

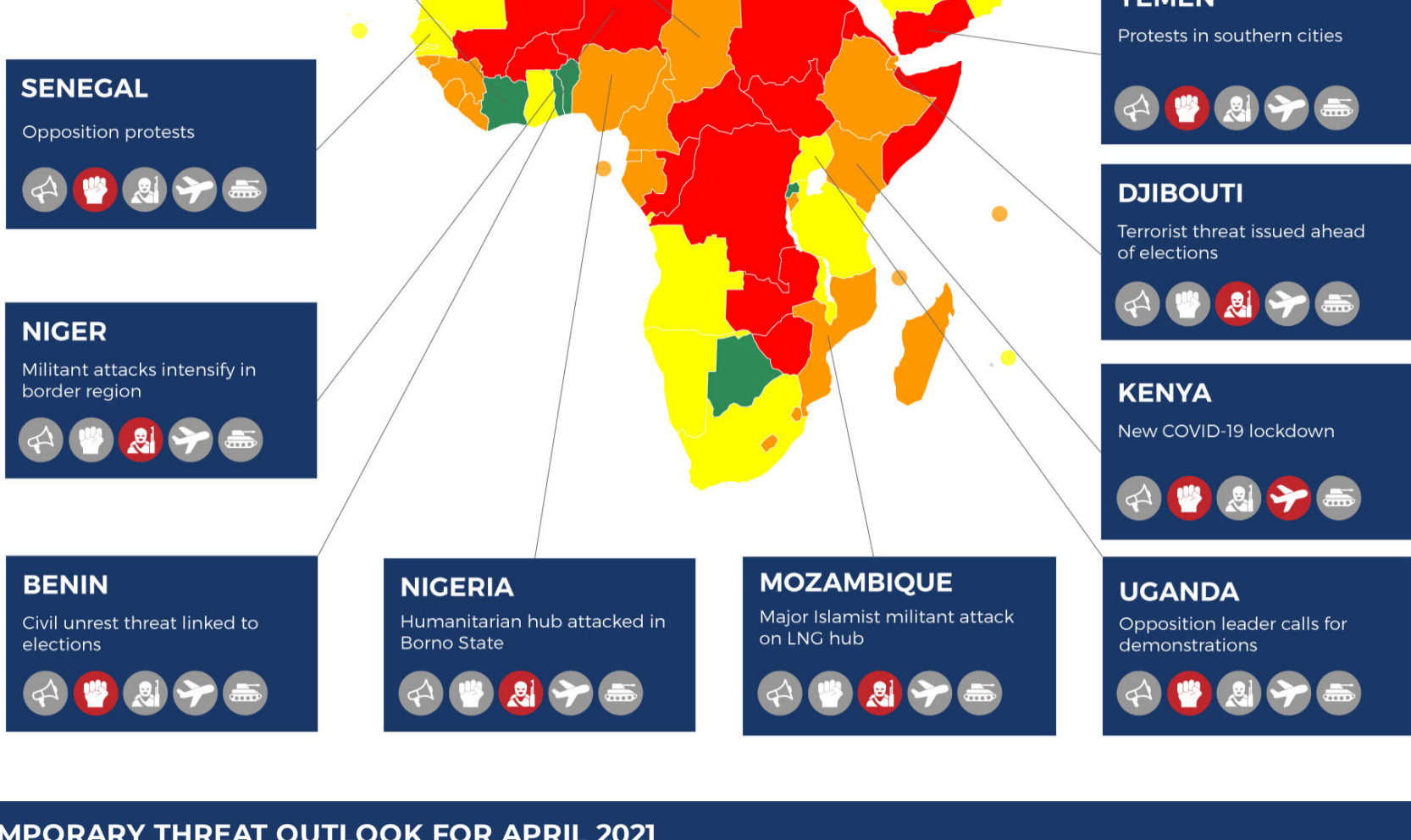
ACTIONABLE BUSINESS RISK INTELLIGENCE



TOP RISKS FOR APRIL 2021

31 March 2021

The coming month is likely to see an intensification of militant activity in several areas, with an escalation in violence in north-eastern Nigeria and western Niger, and an attack in northern Ivory Coast signalling the resilience of regional insurgencies in the Sahel and Lake Chad regions. In Mozambique, militants conducted a major attack on an oil and gas sector hub in north-eastern Cabo Delgado province, dispelling claims that the insurgency is on the back foot. Election-related unrest will present a sustained threat in Chad, Benin, and Uganda, while worsening political and socio-economic issues will drive a heightened likelihood of demonstrations in Algeria, southern Iraq, Senegal, and Yemen. In Jordan, protests have erupted over the perceived mishandling of the COVID-19 crisis. Further COVID-19 restrictive measures in Kenya threaten to disrupt local travel and stimulate popular frustrations.



