



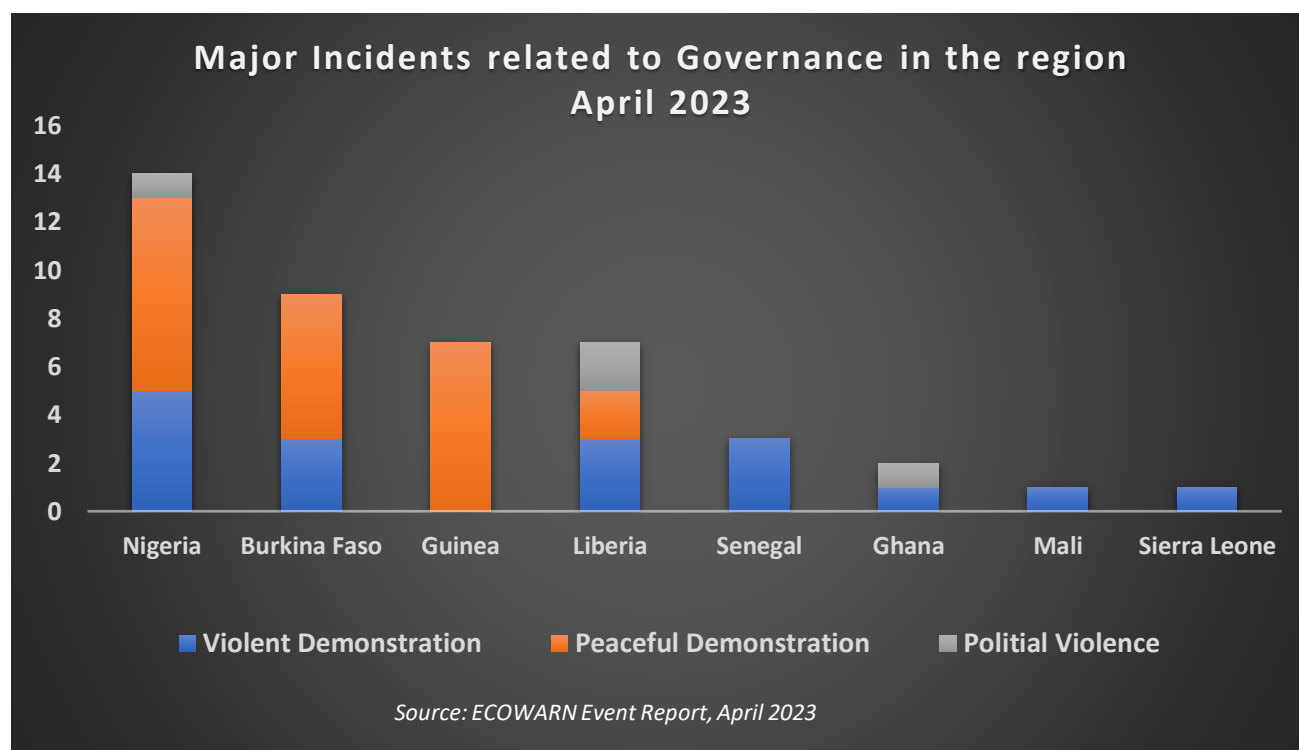
Monthly Human Security Report: Governance and Human Rights

Executive Summary

The Early Warning Governance and Human Right report for the month of April 2023 looks at the current socio-political developments in the ECOWAS region and their potential impacts on human security. It analyses the salient issues concerning the uptick in reported human rights violation in several countries, the resurgences of community clashes and the political situation in countries preparing for elections in 2023 including Liberia.

The security situation in Sahel continues to exacerbate the humanitarian crisis, requiring an urgent scale-up of emergency response. In this fragile context, the situation in Sudan has the potential impact of aggravating an already dire situation. As of 28 April 2023, the UN refugee agency estimated over 50,000 people had fled Sudan to neighboring countries. This report looks at the impact, on the humanitarian situation, on livelihoods and on human rights, of the ongoing insecurity and some of the measures put in place to address it, such as the instauration of curfew and declaration of state of emergency.

