



SECURITY EXCHANGE



## Security Exchange InTouch Monthly - January 2023





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## AFRICA

### Somalia: Violent protests rock Las Anod

Over the past two months, a decades-old conflict over the disputed city of Las Anod has bubbled to the surface amid bloody protests and worsening political tensions. Since December, at least 80 people have been killed, scores have been injured, and more than 80,000 have been displaced during a violent crackdown on dissent by Somaliland officials. The implications of the conflict are significant, exposing deeply rooted clan-based divisions and the fragility of Somalia's political landscape.

Las Anod is in the Sool region of Somaliland, a self-declared autonomous state that is not recognised by the international community. The city was incorporated into Somaliland when the region declared its independence in 1991, but it has also since been claimed by neighbouring Puntland, a semi-autonomous region. Las Anod has historically been the epicentre of anti-secessionist sentiment in the region. Traditional leaders and local militias in the Sool, Sanaag, and Cayn (SSC) region - a third of Somaliland's territory - have expressed long-standing support for Somali unification and the creation of a new state within federal Somalia. According to various sources, a significant proportion of the region's population feels the same way, and the Dhulbahante clan - the majority clan in the area - has traditionally opposed Somaliland's secession. In December 2022, reports emerged that a young politician was assassinated in Las Anod. The politician was linked to Wadaani, Somaliland's largest opposition party, and a member of the Dhulbahante. Las Anod residents staged large protests in response, expressing frustration with Somaliland authorities' lack of interest in investigating the killing and reiterating calls for the city's reunification with the federal state of Somalia. Somaliland troops responded by attacking protesters with live bullets and shelling several neighbourhoods to retake the city. Local sources have reported that authorities cut off water and electricity to the city during the shelling and that the armed forces have targeted hospitals and ambulances.

Somaliland's security forces reportedly withdrew from the city in early January but resumed attacks on civilians on 5 February. Amid the violence, regional relationships have soured. The presidents of Puntland and Somaliland have traded accusations, with each accusing the other of starting the violence and using rhetoric to fuel the protests. In late January, civil society groups and clan leaders from the SSC region held a nine-day conference. They publicly condemned the Somaliland administration, calling it a "secessionist" organisation and declaring its rule over the region illegal. As of the publication of this newsletter, the Somaliland government is not in control of Las Anod. The region's troops are continuing efforts to retake the city, and local militias supporting reunification have taken up arms in retaliation. The recent events in Las Anod pose a risk to the security of north-western Somalia on multiple levels. For regional politics, the situation threatens Somaliland's administration and its claim of independence. Growing anti-secessionist sentiment amongst critical regional actors and strained relations with Puntland could erode any legitimacy the self-declared independent state of Somaliland may have had and signify a high risk of further destabilisation. The most significant concern, however, is the risk of a continued escalation of the conflict. If the violence spreads beyond Las Anod, the result could be a high number of casualties and an acute humanitarian crisis.

The Las Anod conflict also threatens Somalia's national security, as any involvement by the federal government in Mogadishu would be problematic. The Somali government is not technically able to intervene because of Somaliland's de facto independence, and it is already heavily engaged in counter-insurgency efforts against al-Shabaab. However, if the federal government is forced to intervene, such measures would reduce resources available in the fight against jihadist militants and allow al-Shabaab to continue its expansion unchecked. This is already a concern for Somaliland, as the power vacuum caused by the Las Anod conflict could stand as an opportunity for al-Shabaab to move into north-western Somalia and compromise an area usually considered a shining example of stability. Moreover, the continued violence and displacement in Las Anod will inevitably exacerbate Somalia's already dire humanitarian situation. Resources are already stretched thin as the country grapples with its fifth consecutive failed rainy season, the persistent threat of famine, and the resulting mass displacement crisis.

The current situation in Las Anod is rapidly evolving and immensely complex, but what is clear is that the conflict has significant political, security, and humanitarian implications. This historic clash of interests and the damage to relationships between traditional, regional, and state authorities will have to be addressed if there is any hope for a lasting resolution.