TEMPORARY THREAT OUTLOOK FOR APRIL 2021

PANGEA-RISK selects the most critical situations across Africa and the Middle East that pose a temporary threat to commercial operations within the three-month outlook. The threat ranking is updated on a monthly basis.

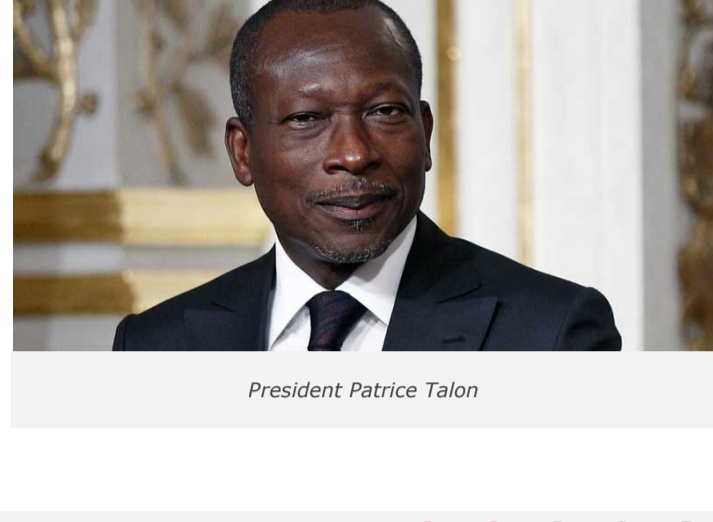
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

BENIN

Civil unrest threat linked to elections

The threat of civil unrest will be elevated in the coming weeks as Benin prepares to hold presidential elections on 11 April. The last two elections saw significant episodes of unrest, with demonstrators calling for President Patrice Talon to step down. While the opposition has not yet called for any protests, demonstrations are likely to take place as the election date approaches, as well as following the release of results on 13 April. Triggers for spontaneous protests include the arrest of opposition figures or the imposition of any measures perceived as restricting voter participation. Protests are most likely to take place in opposition strongholds, including Cotonou.

See Country Outlook: [BENIN](#)



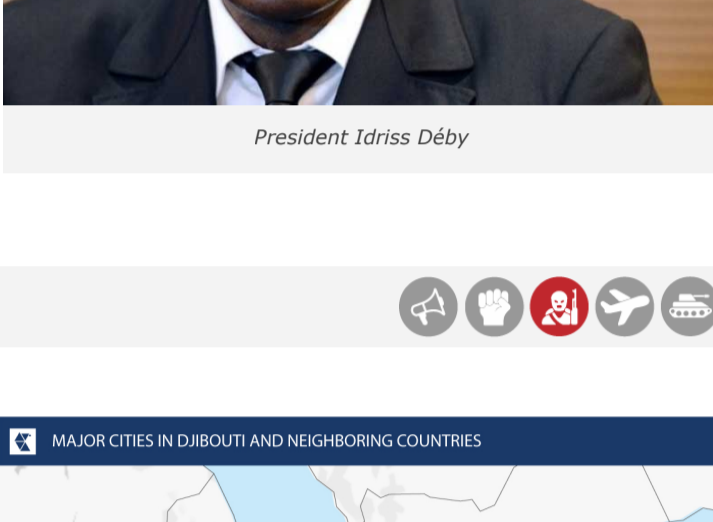
President Patrice Talon

CHAD

Opposition withdraws from election

The withdrawal of most opposition candidates from Chad's presidential election, scheduled for 11 April, has increased the threat of civil unrest in the coming weeks. On 12 March, a new opposition coalition announced its intent to use protests and labour strikes to force President Idriss Deby to step down. Protests are most likely to take place in the capital, N'Djamena, near the Palais du 15 Janvier, the Place de la Nation as well as the Assemblée Nationale building. During protests, there is a high likelihood of violent confrontations between security forces and demonstrators, as well as intermittent communications blackouts.

