



WFP Executive Director David Beasley with a C-17 provided by the United Arab Emirates, shortly after it arrived in Accra, Ghana. Photo: WFP

World Food Programme

Security Division

Weekly Covid-19 Security Situation and Outlook

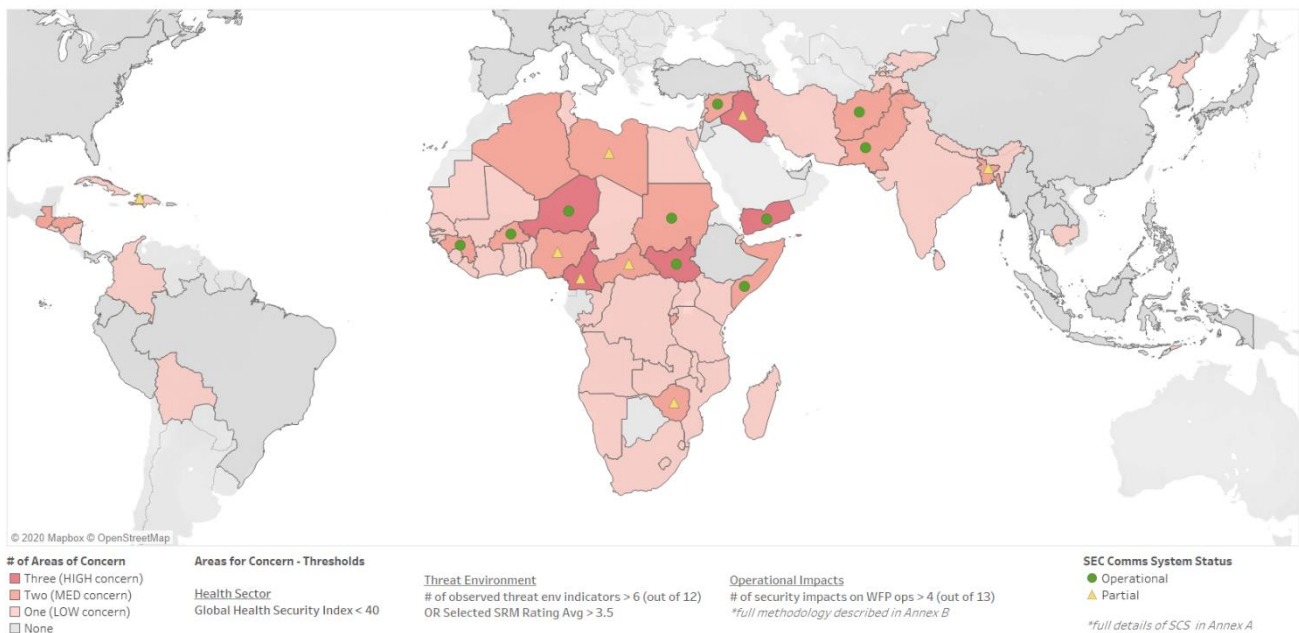
04 June 2020

This version is releasable to the UN Inter-Agency Security Managers Network (IASMN), the Saving Lives Together HQ Counterpart Organisations, and WFP Cooperating Partners

Report Highlights

- This week five countries have high reported security concerns (Niger, Cameroon, South Sudan, Iraq, Yemen) and 17 countries have reported medium security concerns. A notable change from last week is that Yemen has moved from medium to high (caused by security threat environment, marked by the protracted armed conflict, as well as an increase in the impact of COVID-19) and Syria from high to medium (travel restrictions seem to generate less impact, but cross-border/cross-line operations may be impacted by potential UN Security Council decisions). Lebanon, Mozambique and Myanmar remain under increased monitoring, while not captured by the analysis, due to aspects of the specific country situation in the COVID-19 context.
- Civil unrest has emerged as the security threat category that is most affected by COVID-19, with increased discontent and socio-economic grievances recorded in many countries as gradual easing of restrictions facilitates civil protests, with the subsequent potential for heavy-handed state responses and associated violence in the coming weeks.

Countries of Security Concern



Global Security Situation Outlook

As Central and South America have become 'the intense zones' for COVID-19, concerns have been raised over a **second wave of the outbreak of COVID-19** in some other countries, prompting them to reinstate restrictions (South Korea) or impose additional measures (India). At the same time, many countries in Europe, Asia and parts of Africa continue to ease measures in response to socio-economic and public pressures.

Meanwhile, concerns over **potential political destabilization** have emerged this week in South Sudan where top officials tested positive for COVID-19.

Armed conflict continues unabated in Libya, Yemen, Syria. Activity by the Islamic State and/or its affiliates persists in Iraq, Syria, Mozambique's Cabo Delgado while Al-Shabaab remains a potent threat in Somalia. Previously reported observations in changing crime patterns remain largely unchanged: some types of crime have decreased (e.g. burglaries) while others such as cyber-crimes increased.

