



## **Situation Room Brief (End of August 2021)**

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## ALGERIA BREAKS OFF DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH NEIGHBORING MOROCCO

On August 20, the Algerian presidency indicated its intention to “review its relations” with Rabat. At issue: alleged responsibility for the fires that ravaged part of the country. Algeria believes the Movement for Autonomy of Kabylia (MAK) is implicated. Algiers believes it to be supported by “Morocco and the Zionist entity”<sup>1</sup>. Algeria formally broke off diplomatic relations with neighboring Morocco on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> August 2021, with the foreign minister citing a series of alleged hostile acts<sup>2</sup>. He also denounced “massive and systematic acts of espionage” by Morocco, a reference to allegations that the kingdom’s security services used Israeli-made Pegasus spyware against its officials and citizenry, APS said.

The situation has been very tense between Algiers and Rabat for several years, and particularly since the Polisario Front, based in Algerian territory, announced in November 2020 the breakdown of the cease-fire and the resumption of hostilities against Morocco.

Apart from trade, which continues, political, diplomatic and security relations between the two neighbors have long been comatose. As for the land borders, they have been closed for 27 years<sup>3</sup>.

## ARAB LEAGUE AND OIC CALL FOR ALGERIA-MOROCCO DIALOGUE

The OIC “called for dialogue to resolve any possible differences”, a statement from the Jeddah-based organisation said on Wednesday. Saudi Arabia called on the nations “to prioritise dialogue” to help “achieve security and stability”, a foreign ministry statement read. Arab League Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul Gheit urged “both countries to exercise restraint and to avoid further escalation” in a statement late on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> August 2021<sup>4</sup>. Algiers has long been at odds with Rabat - particularly over Western Sahara, a former Spanish colony Morocco sees as an integral part of its territory, but where Algiers has supported the Polisario independence movement.

Their rivalry took a new twist last year when outgoing US president Donald Trump recognised Moroccan sovereignty over the territory, in exchange for Morocco normalising ties with Israel. For Algeria, that amounted to Rabat “introducing a foreign military force into the Maghreb”, in the words of Foreign Minister Ramtane Lamamra on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> August 2021. Morocco’s foreign ministry hit back, saying Algiers’ move was “completely unjustified”<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theafricareport.com/121545/algeria-breaks-off-relations-with-morocco-citing-fires-and-israel/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/africa-algeria-morocco-9eff366c7de2783f5f63efa03e026720>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.theafricareport.com/121545/algeria-breaks-off-relations-with-morocco-citing-fires-and-israel/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/26/arab-league-oic-dialogue-algeria-morocco-diplomatic-ties>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.news24.com/news24/africa/news/arab-league-oic-call-for-algeria-morocco-dialogue-amid-spat-20210826>

**LIBYA AND SUDAN AGREE TO ENFORCE REGIONAL BORDER MONITORING DEAL**

Sudan and Libya agreed on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> August 2021 to activate a regional security agreement to curb human trafficking and illegal immigration. Musa al-Koni Vice-President of the Libyan Presidential Council accompanied by the Libyan Minister of Immigration arrived in Khartoum on a two-day visit. The visiting Libyan delegation held a meeting with the Vice-Chairman of the Transitional Sovereign Council to discuss ways to activate joint border security agreements that include Chad and Niger<sup>6</sup>. In a related development, Sudanese Interior Minister Izz al-Din al-Sheikh held a separate meeting with the Libyan Minister of State

for Immigration to discuss efforts to curb illegal immigration and human trafficking<sup>7</sup>. Libya's neighbours have previously wanted to participate in conversations on the situation in Libya, stating that they are also affected by the turmoil.

Sudan, Libya, Chad, and Niger signed an agreement on June 2, 2018, calling for the deployment of a joint force to monitor borders and combat human trafficking, although it has yet to be implemented<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup>  
<https://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article6998>  
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<sup>7</sup> <https://newscentral.africa/2021/08/25/libya-sudan-to-enforce-regional-border-monitoring-deal/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://menaaffairs.com/sudan-libya-agree-to-implement-regional-border-monitoring-agreement/>

### NIGER: ARMY REPELS BOKO HARAM ATTACK

Africa 24 Website reported on the 25<sup>th</sup> of August 2021 that hundreds of Boko Haram militants attacked a military post in south-eastern Niger overnight, killing 16 soldiers and wounding nine more. On the same day, the defence ministry of Niger said in a statement that about 50 of the Islamist militants were killed in the resulting combat in the West African country's Diffa region and significant quantities of weapons were recovered<sup>9</sup>. The attack targeted the town of Baroua, where thousands of residents had only just returned after taking refuge elsewhere following jihadist massacres in 2015.