## Central African Republic

16 January 2023: Two Wagner operatives killed near Abba, Nana-Mambéré

On Saturday, two Wagner group operatives were killed and three others were injured during clashes near Abba, Nana-Mambéré. The incident occurred in the morning local time when rebels from the 3R and the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CCC) attacked a Wagner position at a Yidéré mining site.

## Nigeria

16 January 2023: Armed suspects kidnap 25 people in Kankara attack

Armed suspects reportedly kidnapped at least 25 people during an attack in Kankara, Katsina State, on Sunday. The suspects targeted the New Life for All Church in Jan-Tsauni, Gidan Harun, at around 10:00 local time. Security personnel are searching for the victims.

## The Gambia

18 January 2023: Vice president dies following short illness

On Tuesday, Gambia's President Adama Barrow announced that Vice President Bandara Aieu Joof has died. The vice president reportedly passed away in India "after a short illness". Joof was appointed vice president in 2022 after serving as education minister for five years. Sources say the vice president had not been seen publicly for months before his death.

## DR Congo

19 January 2023: Dozens of bodies found in mass graves in Ituri

Dozens of bodies have reportedly been found in mass graves in Ituri. According to a UN spokesperson, 42 bodies were discovered in the village of Nyamamba and seven others were found in Mbogi. This week, UN peacekeepers were deployed to the area after reports of attacks on civilians by CODECO militants.

## Chad

19 January 2023: Dozens killed during security operation in Moyen-Chari

On Thursday, at least 77 people were killed during a military operation in Moyen-Chari. The operation was launched in the morning local time after security forces received intelligence on the presence of militants in the area. The victims include 14 soldiers and 63 rebels. The exact location of the incident was not reported.

## Somalia

20 January 2023: Al-Shabaab fighters target troops in Galcad

Al-Shabaab militants have launched an attack against government troops in the contested town of Galcad. The Somali government confirmed that seven soldiers were killed and said more than 100 al-Shabaab fighters also died. The militant group had earlier claimed to have killed 159 soldiers and seized more than 40 army vehicles. The figures from both sides have not been independently verified.

## South Africa

20 January 2023: Teenager shot dead in Mitchells Plain

An 18-year-old boy has been shot dead in the Mitchells Plain area of Cape Town. Police said Wakeel Dreyer was shot 17 times outside a shop on Thursday afternoon. He had been due to collect his school exam results on Friday. "The unknown suspects fled the scene and are yet to be arrested. The motive for the attack is yet to be determined," said Warrant Officer Joseph Swartbooi.

## Mozambique

23 January 2023: Residents attack health worker in Balaka

On Sunday, a health worker was injured during a mob lynching in Balaka, Southern Region. Suspects attacked the victim at the Nandumbo Health Centre in the Area of Traditional Authority Kalembo, prompting some health workers to flee. Balaka residents have reportedly accused health workers of contributing to the rise in cholera cases in the area.

## Ethiopia

30 January 2023: Twenty people kidnapped in West Shewa

Twenty people were kidnapped by unidentified armed assailants in West Shewa, Oromia yesterday afternoon. The incident occurred at the Dangote cement factory, in Muger, at around 16:30 local time. No suspects have been identified.

## South Sudan

30 January 2023: Sixteen killed, eight injured after armed attack in Twic

Sixteen people were killed and eight others were injured following an armed attack in Twic, Warrap yesterday morning. The incident occurred in Turalei at around 10:00 local time. According to reports, the gunmen belonged to Abyei and Unity State criminal organisations. No arrests have been made.

## AMERICAS

### US: Balloongate

On 4 February, the US ordered the downing of an unidentified balloon spotted flying over Billings, Montana. As the apparatus' functions were being examined and remained unclear, the US spotted two more of the objects flying over South Carolina and Michigan just a few days later. Amid the uncertainty surrounding the purpose of the objects, the Biden administration promptly suspected China of spying and targeting security facilities, which led to legislative momentum in Congress. Shortly after, the House Financial Services Committee promoted a 17-bill package aimed at hindering China's economic and financial strength.

Even though China maintained that the first balloon was intended for meteorological and scientific research, the airspace incident highlighted the fragility of US-China relations. The uncertainty surrounding the ordeal promptly forced Washington's top diplomat, Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, to postpone his planned trip to Beijing. The trip was aimed at coordinating efforts to build a more stable relationship which never fully recovered from a commercial policy dispute brought on by the Trump administration in 2016.

