

# Dateline Africa

## No end in sight for Sudan's civil war

**1 MARCH 2023 - 31 MAY 2023**



Civil war in Sudan Source: Wikimedia Commons

The world has been shaken by the fierce fighting between the two rival military factions in Sudan, following failure, earlier in April, to sign a long-promised agreement naming a civilian government. Sudan fell under military rule after a coup in October 2021. The country enjoyed a brief period of hope after the ousting of then-president, Omar al Bashir, in 2019. The civil war is particularly intense in Khartoum, the capital, and in Darfur. Efforts towards a truce have failed repeatedly.

### MAY

**31 May:** Ama Ata Aidoo, the legendary African writer and feminist died at home in Ghana aged 81 years.

Her classic works *The Dilemma of a Ghost* and *Changes* were taught to children in West African schools for decades. In 1965, she was the first African woman to publish a play. Aidoo lectured at the University of Ghana and was briefly the county's education minister from 1982 to 1983.

**29 May:** Kenyan President William Ruto said four African countries plan to connect the Indian and Atlantic Oceans through a new trans-African railway line. He was speaking at a conference on the African Continental Free Trade Area in Nairobi. Talks involve Kenya, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Congo (Brazzaville)



APOPO trainer in Tanzania Source: Unknown

**26 May:** Rats are being trained to sniff out tuberculosis in laboratories in Tanzania and Kenya, transforming the way the disease is detected. The African giant pouched rat is already renowned for finding land mines. Now its remarkable sense of smell is being used to detect TB, an infectious disease that mostly affects poor communities. The

rats replace laborious microscope tests. The rats work with scientists at APOPO, a Belgian NGO, based in Tanzania.



Aftermath of Cyclone Freddy Source: Malawi Red Cross Society

**23 May:** The Center for Disaster Philanthropy (CDP) announced record-breaking Cyclone Freddy was the longest-lived tropical cyclone ever recorded and is now **officially Earth's most energetic storm ever observed**. At least 1,434 people died: at least 1,216 people in Malawi, with 537 people reported missing and presumed dead; 198 in Mozambique, 17 in Madagascar, two in Zimbabwe, and one in Mauritius. It created what was called a triple humanitarian crisis; the storm itself significantly intensified an already serious cholera outbreak in worst-hit Malawi and Mozambique and magnified the threat of food insecurity across the region, leaving millions at risk.

### APRIL

**29 April:** President William Ruto of Kenya, in a public discussion, criticised "Africa plus one conferences" as demeaning: "We have these meetings, Africa-US meeting, Africa-Europe, Africa-Turkey, Africa-India, Africa-Russia and Africa-Japan. We have made the decision >>>

that it is not intelligent for 54 of us to go and sit before one gentleman from another place.” He said the African Union has decided that in future discussions between Africa and any other country, Africa will be represented by the chair of the AU Commission and the chairs of five Regional Economic Communities (RECs). “We respect the sovereignty of others. I think to ask for reciprocity is not to ask for too much”.

**29 April:** Africa’s population will more than double by 2100, Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, said at the 2023 Ibrahim Governance Weekend (IGW), hosted by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation in Nairobi, Kenya. He said its youth will be half of the world’s youth, which “is an immeasurable potential for initiative, creativity and productive growth in all areas of human assets...This will be Africa’s century.”

**25 April:** The South African Presidency announced that “South Africa will work to invigorate the Malabo protocol,” which extends the jurisdiction of the proposed African Court of Justice and Human Rights (ACJHR) to crimes under international law and transnational crimes. The Court will have jurisdiction to try 14 different crimes, including genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The protocol has to be ratified by at least 15 African Union members before it takes effect. None had signed to date.



Anger over Wuambushu Source: Unknown

**23 April:** France launched military operation Wuambushu (“take back” in the local language) to force undocumented migrants in Mayotte to

the Comoran island of Anjouan, 70km away. Fierce clashes broke out between the island’s residents and the 1,800 members of the French security forces deployed, including hundreds sent from mainland France. [Le Monde](#) reported the “new generation of riot police” used at least 650 tear gas grenades, 85 sting-ball grenades, and 60 rubber bullet gun shots. The campaign, authorised by France’s President Emmanuel Macron, ostensibly aimed to dismantle shanty towns, expel irregular migrants and combat crime on the island. Mayotte is the only one of the four Comoros islands that remains French. The others formed the Union of Comoros after declaring their independence from France in 1974

**19 April:** At least 78 people were killed in a stampede in the Yemeni capital of Sanaa as residents gathered at a school to receive cash donations distributed by merchants during Ramadan, highlighting [Yemen’s dire humanitarian crisis](#).

**1 April:** In Kenya over 960,000 public servants, including parliamentarians, had not been paid their March salaries. The cash crunch was due to the urgent need to pay off interest on foreign loans to avoid defaulting on government debt.

## MARCH



Paul Rusesabagina Source: Flickr

**25 March:** The Rwandan rights activist Paul Rusesabagina, regarded a hero for saving lives during the Rwandan genocide, was released from a 25-year prison sentence. An outspoken

opponent of Rwandan President Paul Kagame, Rusesabagina was living in the US when he was “renditioned” back to Rwanda in 2020 after being abducted by the Rwandan government. He returned to the US after his release, which was negotiated by Qatar.

**21 March:** The Indian army hosted 10 days of joint military exercises with armies from eight African countries — Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Niger, Seychelles, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia — in Pune, Maharashtra. Another 12 countries attended as observers (Botswana, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, the Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, Sudan, South Africa). The second Africa-India Joint Exercise (AFINDEX), it focused on Humanitarian Mine Assistance and United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. It was linked to a trade show featuring Indian defence equipment and security technologies.

**18 March:** British Home Secretary Suella Braverman visited the capital of Rwanda, Kigali, where she visited two housing estates earmarked for asylum seekers the British government intends to deport to Rwanda “for processing”. The deportation plan caused an outcry in the UK when it was announced No illegal immigrants have been deported yet due to court challenges, but the UK has already paid Rwanda about US\$169 million for its cooperation.

**13 March:** The UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (SPT) reported “entrenched” ill treatment in prisons, poor detention conditions and allegations of corruption in South Africa following its first visit. Abdallah Ounnir, head of the subcommittee’s delegation, said: “There is an urgent need for South Africa to establish a national preventive mechanism” in order to comply with the [Convention against Torture](#) it signed in 2019. **NA**