See Country Outlook: [CHAD](#)



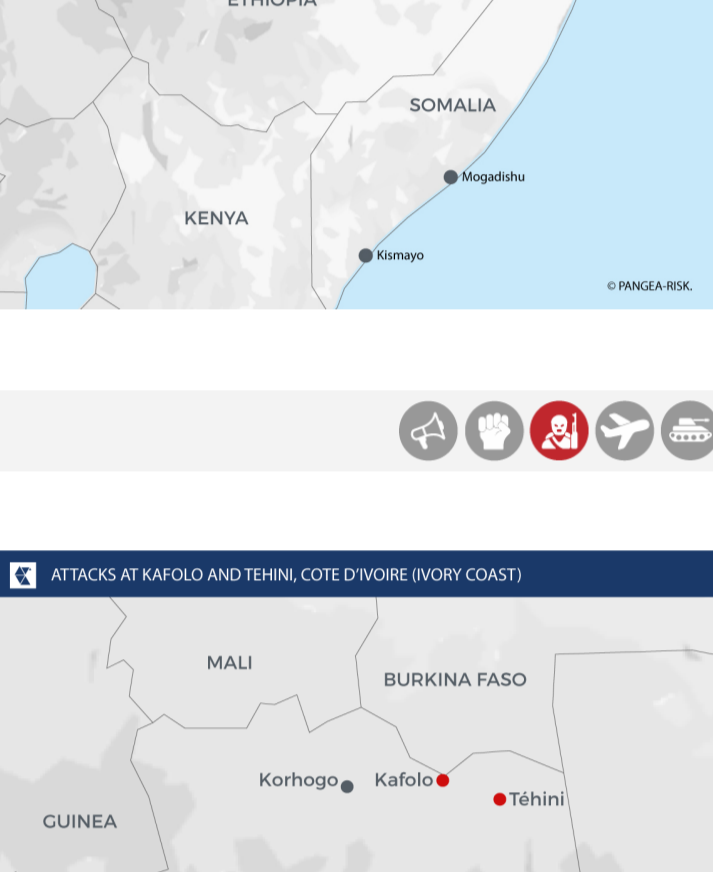
President Idriss Deby

DJIBOUTI

Terrorist threat issued ahead of elections

On 27 March, Somali militant group Al Shabaab released a propaganda video criticising Djibouti's government for hosting foreign military bases, and calling for its supporters to carry out attacks on French and US interests in the country. The statement comes as Djibouti prepares to hold presidential elections on 9 April. While Al Shabaab has little visible operational presence in the country, the presence of local supporters capable of unsophisticated lone wolf attacks cannot be ruled out. Social tensions are also likely to escalate ahead of the elections, with an attendant threat of protests.

See Country Outlook: [DJIBOUTI](#)