Moreover, the incident exposed some of the challenges of navigating the complex relationship between the US and China. Considering the current political polarization in the US, the fact that a more-aggressive China policy carries bipartisan support puts the Biden administration under pressure to act swiftly and firmly. Furthermore, the incident has raised questions regarding international law and airspace sovereignty. While China maintains that the so-called 'spy' balloon was an unmanned weather airship that was accidentally blown off course, the object's capabilities are still being examined by counter-intelligence officers. China's defensive tone later gave way to a more aggressive response from Beijing, producing hints that a US surveillance satellite might be shot down in retaliation. Though improbable, the action would be in breach of international airspace law, and the rhetoric has now been recently toned down by both Beijing and Washington. However, China opted to blacklist Lockheed & Martin and Raytheon Technologies, two US military technology providers on 16 February.

The recent incidents involving mutual escalations, including US sanctions on a Chinese company conducting business with Russia's paramilitary Wagner Group and a likely US ban on all trade with Chinese tech giant Huawei, have added to the already-fragile relationship between the two. The facts bode poorly for Presidents Biden and Xi as they attempt a political détente. Efforts to build a 'more stable floor' under the relationship will prove easier said than done amid structurally intensifying strategic competition and a complete absence of trust.

Moreover, the US-China relationship - currently a fragile one - could face further strain soon as China grows closer to Russia and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy travels to Taiwan in an effort to tighten the screws on China's tech sector. Given both countries' geopolitical might, efforts will likely be focused on how the two countries navigate these challenges.



## Venezuela

16 January 2023: Two state police officers shot and killed in Sucre

Two state police officers were shot and killed in Sucre, Miranda on Saturday evening. The incident occurred on Main Street in the Las Casitas area of El Winche, at around 21:00 local time. No arrests have been made.

## Mexico

17 January 2023: Two people kidnapped and killed in Reynosa

Two people were kidnapped and killed in Reynosa, Tamaulipas. Police discovered the bodies at 6 Nuevo León Street, in Rodríguez, earlier this morning after the victims has been taken some 24 hours earlier. No arrests have been made.

## Peru

20 January 2023: One dead, dozens injured as nationwide protests continue

One person died and at least ten others were injured during violent clashes between demonstrators and security officers along the Añashuayco Bridge in Cerro Colorado, Arequipa. Three others were injured during clashes outside Juliaca Airport (JUL) Eight others were injured during clashes in Lima, as protesters clashed with security at the San Martín Plaza, Dos de Mayo Plaza, UMSM University, and Abanacay Avenue. Citizens had to be evacuated from a building on 11 Jirón Carabaya as it was set on fire.

## Honduras

20 January 2023: Two people kidnapped and killed in San Pedro Sula

Two people were kidnapped and killed in San Pedro Sula, Cortés. Police discovered the bodies along the Ticamaya Road at around 09:00 local time after they had been reported missing a few days prior. No arrests have been made.

## Argentina

23 January 2023: One killed, four injured after shooting in Graneros

One person was killed and four others were injured following a shooting in Graneros, O'Higgins on Saturday evening. The incident occurred in San Ramón, at around 00:30 local time. According to police, the incident was gang-related. No arrests have been made.

## USA

24 January 2023: Two students killed, teacher injured after school shooting in Des Moines, IA

Two students were killed and one teacher was injured following a school shooting in Des Moines, Iowa yesterday afternoon. The incident occurred at 455 Southwest 5th Street, at around 12:45 local time. Police said they arrested three suspects at the scene.

## Brazil

25 January 2023: Two suspects killed during shootout with police in São Gonçalo

Two armed suspects were killed during a shootout with police in São Gonçalo, Rio de Janeiro yesterday morning. The incident occurred in Jardim Catarina, during the early morning hours.

## Colombia

30 January 2023: Nine ELN members, one soldier killed after clashes in Buenaventura

Nine ELN members and one soldier were killed during clashes in Buenaventura, Valle de Cauca yesterday. The incident occurred in the Raposo River area, at an undisclosed time.