Finally, the report proffers practical recommendations to address some of the herein identified challenges to Human Security.





ANALYSIS OF CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

DEMOCRACY AND POLITICAL GOVERNANCE

Guinea

Talks between the Government and opposition parties continued in the month under review following the first round of talks in March as part of mediation efforts led by religious leaders. The Prime Minister, Mr. Bernard Goumou and the Forces Vives de Guinée (FVG), a large opposition coalition including outlawed National Front for the Defence of the Constitution, opposition leader Cellou Dallein Diallo's party and deposed President Condé's Rally of the Guinean People (RPG), held several rounds of talks albeit without yielding a tangible path to end political tension. The key demands of the opposition include the release of detained opposition figures, lifting of the ban on protests and new national dialogue to be overseen by external stakeholders. If the stalemate continues, it could spur a call for renewed street protests by the opposition.

In the month under review also, spontaneous protests erupted over power shortages. Youths protesting power cuts clashed with police in several neighborhoods of Kankan city. The possibility of recurrent power shortages could also lead to new protests.

Mali

The relations between the Government and the groups that are signatory to the Algiers Accord appear to be deteriorating. In the month under review, an army aircraft apparently flew over Kidal city, base of the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA). CMA reportedly responded with warning shots, and the same day denounced ceasefire "violation" and "grave provocation". In an effort to revive the peace process, the pact's international mediation mechanism, led by Algeria) proposed meetings which the interim Government apparently declined. Further stoking tensions, the armed forces reportedly arrested elements that they qualified as terrorists, however CMA have since claimed that the detainees are coalition members.

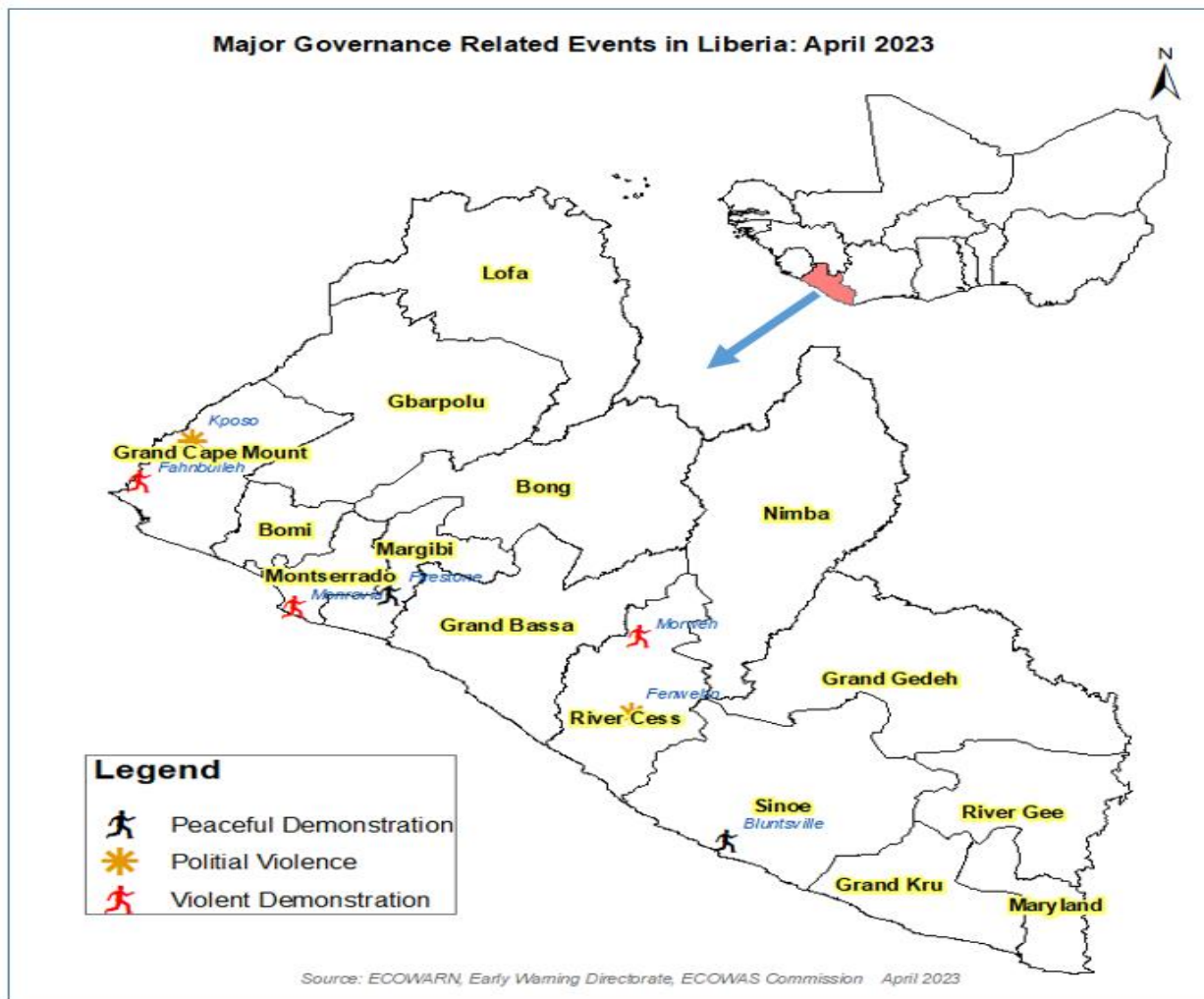
Furthermore, tensions with the UN resurfaced ahead of the renewal of the organizations mandate in Mali. The UN Security Council earlier in the month expressed concerns over the stalled peace process. Ahead of the vote on the UN mission (MINUSMA)'s mandate renewal in June, the UN continues to urge the interim Government to lift restrictions on MINUSMA's operations.