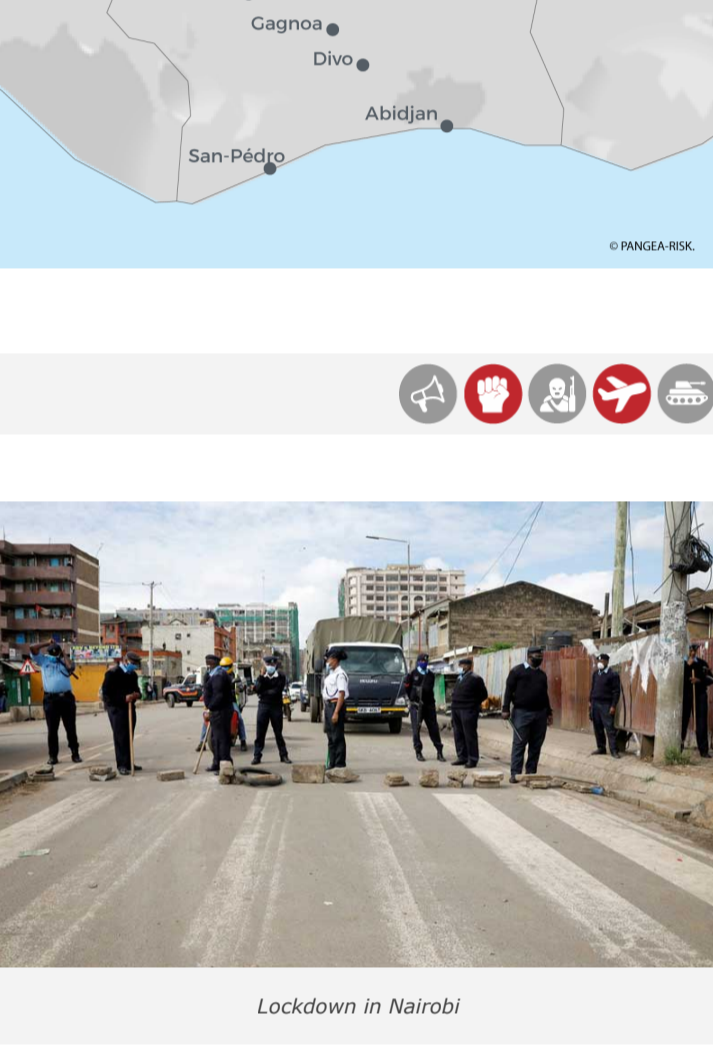


IVORY COAST

Militant attack on Burkina Faso border

On 28-29 March, at least two security forces personnel were killed in a suspected Islamist militant attack targeting two border security posts at Kafilo and Tehini in northern Ivory Coast. Reports indicate that an estimated 60 gunmen crossed over the border from Burkina Faso and carried out the assault, after which the attackers seized weapons and equipment from the security posts. No group has claimed responsibility, but Islamist militants previously attacked security forces in the same region in June 2020. The incident highlights that the militant threat in the region remains pronounced despite the efforts of regional security forces.

See Country Outlook: [COTE D'IVOIRE \(IVORY COAST\)](#)



KENYA

New COVID-19 lockdown

On 26 March, Kenya imposed a new set of restrictive measures in the capital, Nairobi, and four other counties, Kajado, Machakos, Kiambu, and Nakuru, in response to a surge in the number of new COVID-19 cases since January. The measures include a ban on all public gatherings and in-person meetings, and all bars, restaurants and places of worship are also to close. While international travel remains open, all travel in and out of restricted areas is banned. It is unclear how long the measures will remain in place. In addition to travel and business disruptions, the new measures are likely to feed into public frustrations and heighten the threat of civil unrest in the coming weeks.

See Country Outlook: [KENYA](#)



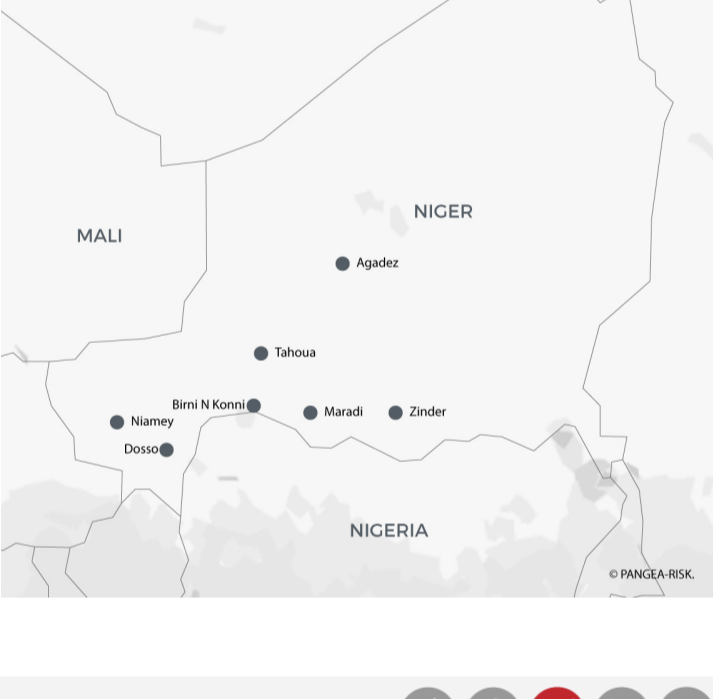
Lockdown in Nairobi

MOZAMBIQUE

Major Islamist militant attack on LNG hub

On 24 March, Islamist militants launched a co-ordinated assault on the coastal town of Palma, the hub for the liquefied natural gas (LNG) industry in Mozambique's north-eastern Cabo Delgado province. The casualty count remains unclear, but witnesses report that a significant number of people have been killed, and a high number still remain unaccounted for, including foreign nationals employed in the LNG sector. Local intelligence sources estimate that approximately 100 militants were involved in the attack, which included the use of mortars and heavy weapons. Security forces are likely to attempt to secure the area in the coming weeks.