## Jamaica

30 January 2023: Four killed, six injured after shootings in Kingston

Four people were killed and six others were injured following separate shooting attacks in Kingston, Surrey yesterday evening. Two people were killed and two others were injured on Luke Lane at around 17:00 local time. Two others were killed and four others were injured on Chestnut Lane, in Tivoli Gardens, at around 21:00 local time. No arrests have been reported for either incident.

## Haiti

30 January 2023: MSF suspends hospital activity after patient was assassinated in Port-au-Prince

Médécins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) announced the suspension of its activities at the Raoul Pierre Louis Hospital in Port-au-Prince. The measure was taken after a patient was assassinated by three armed suspects on Friday afternoon. No arrests have been made.

## Cuba

31 January 2023: Five dead, 12 missing, 11 rescued after migrant boat capsized in Cárdenas

Five people died, 12 went missing and 11 were rescued after a migrant boat capsized off the coast of Cárdenas, Matanzas on Sunday. The incident occurred north of Cayo Cruz del Padre at an unreported time.





## ASIA

### Pakistan: Peshawar mosque blast highlights growing threat

The recent deadly bombing of a mosque in Peshawar city, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, has highlighted deteriorating security in parts of Pakistan, following last year's breakdown in a ceasefire between the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the Pakistani government. The 30 January bombing is believed to have killed at least 100 victims and was carried out by a single suicide bomber, who targeted a mosque within a police headquarters compound in the high-security Police Lines area of central Peshawar.

The blast occurred at around 13:30 local time, during afternoon prayers on Monday 30 January, when between 300 to 400 police officers were believed to be in the area at the time. The mosque is one of the most heavily controlled areas of the city, adjacent to police headquarters, as well as intelligence and counter-terrorism bureaus. Police investigating the recent attack have suggested that the suicide bomber – who had reportedly dressed as a police officer – potentially also had inside help in order to successfully infiltrate the highly fortified compound.

The attack was claimed by the Jamaat-ul-Ahrar (JuA) terrorist group – a faction of the TTP. The JuA indicated the bombing had been carried out to avenge the death of JuA founder and former leader Omar Khalid Khorasani – who died in a roadside bombing in Afghanistan last year. Meanwhile a TTP spokesperson condemned any attack on mosques as a sacred offence, distancing the group from JuA's claim of responsibility in a separate statement: "Regarding the Peshawar incident, we consider it necessary to clarify that Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan has nothing to do with this incident. According to our laws and general constitution, any action in mosques, madrasas, funerals grounds and other sacred places is an offence," said TTP spokesperson Muhammad Khorasani.

Following the bombing, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif strongly condemned the attack, stating that the "brutal killing of Muslims prostrating before Allah is against the teachings of the Quran" and that the targeting of a mosque presented "proof that the attackers have nothing to do with Islam". Sharif travelled to Peshawar in the wake of the attack to visit victims in hospital. During the emergency visit, he indicated that he believed terrorism to be the country's "foremost national security challenge". Meanwhile, ex-PM Imran Khan has increased pressure on government authorities and the security forces to improve intelligence gathering and to better equip police forces to combat the threat of terrorism.

Located in the fringes of Pakistan's tribal districts which border neighbouring Afghanistan, the city of Peshawar has often been the site of violent militant attacks. Last year, the Islamic State (IS) claimed a deadly bomb attack on a Shia mosque in the city, which killed at least 61 people. The city serves as the provincial capital for the restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, which has seen a notable uptick in violence since the TTP ended their ceasefire with the Pakistani government in November 2022. The latest attack has come during a particularly rocky period of instability and insecurity in the region – which has been hard-hit by a cost of living crisis, made worse by devastating floods last year – with many residents taking to the streets in recent weeks to protest against the deteriorating situation there.



## Nepal

### 15 January 2023: Plane crashes near Pokhara

At least 66 people have been killed after a plane crashed near Pokhara airport. The ATR 72 aircraft was travelling from Kathmandu with 72 people on board when it came down on Sunday morning. "I am deeply saddened by the sad and tragic accident of Yeti Airlines ANC ATR 72 which was flying from Kathmandu to Pokhara with passengers," said Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, who also called an emergency cabinet meeting in response to the accident. Rescue operations are ongoing but no survivors have been found so far.