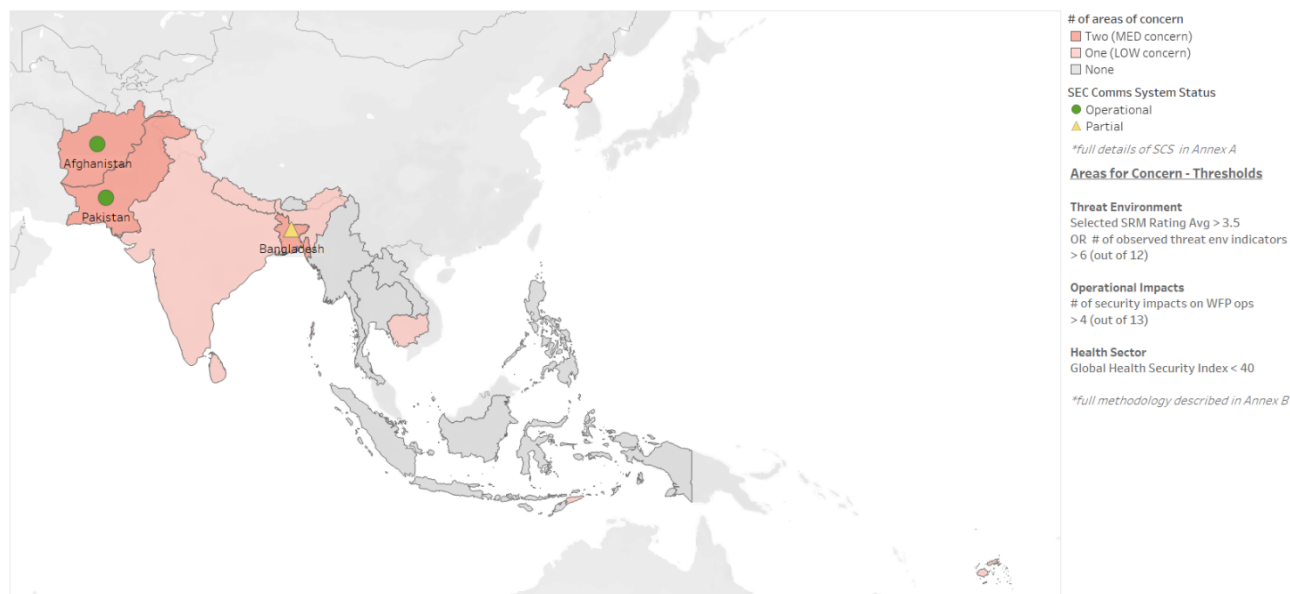
The **pandemic continues to serve as a friction point between Governments and populations**, who are increasingly affected by impacts of COVID-19 restrictions and economic downturns.

In West Africa, several countries show signs of increased unrest and/or aggressive responses by security services (Burkina Faso, Senegal). Where restrictions are relaxed, resumption of anti-government protests have already been prompted, or assessed to be likely in the near future, particularly in the Middle East (Lebanon, Tunisia, Palestinian Authority). Meanwhile, the potential for escalation in protests is also noted in South and Central America as Governments continue to struggle in responding to the COVID-19 outbreak.

An additional factor driving unrest, and even some violence, has been the handling of the remains of deceased COVID-19 patients (CAR) – this will increasingly be an issue in countries who have yet to see the peak of their outbreak. Similarly, the handling of repatriated citizens has evolved as both a health and potential security concern in southern Africa (Malawi, Zimbabwe).

Regional Security Situation Updates

Asia



- Bangladesh and Pakistan are of MEDIUM concern due to the prevailing security threat environments, in which crime and civil unrest can affect humanitarian operations.
- Afghanistan is of MEDIUM concern due to the ongoing armed conflict affecting the country.
- While the majority of Myanmar remains of low concern due to COVID-19, it remains under monitoring due to the deteriorating threat environment caused by escalating armed conflict, as well as concerns over civil unrest.