In addition, the transitional government has scheduled the referendum on the new constitution for the 18th June 2023. This election will be a precursor to the legislative and the presidential elections and a step towards the return to civilian rule. It will be held across the country and in the diplomatic and consular missions.

Liberia

The 1st phase of the Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) exercise which ended on the 9th April 2023 reportedly faced some technical glitches including biometric card shortages and limited capacity of short term staff of the NEC to operate the BVR equipment which caused some delay in the process. According to the National Election Commission (NEC), on the 17th April 2024, the provisional result of the 1st batch of the biometric registration exercise conducted in Bomi, Gbarpolu, Grand Bassa, Grand Cape Mount, Montserrado and Margibi counties recorded a total of 1,435, 209 registered voters (711, 410 females and 723,799 males) including 891209 in Montserrado (a hot spot during election period) and 184425 in Grand Bassa. It is important to note that this provisional result is subject to change due to the de-duplication and the adjudication processes.

The second phase of the BVR registration process is scheduled for April 21st to May 11th, 2023 in Bong, Grand Gedeh, Grand Kru, Lofa, Maryland, Nimba, River Cess, River Gee and Sinoe Counties.





Though some pockets of violence were reported during the registration process, twenty-seven (27) political parties including the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) and the main opposition Unity Party (UP) committed to violence free election by signing the Farmington River Declaration on the 4th April 2023 in Margibi County.

The October 10, 2023 General election as mandated by the Constitution will be the first election to be conducted after the exit of the United Nation Mission in Liberia and the first following the transition from manual to the biometric process. Another important consideration presently appears to be financial constraints as the National Election Commission has lamented the limited disbursement of funds with only US \$ 27,500,000 released with an outstanding of US \$25, 500, 000 (about 48.11% of the total budget allocated to NEC) from the US \$ 53 million budget approved of the election by the Ministry of Finance .

INTERCOMMUNAL CONFLICTS

Ghana

In Northern Ghana, about thirty (30) people are reportedly killed between December 2022 and April 2023 following the escalation of the 40-year-old ethnic conflict between the Mamprusi and the Kusasi people over the Bawku chieftaincy seat after some years of relative lull in tensions. The conflict in Bawku, which is an hour drive from the Burkina Faso border, has reportedly involved foreign combatants in the recent uptick in incidents.