See Country Outlook: [MOZAMBIQUE](#)



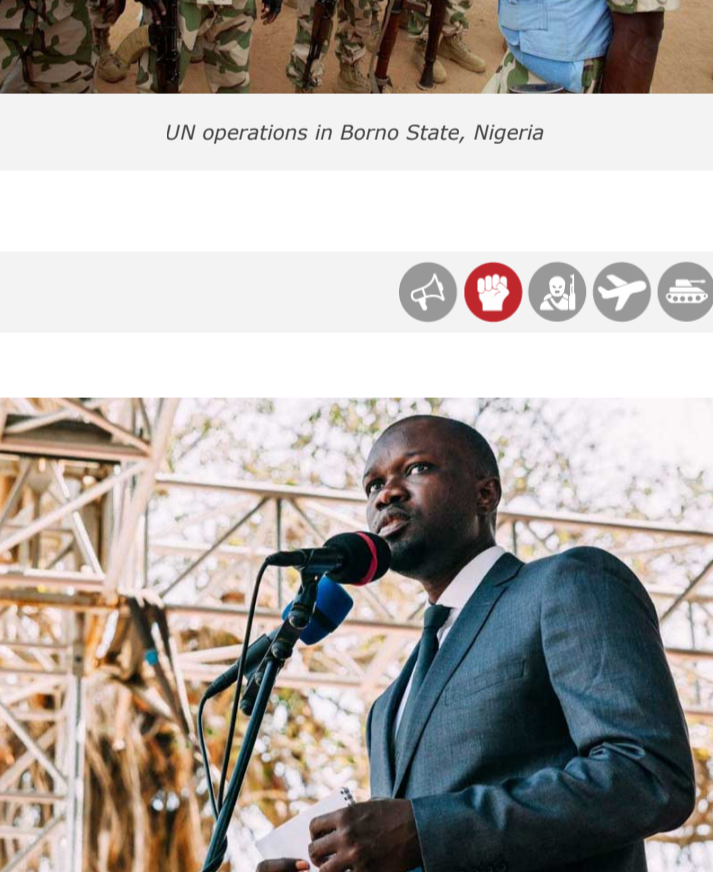
Soldiers in Palma, Cabo Delgado

NIGER

Militant attacks intensify in border region

Over the past month, at least 200 people have been killed in a series of militant attacks targeting civilians in Niger's western Tahoua and Tillaberi regions, near the border with Mali. On 21 March, at least 137 people were killed during co-ordinated attacks on several villages in the Tahoua region. While no group has yet claimed responsibility, the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) has previously conducted similar attacks in the region. The incidents highlight the sustained capability of militant groups to conduct significant attacks in the region, despite international and regional counter-terrorism efforts.

See Country Outlook: [NIGER](#)