### NIGERIA SIGNS MILITARY COOPERATION AGREEMENT WITH RUSSIA

In 2019 already, President Muhammadu Buhari had expressed interest in a military pact with Russia, when he met with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin at a Russia-Africa summit. This was materialised this 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 2021 with the signature of a military cooperation deal between Nigeria and Russia. The Honourable Minister of Defence, Major General Bashir Salihi

MAGASHI (Rtd), who is on an official visit to Russia, signed on behalf of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, while the Director of the Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation, Dmitry Shugaev, signed for the Russian Federation<sup>10</sup>. According to the Nigerian embassy in Moscow, "The Agreement on Military-Technical Cooperation between both countries provides a legal framework for the supply of military equipment, provision of after sales services, training of personnel in respective educational establishments and technology transfer, among others"<sup>11</sup>.

It furthers "our bilateral cooperation with the Russian Federation in this area," Abdullahi Shehu, Nigeria's envoy to Russia, told VOA's Hausa Service by phone Thursday from Moscow. Nigeria already uses some Russian fighter jets and helicopters, alongside military equipment purchased from Western powers, such as the United States, according to Reuters news service. Shehu said the new five-year pact did not preclude more collaboration with "other strategic partners."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20210825-niger-army-repels-boko-haram-attack-says-16-soldiers-killed>

<sup>10</sup> <https://defence.gov.ng/2021/08/29/nigeria-signs-military-technical-cooperation-agreement-with-russia/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/nigeria-signs-military-cooperation-agreement-with-russia-2021-08-25/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.voanews.com/africa/nigeria-russia-sign-military-agreement>

### 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>13</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>14</sup>.

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

### 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

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.voanews.com/africa/cameroon-military-raids-separatist-held-roads-kill-seven-self-proclaimed-separatist-generals>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.voanews.com/africa/cameroon-military-raids-separatist-held-roads-kill-seven-self-proclaimed-separatist-generals>

security and stability of Sudan and Chad<sup>15</sup>.

#### SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN: REOPENING OF BORDERS AFTER 11 YEARS

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 2021, an article published on the website Theeastafrican reported that Sudan and South Sudan have agreed to open their borders after 11 years. after a meeting between South Sudan's President Salva Kiir and Sudan's Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, according to President Kiir's office<sup>16</sup>. Both leaders noted that the decision will be implemented on October 1, and trade between Khartoum and Juba will also resume on the same day. A joint statement released on Sunday said that the border will be opened at four crossings to allow free movement of goods and people. "The two countries agreed to start with four border crossings: Buram–Timsah in Western Behr El Ghazal state, Meram—Wanjok in Northern Behr El Ghazal State, Jebelain Renk in Upper Nile state and Kharasana–Pan Akuac in Unity state,"<sup>17</sup>. The agreement allows citizens of both countries to enjoy "freedom of residence, freedom of movement, freedom to undertake economic activity and freedom to acquire and dispose of the property." However, it is yet to be implemented<sup>18</sup>.

#### ERITREA: NEW US SANCTIONS OVER ETHIOPIA'S TIGRAY WAR

On Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 2021, The United States imposed new sanctions over Ethiopia's deadly Tigray conflict, as hundreds of thousands of people face famine conditions under a government blockade the U.S. has called a "siege" and

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.africanews.com/2021/08/31/sudan-chad-agree-to-boost-security-fight-cross-border-terror-threats/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/sudan-south-sudan-to-reopen-borders-3521412>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.statecraft.co.in/article/sudan-south-sudan-leaders-agree-to-reopen-borders-after-11-years>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.statecraft.co.in/article/sudan-south-sudan-leaders-agree-to-reopen-borders-after-11-years>

fighting spreads into other parts of the country<sup>19</sup>.