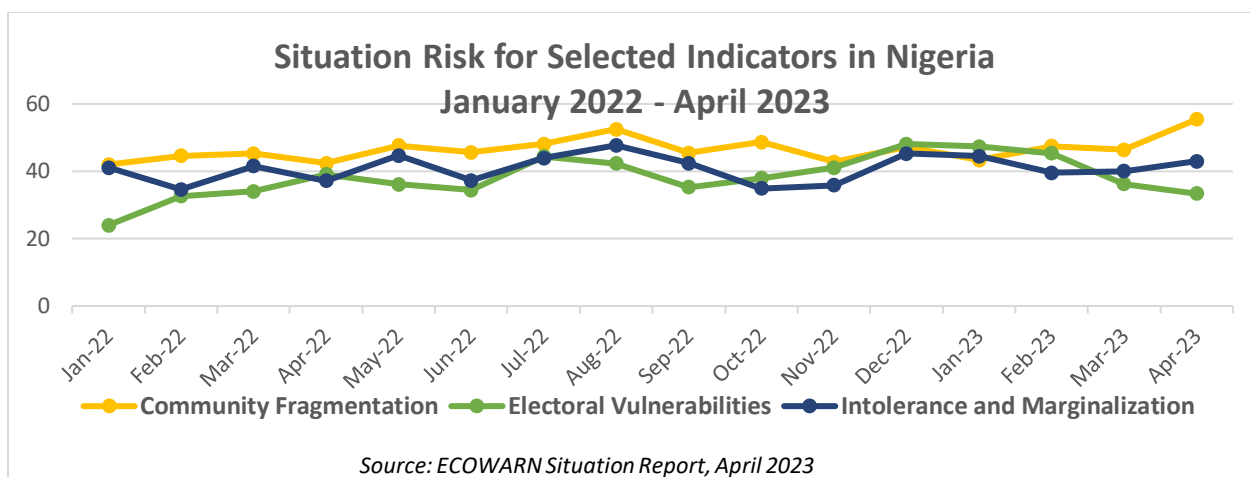
The volatile situation has resorted in the increased presence of security forces in communities. The vulnerability of the Northern Ghana to violent extremism/ terrorism seems to have heightened with the resurgence of the Bawku chieftaincy conflict, as well as the increase in attacks around the borders, the influx of refugees or asylum seekers from Burkina Faso using the porous border without submitting to proper profiling by immigration services.

Nigeria

The North West and North Central regions saw a resurgence of deadly attacks, which led to fatalities in the month under review. In Benue state, armed groups reportedly launched multiple attacks on civilians in Apa, Guma and Otukpo areas, apparently killing 149 people. Armed groups also conducted deadly raids in Kaduna state. In Nasarawa state, herder-farmer violence led to fatalities and in Plateau state, armed groups apparently attacked communities in Barkin-Ladi, Jos South and Riyom areas.

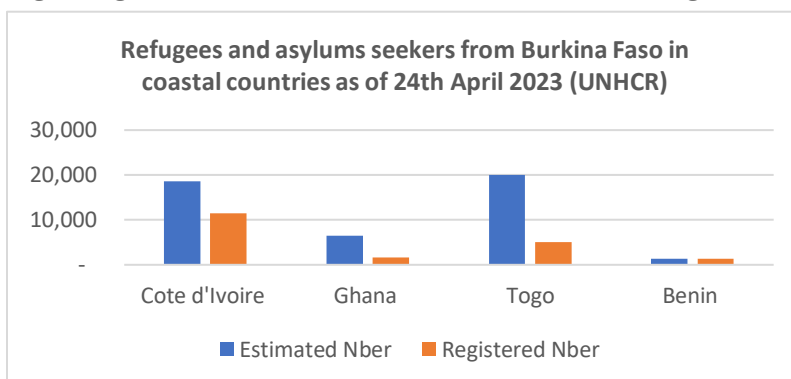
In the South East region, violence associated with Biafra agitation persisted with reported attacks in Aboh Mbaise and Ngor Okpala area, Imo state.