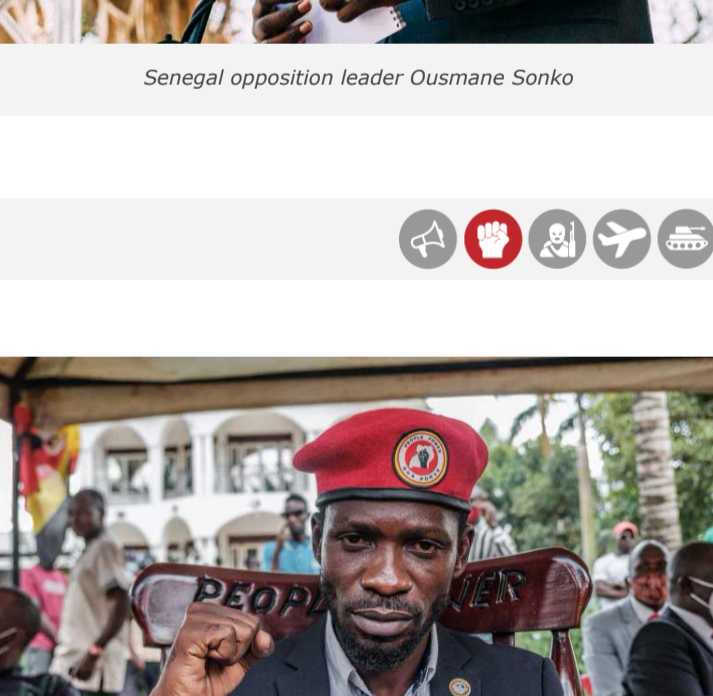


NIGERIA

Humanitarian hub attacked in Borno State

On 1 March, the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) reportedly attacked and occupied the town of Dikwa, a hub for humanitarian operations in Nigeria's north-eastern Borno State. At least seven local aid workers were reportedly abducted during the attack, and a significant amount of aid infrastructure was torched. Reports also indicate that the militants laid siege to a UN compound in Dikwa, trapping international staff, before Nigerian security forces were able to retake the town. The incident comes amidst an ongoing escalation in ISWAP attacks in Borno State since January, including the group's first employment of vehicle-borne suicide improvised explosive devices.

See Country Outlook: [NIGERIA](#)



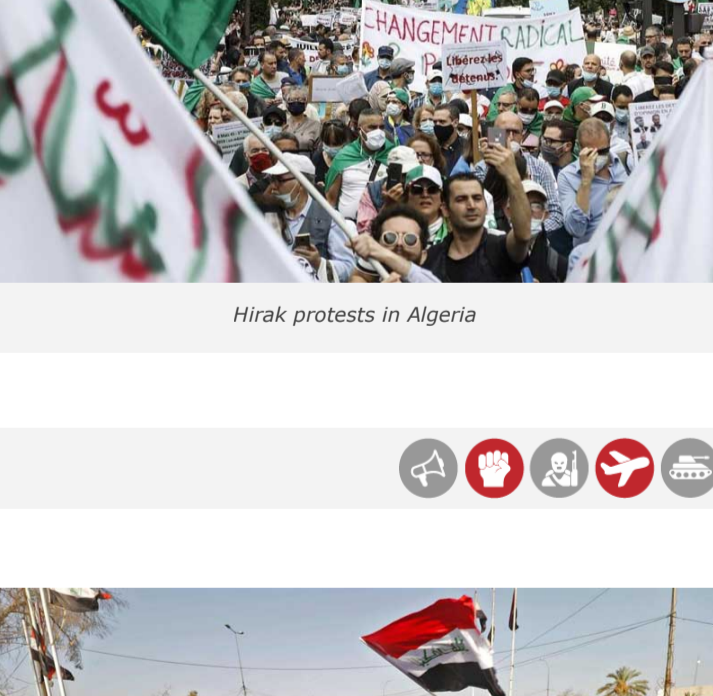
UN operations in Borno State, Nigeria

SENEGAL

Opposition protests

In early March, sexual assault allegations levelled against opposition leader and presidential aspirant Ousmane Sonko, head of the Pastef-Les Patriotes party, prompted violent nationwide protests. Since 8 March, the opposition coalition, Movement for the Defence of Democracy (MZD), has suspended further calls for protests pending the outcome of negotiations with the government. Nonetheless, small protests and demonstrations have continued to take place in the capital, Dakar. In the case of a breakdown in talks, a renewal of widespread demonstrations is likely. Other triggers for spontaneous protests include arrests of opposition figures, or any further targeting of Sonko.

See Country Outlook: [SENEGAL](#)