## Indonesia

### 24 January 2023: Floods and landslides kill two in West Sumatra

Flooding and landslides have led to the deaths of at least two people in the West Sumatra province. The deaths have been reported overnight, in the Padang Pariaman Regency, where heavy rainfall has triggered disruptive floods and landslides. Impacted areas include Batang Anai, Ulakan Tapakis, Lubuk Alung, Nan Sabaris, Sintuak Toboh Gadang, VII Koto, V Koto, Anam Lingkuang, 2X11 Six Lingkung, and 2X11 Kayu Tanam, while the main road connecting Padang Pariaman to Agam in the Sungai Geringgin district has also been major affected.

## Papua New Guinea

### 24 January 2023: Tribal clashes reported in Jiwaka

Tribal clashes have apparently broken out in the Jiwaka province, leaving at least seven people dead. Local reports indicate that the deadly fighting is believed to have erupted in the North Waghi area of the province over the weekend, where the Wika tribal community is said to have clashed with the Waka community near Nondugl. It's claimed the Wika tribe was accused of stealing livestock amid recent Chinese Lunar New Year festivities - leading to a confrontation which allegedly escalated violently.

## Australia

### 25 January 2023: Two die in Sydney police chase

Two people have reportedly died amid a recent police chase in Sydney. The police chase involved a road accident which occurred on the M4 highway in Strathfield, shortly before 00:30 local time on Tuesday morning. According to reports, police officers gave chase after attempting to stop a vehicle for speeding. Both victims are understood to be the driver and a passenger of the vehicle being chased by police.

## Myanmar

### 27 January 2023: Dozens killed amid Kawkaik clashes

Several dozen people have allegedly been killed amid recent clashes in the Kawkaik area of Kayin state. Local reports claim that major fighting between anti-junta resistance forces and junta troops has been ongoing in the area since the weekend, entering its seventh consecutive day on Friday 27 January. It's claimed the clashes erupted when resistance groups ambushed a junta detachment of 150 troops near Kyondoe last week, triggering widespread violence as other armed resistance groups allegedly joined the fight.

## Philippines

### 27 January 2023: Midsalip police shooting kills one

An exchange of fire which allegedly broke out between a criminal suspect and police in the Midsalip area of Zamboanga del Sur on Wednesday has allegedly resulted in the death of at least one person. According to local sources, the fatality was incurred after police opened fire on a suspected gang member amid a confrontation. The suspect was reported to have been armed, with police allegedly seizing a rifle and ammunition from the deceased's body.

## New Zealand

### 28 January 2023: Auckland declares emergency amid floods

Auckland has declared a state of emergency amid flooding caused by torrential downpours. The floods have triggered widespread disruption and evacuations, while power cuts have also impacted some areas. The city is understood to have received 75 percent of its average seasonal rainfall within a 15-hour period on Friday. The New Zealand Defence Force is helping with evacuations and emergency shelters have been set up across the city. So far, at least three deaths have been reported.

## Afghanistan

### 30 January 2023: Dozens killed in Peshawar mosque blast

Dozens of people have reportedly been killed amid a suspected bombing at a mosque in the high-security Police Lines area of central Peshawar. The explosion has occurred on Monday morning, when a major blast apparently impacted a section of the mosque building whilst it was packed with worshippers. Some 32 fatalities have been confirmed amid initial reports and more than 150 others have also been injured; however, it's feared the death toll could rise further still. The mosque was located in the same complex as a police headquarters and most of those dead are police force members. No immediate claim of responsibility has been made for the deadly blast so far.





## EUROPE

### Germany: Letzte generation protests

Known as the 'Klimakleber' (the 'climate glueers') in German, activists from the Letzte Generation (aka 'Last Generation') protest group have gained media attention in recent months for causing increasingly disruptive roadblocks by gluing themselves to streets as they demonstrate over a global climate crisis. The group's aim has largely been to help improve environmental awareness and to discourage the use of fossil fuels and has performed hundreds of small-scale protest stunts in Germany, Austria, and Italy over the last year.