Kidnapping for ransom continues across the country with incidents reported In Zamfara, Nasarawa, Rivers and the Federal Capital Territory in the month under review.



Humanitarian Crisis

The insecurity in the Sahel has created a growing humanitarian crisis with thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons, now going further into the coastal countries. This potentially means increased demand for social amenities such as housing, health care, schools and arable lands, increasing the risks for conflicts between refugees/IDP's and the host communities.



Refugees and asylums seekers from Burkina Faso in coastal countries as of 24th April 2024

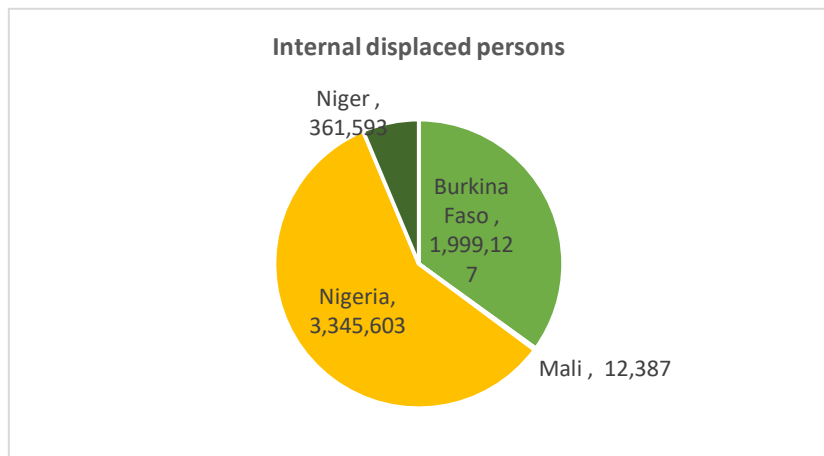
Countries	Estimated Nber	Registered Nber	Regions affected
Cote d'Ivoire	18,647	11,455	Boukani, Tchologo, Poro, Bagoue, Folon, Gontougo
Ghana	6,544	1,650	Upper East and Upper West
Togo	20,000	4,985	Savanes
Benin	1,288	1,288	Alibori, Atacora
Total	46,479	19,378	

In Ghana, over 6000 people from Burkina Faso have reportedly fled their country to seek refuge through border towns in the Upper East and Upper West Region.

In Cote d'Ivoire, approximately 18000 refugees from Burkina Faso are hosted by communities in the Northern regions including Bounkani, Tchologo, Poro, Bagoue, Folon, Gontougo among which 6000 of these refugees are reportedly hosted in Tougbo (a border town of the Bounkani region) which has an estimated population of 30,582, meaning there has been a 20% increment of the population because of the influx.

Benin and Togo are also experiencing internal displacement in some communities along the borders following attacks. Despite this, an estimated 20,000 and 1,288 refugees, respectively, have made their way into Togo and Benin. With an earlier estimation of 10643 refugees in Togo and 943 refugees in Benin as of 31 January¹ 2023, it is evident that these numbers are growing.

There is a need for humanitarian supports to both host communities and refugees/internally displaced to cushion the effect of the influx.



GENDER

Several gender related developments in the month under review are noteworthy. For instance, in the governorship and councillorship elections held on 15th April 2023 in the Gambia, of the 58 women candidates, 18 were elected into office and out of 367 candidate, the 58 women represented 16%. The Gambia, like all ECOWAS Member States, is on the path of growing the representation of women in political leadership.

Also, the recent spate of kidnapping in Nigeria continues to take its toll particularly on women. Indeed the reported abduction, in Kwali area Council in the FCT, of 29 community residents including 10 females and several children on the 25th of April and in another development, the abduction of three people including 2 females in an attack carried out by suspected kidnappers at Ogbakiri Junction, in the Emohia LGA of Rivers State, against the backdrop of several kidnapping of girls from schools, underscores the peculiar vulnerabilities faced by females in this context.