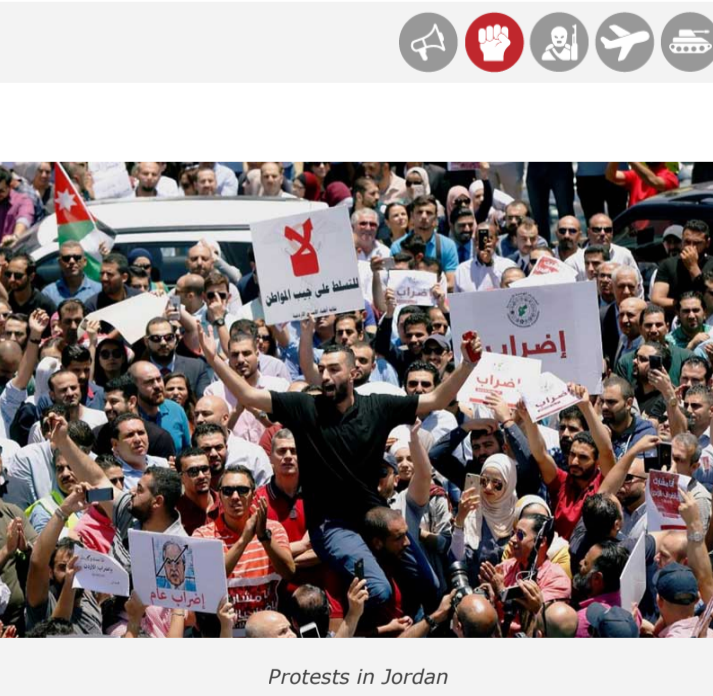
Senegalese opposition leader Ousmane Sonko

UGANDA

Opposition leader calls for demonstrations

There is a heightened threat of protests in Uganda following multiple calls by Ugandan opposition leader Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu, known popularly as Bobi Wine, for Ugandans to protest against the outcome of the January election which saw long-standing President, Yoweri Museveni, re-elected. In a speech on 15 March, Ssentamu reaffirmed his intent to lead protests ahead of Museveni's inauguration in May. On the same day, Ssentamu was briefly arrested during a protest March in Kampala, after which his home was surrounded by police and military personnel. Further protests are likely in the coming weeks, with a high likelihood of violent confrontations between security forces and demonstrators.

See Country Outlook: [UGANDA](#)



Uganda opposition leader Bobi Wine

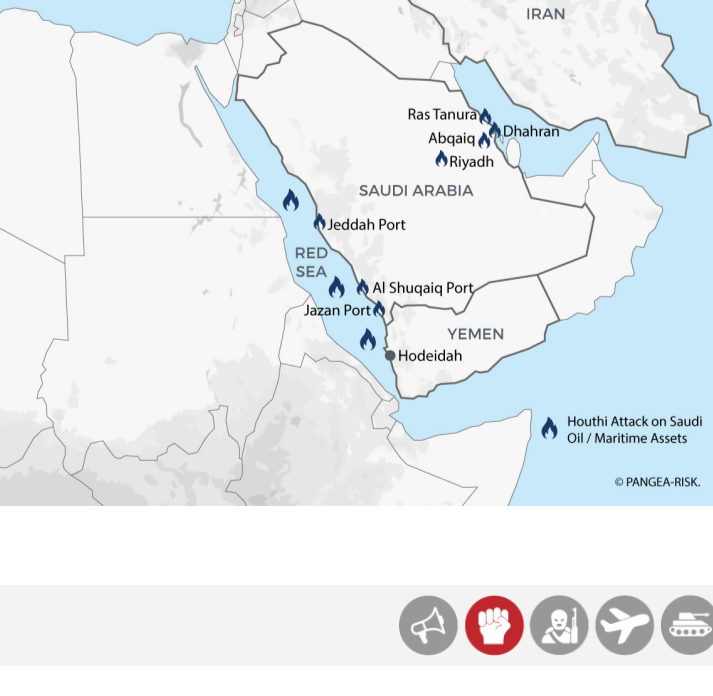
MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA

ALGERIA

Resumption of Hirak protests

Since 22 February, protests by the anti-government 'Hirak' movement have intensified across Algeria. Protests have focused on the capital, Algiers, with thousands of demonstrators turning up for weekly protests, calling for an end to military influence in politics and criticising the government's decision to hold early elections in June. On 26 March, during protests in Oran and Mostaganem, security forces reportedly used tear gas to disperse demonstrators. Further protests are likely in the coming month, especially on Fridays, with a high likelihood of violent confrontations between security forces and demonstrators.