Letzte Generation activists have targeted key roads during busy traffic times in dozens of cities across Germany – particularly Berlin, but also in Bremen, Cologne, Constance, Dresden, Dusseldorf, Freiburg, Gottingen, Hamburg, Hanover, Heidelberg, Leipzig, Ludwigsburg, Luneburg, Marburg, Munich, Potsdam, Weusbaden, and Ulm, among other places. Meanwhile, in neighbouring Austria, most road protests held under the Letzte Generation banner have been taking place in the Austrian capital city of Vienna, although several protests have been held in other cities in recent weeks, including Graz, Innsbruck, Klagenfurt am Worthersee, and Linz. The German environmental group has sister organisations in other parts of Europe as well, gaining momentum as a grassroots-driven movement. In Italy, Letzte Generation activists are known under their Italian moniker: 'Ultima Generazione', and have held rallies in Florence, Milan, and Rome in recent months. In Rome, activists also appeared to take inspiration from a recent 'Just Stop Oil' protest stunt in London, by attempting to throw soup at a painting by Vincent van Gogh in Rome's Palazzo Bonaparte in November. The action was again mirrored by activists in Germany, who threw mashed potato at a Monet painting in Potsdam.

The protests typically appear to be planned at short notice via social media groups, with the aim of striking affected areas with little-to-no warning. In the past, police and the emergency services have been quick to respond to protest sites, working rapidly to remove protesters from the roads within the hour; however, congestion, traffic delays, and general disruption often impact the immediate and surrounding areas significantly. While the protests are mostly non-violent, motorists have been known on occasion to engage in verbal and physical confrontations with the activists. Some 370 protest actions were led by activists affiliated with the group over the course of last year and the tally for 2023 already looks set to build on that figure, after a December raid on activists' apartments in Germany only served to add fuel to the fire.

While the main overall arching aim of the protests is to raise awareness of the global environmental crisis by encouraging governments to reduce fossil fuel consumption, many of the protests being organised more specifically target localised governments with proposed policy changes highlighting how local authorities might best do their part, such as: introducing speed limits, reduced-cost regional train passes, as well as investing more into renewable energy development plans. The movement has yet to achieve much headway in terms of reaching grassroots solutions; however, it has been successful to a degree, in that it has managed to raise awareness of the group's cause and purpose, using social media and press coverage to elevate the Letzte Generation movement to a similar level of notoriety as more prominent environmental activist groups, such as Extinction Rebellion, Just Stop Oil, and Fridays for Future.



## France

### 15 January 2023: British woman killed by avalanche in French Alps

A British woman has been killed by an avalanche in the French Alps. The unnamed victim was hiking with two friends on the Argentière Glacier, which is part of Mont Blanc, when they were caught on Saturday. A specialist high mountain search and rescue unit from Chamonix were alerted and a team deployed via helicopter.

## Netherlands

### 18 January 2023: The Hague shooting injures one

A shooting incident which has recently occurred in The Hague has left at least one person wounded. The shooting apparently took place on Tuesday morning, at around 09:00 local time in the Hertzogstraat area of The Hague's Transvaal district. The victim has been identified as a woman, who was reportedly shot at multiple times by a male assailant in the street. The police cordoned off the street for investigation, while no arrests have been made so far.

## Bosnia & Herzegovina

### 20 January 2023: One killed in Sagarejo shooting

At least one person has reportedly been killed amid a recent shooting incident which is purported to have occurred on Thursday in the Sagarejo area of Kakheti. While one person has been confirmed dead, several others are also alleged to have been injured amid the incident, with an internal affairs ministry employee also thought to be among the casualties. Reports indicated the attacker opened fire from the balcony of a residential building near Geo Hospital, firing on the victims before then turning their gun on themselves. An investigation into the possible motive behind the attack has been launched.

## Denmark

### 23 January 2023: Fatal Dragor shooting kills one

A deadly shooting incident which has apparently occurred in the Dragor area of the Capital Region has allegedly resulted in the death of at least one person. The killing is reported to have occurred on Sunday evening at around 18:30 local time, near Dragor Fort in the Prins Knuds Daemning area of Dragor. The incident is believed to have been a targeted attack, although details surrounding the motive have yet to be confirmed as police investigations get underway. Two suspects have already been arrested in connection with the killing.

