standing dependence on external financing has helped build disease-specific programmes, laboratories, and data systems, but recent reductions in foreign support - especially from major partners - are revealing the fragility of these structures and widening gaps in core public health functions. Reduced funds are already affecting surveillance coverage, laboratory turnaround times, workforce stability, and specimen transport networks, particularly at the state level where outbreaks are first detected and contained.

Stakeholders at a recent report launch described the situation as a critical juncture: without sustained investment and better coordination, Nigeria's health security architecture could fragment further. Officials emphasised that many surveillance platforms and laboratory services were developed around parallel donor-driven programmes, resulting in inefficiencies and duplications that now magnify risk as funding shrinks. The debate has also prompted calls for greater domestic financing, system integration, and workforce professionalisation so that outbreak detection and response can be maintained even as external support fluctuates.

The early warning implication of this trend is stark - Nigeria's capacity to detect and swiftly respond to emerging disease threats is weakening at a time when such capabilities are essential, heightening the likelihood of delayed outbreak responses and wider spread of infectious diseases. This places the country's disease surveillance risk at a high and escalating level, underscoring the urgent need for domestic investment, system reform, and resilient health infrastructure.



**Gen. LEO Irabor  
Early Warning  
Systems Centre**

Website: [www.niia.gov.ng/early-warning-system-centre](http://www.niia.gov.ng/early-warning-system-centre)

Email: [earlywarning@niia.gov.ng](mailto:earlywarning@niia.gov.ng)

[LinkedIn](#)



13/15 Kofo Abayomi Road,  
Victoria Island, Lagos

Website: [www.niia.gov.ng](http://www.niia.gov.ng)