See Country Outlook: [ALGERIA](#)



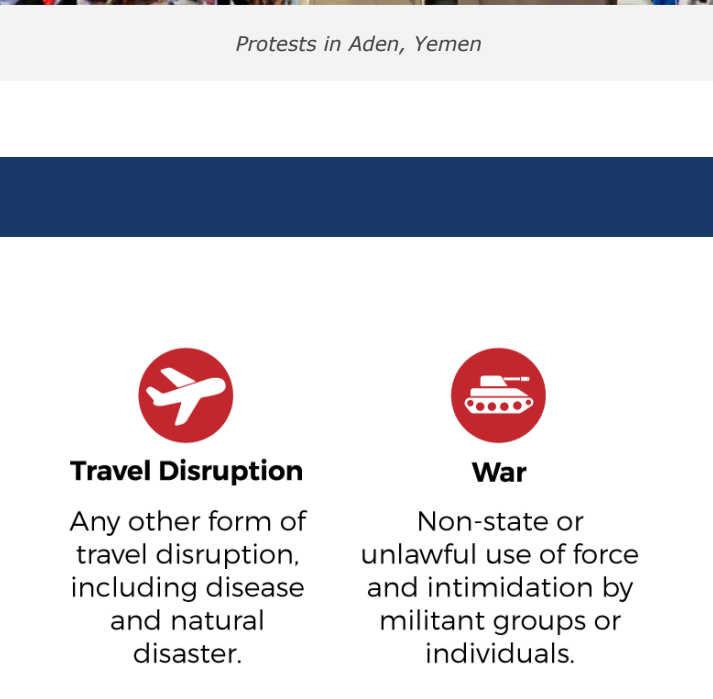
Hirak protests in Algeria

IRAQ

Southern protests escalate

Protests in Iraq's southern governorates escalated over March, with large demonstrations reported in the provincial centres of Basra, Najaf, and Nasiriyah. Protesters have accused local government authorities of corruption and economic mismanagement, amidst rising poverty and unemployment across the southern region. Protests are likely to continue and the coming weeks, with a high likelihood of commercial disruption, as protesters are likely to block off main access routes in the region. Security forces are likely to use significant amounts of force to disperse protesters, including live ammunition.

See Country Outlook: [IRAQ](#)



Protests in southern Iraq

JORDAN

COVID-19 protests

Since 14 March, at least 200 people have been arrested during protests across Jordan, including in Amman, Irbid, and Aqaba. Demonstrators have called for the government to resign over the perceived mishandling of the COVID-19 pandemic following the death of six COVID-19 patients due to oxygen shortages in the town of Salt. As frustrations over the tightening COVID-19 restrictions and deteriorating socio-economic conditions continue to intensify, further protests are likely to take place in the coming weeks. There is a high likelihood of violent confrontations between security forces and demonstrators.

See Country Outlook: [JORDAN](#)

Protests in Jordan

SAUDI ARABIA

Escalation in cross-border attacks

Over March, there was a significant intensification of cross-border attacks targeting Saudi Arabia by the Yemen-based Houthi militia. On 22 March, the Houthis rejected a ceasefire proposed by Saudi Arabia, making it likely that a heightened tempo of cross-border aerial attacks using armed drones, missiles and rockets will be sustained through the coming weeks. Most attacks are likely to remain concentrated in the border areas of south-western Saudi Arabia, targeting the cities of Jizan and Najran, although the Houthis have increasingly demonstrated the ability to conduct longer-range attacks. For instance, on 19 March six armed drones reportedly struck an Aramco oil and gas facility in Riyadh, causing a fire at the site.

See Country Outlook: [SAUDI ARABIA](#)

YEMEN

Protests in southern cities

Since early March, southern Yemen has seen a significant escalation of protests as demonstrators set fires and blocked off major roads in the cities of Aden, Al Mukalla, Seyun, and Lahij. Protesters have decried poor service provision and deteriorating economic conditions. There is significant potential for further escalation in the coming weeks, with a high likelihood of violent confrontations between security forces and demonstrators. For instance, on 15 March, six people were wounded in Seyun when security forces opened fire on demonstrators with live ammunition.

See Country Outlook: [YEMEN](#)

Protests in Aden, Yemen

ICON LEGEND

- Industrial Action**
The risk of strike action or related protests.
- Protests & Riots**
Civil commotion including protests, riots, and other forms of civil unrest.
- Terrorism & Insurgency**
State use of force including invasion, insurrection, rebellion, and hijacking.
- Travel Disruption**
Any other form of travel disruption, including disease and natural disaster.
- War**
Non-state or unlawful use of force and intimidation by militant groups or individuals.