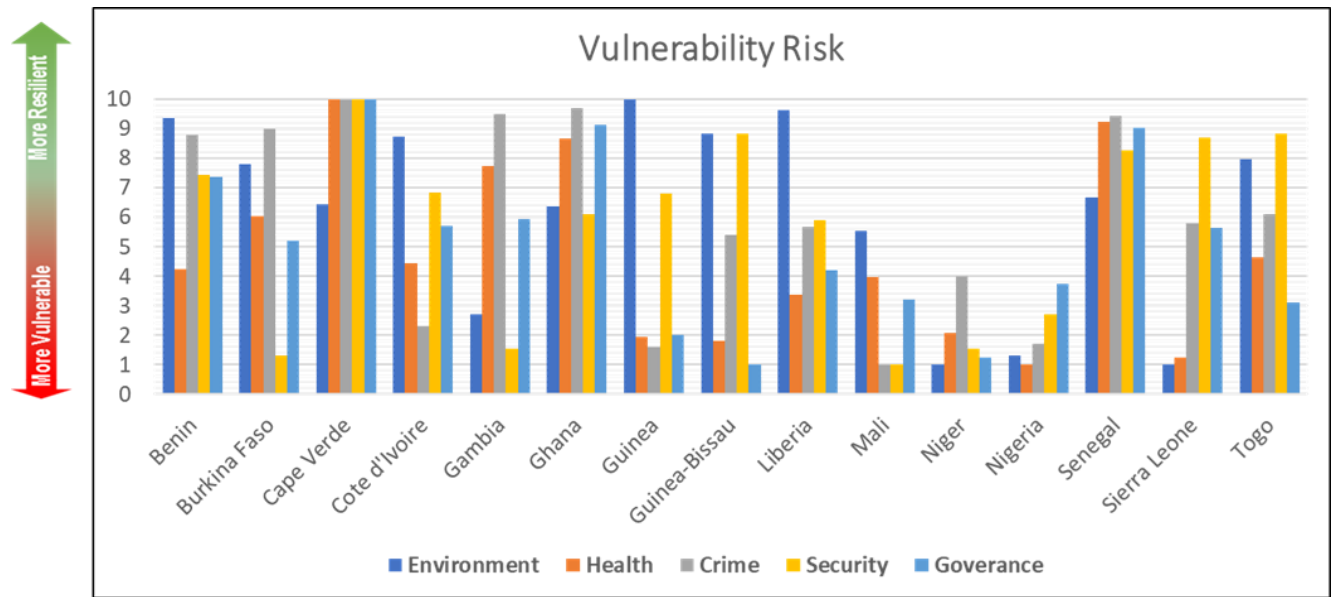
¹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/benin/outil-de-veille-multirisques-pour-les-pays-cotiers-dafrique-de-louest-benin-cote-divoire-ghana-togo-granit-au-31-janvier-2023>



RECOMMENDATIONS

Key Directorates and Departments	Key ECOWAS Protocols
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Directorate of Political Affaires• Directorate of Humanitarian and Social Affairs• ECOWAS Gender Development Center• WAHO• ECOWAS Youth & Sports Development Centre (EYSDC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance• ECOWAS Gender Policy 2004

- ❖ As the implementation of the ECOWAS Action Plan to fight terrorism takes center-stage in regional peace and security discourse, it is recommended that the *prevention through development approach* is also promoted to take center stage in order to ensure that adequate attention and resources are deployed to tackle the structural drivers of insecurity in the long-term.
- ❖ The ECOWAS Election Assistance Division may wish to consider drawing from the challenges identified during the ongoing voter registration process in Liberia to engage and support the election management body in tackling some of the encountered technical and capacity challenges prior to the elections.
- ❖ It is also recommended that ECOWAS continues to scale up its efforts in support of humanitarian actions with a focus on vulnerable groups.



Source: ECOWARN -ECOWAS Country Risk and Vulnerability (CRVA)