## UK

### 26 January 2023: Refugee groups protest in Brighton

A demonstration has been staged in the southern coastal town of Brighton, West Sussex. The protest was organised by several refugee groups to call for action amid the recent disappearance of some 137 unaccompanied children refugees, who had been housed in hotels assigned by the Home Office but have since been relocated without clear traceable links to their new accommodation. The demonstration has been staged in front of the Jubilee Clock Tower.

## Germany

### 26 January 2023: Two killed amid train knife attack near Hamburg

Two deaths have been reported, while several other people have also been injured amid a knife attack which purportedly occurred on a train in northern Germany on Wednesday. The stabbing apparently happened on a regional train travelling between the cities of Hamburg and Kiel. The suspect is alleged to have been identified as a 33-year-old Palestinian asylum seeker, who is currently receiving treatment for injuries after being arrested at a Brokstedt train station.

## Spain

### 26 January 2023: One killed in Algeciras church machete attacks

One person has been killed and at least one other has also been injured amid church machete attacks in Algeciras, southern Spain. The casualties were incurred after a man wielding a machete carried out the attacks at two churches on Wednesday evening, at around 19:00 local time, when the man entered the church of San Isidro in Algeciras and seriously injured a priest. The suspect then went to a second church and stabbed a verger to death. Police have since detained the suspect, while investigators are treating the incident as terror-related.

## Italy

### 31 January 2023: One killed in Lazio shooting

One person has been confirmed dead following a fatal shooting incident in the Alatri area of Lazio on Monday. The shooting is reported to have taken place on Monday evening, at around 20:00 local time, outside a pizzeria in the historic part of the town centre, where an 18-year-old male was apparently shot in the head in what appears to have been a targeted killing. Two unidentified assailants are claimed to have ambushed the victim, in what police suspect was a planned attack linked to rival youth gangs. No arrests have been made so far.





## MENA

### Turkey: Scale of devastation raises questions for the state

The two powerful earthquakes that struck southern Turkey on 6 February have devastated the country, along with much of northern Syria. To date more than 36,000 people have been killed in Turkey and 6,000 in Syria, although the death toll is expected to continue to rise as rescue efforts switch to recovery operations on both sides of the border. Entire cities have been largely destroyed and millions of people have been made homeless, forced to sleep in tents and temporary shelters provided by aid organisations or, in Turkey's case, the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD).

In Turkey, the scale of the destruction has raised questions about why buildings were not built to survive in an earthquake zone, especially those constructed since new regulations were introduced after the 1999 earthquake in Izmit, which killed 17,000 people. The standards were updated as recently as 2018 to include stricter regulations for seismic resistance, fire protection measures, and improved energy performance policies. According to AFAD, Turkey ranks third in the world in terms of earthquake-related casualties and experiences at least one 5.0-magnitude earthquake every year. The authorities has already issued arrest warrants for dozens of people linked to the construction industry and the Justice Ministry ordered the chief public prosecutor's office to carry out investigations in the 10 provinces impacted by the quakes. The process will take a long time – more than 64,000 buildings were destroyed and it could take prosecutors months to identify all contractors, engineers and building inspectors who worked on these projects.

For President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the disaster could have significant implications for his political career, coming just a few months before elections are due to be held in the country. He will need the investigation to deflect blame away from authorities, especially as Erdogan's Justice and Development Party (AKP) has been in power since 2002. Justice will also need to be swift; the anger at the excruciatingly slow investigation into the 2020 Beirut port explosion is an example that Turkey should take heed of. Critics have accused the ruling party of enabling corruption within the construction industry and not enforcing its own safety regulations. Safety certificates are often bought rather than earned, while questions are also being asked about the \$3bn raised in an earthquake tax and how it has been spent. The government provided legal exemptions, for a fee, for buildings that did not have the required safety certificates. A BBC Turkish report in 2020 found that more than 50 percent of all buildings in Turkey were constructed in violation of regulations.