According to The Treasury Department, "The (Eritrean Defense Forces) have purposely shot civilians in the street and carried out systematic house-to-house searches, executing men and boys, and have forcibly evicted Tigrayan families from their residences and taken over their houses and property,". Eritrea's foreign ministry in a statement called the accusations unacceptable and challenged the U.S. to "bring the case to an

independent adjudication if it indeed has facts to prove its false allegations."<sup>20</sup>. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a separate statement Monday, "The United States will continue to identify and pursue action against those involved in serious human rights abuse in Ethiopia and prolonging the ongoing conflict and humanitarian crisis."<sup>21</sup>

#### SOMALIA: AL SHABAB ATTACKS SOMALI MILITARY BASE AND RECAPTURES CENTRAL TOWN

Al Shabab fighters stormed a military base in the centre of Somalia on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> August 2021 and recaptured a town it lost to government forces earlier this month<sup>22</sup>.

The Somali Army and Darawish forces responded with air strikes and "triumphed" over the attacking al Shabab forces, killing "several" combatants, according to state media which did not

providing details on casualties or the status of the military base or town<sup>23</sup>. Another source report that the government forces, especially the Danab and the Darawish of Galmudug, withdrew from the area during the attack, leaving al Shabab to take control of the area<sup>24</sup>. Somali security forces recaptured the town of Amaara in the central Galmudug region after al-Shabab militants briefly took over early Tuesday following a dawn attack<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/africa-ethiopia-eritrea-7993c81adef7cba4942f08c689f682f0>

<sup>20</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/africa-ethiopia-eritrea-7993c81adef7cba4942f08c689f682f0>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.voanews.com/africa/us-sanctions-eritrea-defense-official-over-ethiopia-tigray-conflict>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/al-shabaab-attacks-somali-military-base-captures-central-town-2021-08-24/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/al-shabaab-attacks-somali-military-base-captures-central-town-2021-08-24/>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.wionews.com/world/al-shabaab-militants-attack-military-base-recapture-somalian-town-from-govt-forces-408112>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.voanews.com/extremism-watch/somali-forces-recapture-town-after-brief-al-shabab-seizure>

## FLASH

- **Sudan: UN agrees to withdraw Ethiopian troops from Abyei: statement**

The United Nations will replace the Ethiopian force deployed in the Abyei Area with troops from other countries. Contributing to UN peacekeeping operations, Sudan announced on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2021. Khartoum had asked the United Nations last April to withdraw the Ethiopian force from the border town on the grounds that Addis was no longer a neutral party. "It is not conceivable to accept Ethiopian forces deployed in the strategic depth of Sudan while the Ethiopian troops are massing on the eastern borders of Sudan," said the Sudanese foreign minister on 6 April 2021<sup>26</sup>. "Foreign Minister Mariam al-Mahdi held a virtual meeting with the UN Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa... in which they agreed to withdraw the Ethiopian contingent from the Interim Security Force in Abyei within three months, at the request of Sudan," Sudanese state news agency SUNA reported late Monday<sup>27</sup>.

- **Chadian history: Hissene Habre dies of COVID-19 at 79**

Chad's former president, Hissene Habre died of Covid in Senegal on the 24<sup>th</sup> of August 2021. He was 79. After serving as prime minister for four years, Habre deposed President Goukouni Oueddei in 1982, beginning his eight years as head of state<sup>28</sup>. After being deposed by Idriss Deby Itno in 1990, Hissene Habre lived in exile in the Senegalese capital, in an upmarket suburb with his wife and children. But the former strongman – who was dubbed "Africa's Pinochet" – was eventually arrested in 2013 and tried by a special tribunal set up by the African Union (AU) under a deal with Senegal<sup>29</sup>. He is known to be the first former head of state to be convicted of crimes against humanity by an African court after his government was accused of killing 40,000 people<sup>30</sup>.

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<https://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article69981>

<sup>27</sup> <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2021/08/24/UN-to-withdraw-Ethiopian-peacekeeping-force-on-Sudan-s-request-Khartoum>

<sup>28</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/africa-health-coronavirus-pandemic-4f71f10dfecf8eb1dc8ed33c87508b2c>

<sup>29</sup>

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/24/chad-s-former-president-hissene-habre-dies-of-covid-aged-79>

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