The financial impact of the earthquakes is also predicted to be devastating to the already weak Turkish economy. On Thursday JP Morgan said that direct costs from the destruction of physical structures could amount to \$25bn, which is 2.5 percent of Turkey's GDP. Erdogan was already under pressure, with public anger rising over skyrocketing inflation and the currency crisis. There is a certain irony that Erdogan's rise to power two decades ago was linked, at least in part, to criticism of the state's response to the Izmit earthquake. "What happens, happens, this is part of fate's plan," Erdogan reportedly said this week during a visit to one of the affected areas. In May the president will find what fate has in store for him.





## Tunisia

**15 January 2023: Protesters gather on anniversary of Arab Spring**

Protesters gathered in central Tunis on Saturday to mark the 12th anniversary of the Arab Spring. Large crowds assembled on the central Avenue Habib Bourguiba, where people called on authoritarian President Kais Saied to step down. His authority is waning after just 11 percent of Tunisia's took part in parliamentary elections last month; a runoff vote is due to be held at the end of January. There was a large police presence in the capital but no major outbreaks of violence were reported.

## Morocco

**16 January 2023: Government angry at Western Sahara comments in Algeria**

The Moroccan government has condemned "provocative" comments made at a regional football tournament in neighbouring Algeria. Morocco's football federation slammed a speech made by the grandson of Nelson Mandela at the African Nations Championship (CHAN) opening ceremony on Friday. "Let us fight to free Western Sahara from oppression," said Mandla Mandela at a stadium named after his grandfather. The Moroccan delegation called on the Confederation of African Football (CAF) to uphold "all its responsibilities in the face of these flagrant transgressions."

## Iran

**19 January 2023: German national arrested for photographing oil facilities**

A German national has been arrested for taking photos of an oil facility in the south-western Khuzestan province. The Jam-e Jam newspaper reported that the suspect was photographing the Aghajari oilfield in Omidiyeh. The German embassy in Tehran said it was aware of the reports and is investigating.

## Libya

**19 January 2023: Rival militias clash in Tripoli**

Rival militias have clashed in the Libyan capital, Tripoli. Heavy fighting was reported in the Qasr Bin Ghashir area to the south of the city early on Thursday morning. The clashes involved members of the Radaa militia and fighters linked to Abd al-Salam al-Zoubi, a militia leader from Zawiya. The groups were competing over the main road to Tripoli's airport. Several people reportedly died in the fighting, although specific details on the casualties has not been released.

## Egypt

**20 January 2023: Police officer killed in Alexandria**

A police officer has been killed while chasing drug dealers in Alexandria. The Ministry of Interior confirmed the death, adding that two suspects were later arrested; a third suspect remains at large. Officers were investigating the trafficking of drugs in the Daqahliya governorate.

## Yemen

**21 January 2023: Six soldiers wounded in Shabwa bombing**

Six soldiers have been wounded in a bomb attack in the southern province of Shabwa. Members of the Southern Transitional Council (STC) and the Shabwa Defense Forces were travelling in the Ar-Ravza district when the device exploded. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack.

## Kuwait

**24 January 2023: Government quits over dispute with parliament**

Kuwait's government has resigned over a dispute with parliament. Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf al-Sabah submitted the resignation of his cabinet to the country's crown prince on Monday. The government was only formed in October, while several previous governments also collapsed in 2022. The latest dispute is centred on a debt relief bill.

## Iraq

**24 January 2023: Central Bank governor replaced over weakening currency**

Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani has replaced the governor of Iraq's Central Bank in response to the fall in the value of the dinar against the US dollar. Mustafa Ghaleb Mukheef reportedly told the PM that he did not want to continue in the post. "Today, the central bank governor's request for discharge was approved, as was the request for retirement by the president of the Trade Bank of Iraq," said al-Sudani. The currency has lost nearly seven percent of its value since mid-November.

## Western Sahara

**26 January 2023: Three killed, three injured after drone strike in Bir Moghrein**

Three civilians were killed and three others were injured during a drone strike carried out by Moroccan Armed Forces near the border with Western Sahara yesterday. The incident was reported in Bir Moghrein at an undisclosed time.