Security Situation Outlook

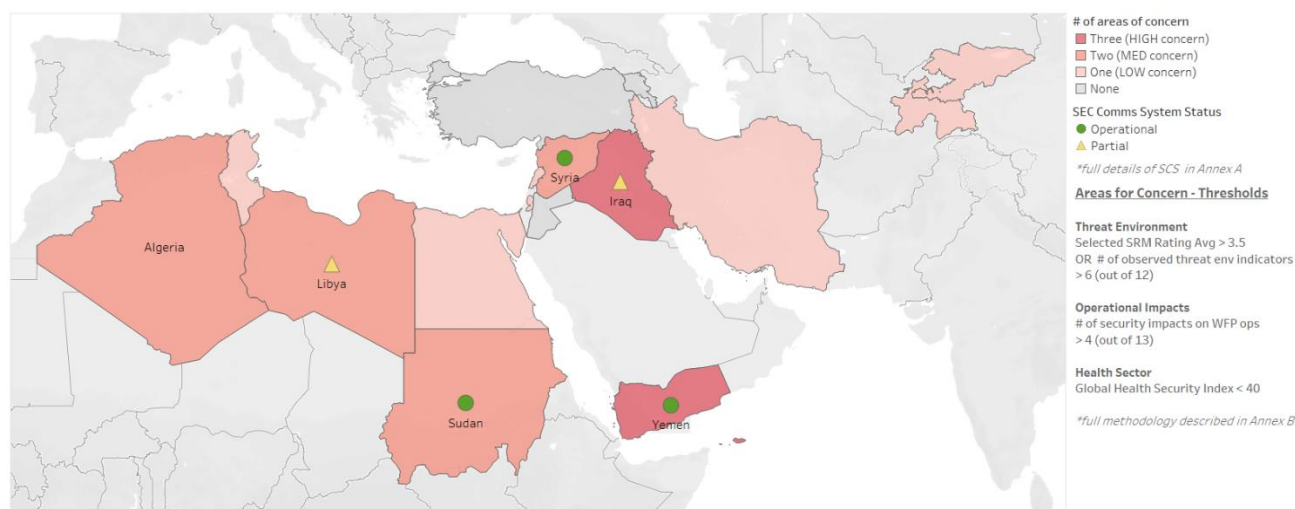
The week under review continues to remind of the **sustained threat posed by armed conflict** across the region despite the pandemic. **In Afghanistan**, violence is likely to increase in the coming weeks despite the Government-Taliban ceasefire that has informally been extended and intra-Afghan peace talks that appear imminent. In addition, the fact that the US might achieve its first phase of troops withdrawal by mid-June, instead of mid-July, could fuel the Taliban insurgency against the Afghan Government. Furthermore, there are speculations **that senior Taliban leaders may have contracted COVID-19**. If true, this could trigger a succession scenario that would accelerate the splintering of the group, as already occurred in the past, thus incidentally complicating the peace process. **In Indonesia's** Papua province, the military and police are on the lookout for an armed group, which reportedly shot dead members of a local COVID-19 response team in Wandai district of the Intan Jaya regency. This marks yet another incident of violence affecting medical health workers in the region. **In Myanmar**, the Arakan Army attacked the Tha Zin Myaing Border Guard Police outpost in Rathedaung township (Rakhine State), leaving ten policemen and three civilians missing. Although fighting might slow down temporarily with the onset of the rainy season in Rakhine and Chin State, recent incidents demonstrate that the conflict might escalate further, which may result in long-term food insecurity. In fact, only days prior to the incident, a video circulated on social media displaying the Myanmar military torturing several members of the Rakhine community, while a Human Rights Watch report allegedly showed the burning of at least 200 houses in Mrauk-U Township.

As noted in previous weeks' assessments, the **threat of extremism/terrorism remains extant across the region**. On 28 May, **the Islamic State (IS) released a statement in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which suggests that the risk of further attacks remains high**. The official spokesperson of the IS called the pandemic a punishment for those who fought against the IS, while also calling for new attacks globally. He criticized the closure of places of worship as a part of COVID-19 restrictions and condemned the Taliban's peace talks with the US in Afghanistan. The release of 'the Voice of Hind', a publication by a regional IS-affiliate in **South Asia**, highlighted that the continuation of IS-claimed attacks counters any claims that the group has been defeated and encouraged Indian Muslims to support the IS. In **Indian Administered Kashmir**, a combination of an increase of the number of clashes and calls by jihadist groups to conduct attacks against Indian security forces could lead to a conflict escalation and surge in terror-style attacks. In **Afghanistan**, alliances and cooperation between non-state armed groups remains fluid and increasingly complex: recent reporting suggests that factions of the Taliban, especially the Haqqani Network, have frequently consulted with Al-Qaeda's leadership about the US-Taliban peace talks. During those meetings, Al-Qaeda members reportedly received reassurances that the US-Taliban peace accord would not hurt long-standing, historic, trusted and partly familial relations between the two groups.

Sporadic incidents of unrest continue to occur in parts of Indonesia due to a perception about unfair distribution of governmental COVID-19 aid and delays due to administrative procedures.

Finally, a storm in the Arabian Sea off India's west coast has intensified into a severe cyclone as it moves towards **India's financial capital of Mumbai**. Cyclone Nisarga was forecast to drop heavy rains and winds gusting up to 120km per hour when it makes landfall as a category 1 Cyclone near the coastal city of Alibagh, about 98km south of Mumbai, according to India's Meteorological Department. There are concerns that severe flooding as a result of the cyclone could cause additional pressure on the health care system, which is already overwhelmed by the pandemic. According to media, **at least 100,000 people, including COVID-19 patients have been evacuated, with potential implications on the spread of the virus**.

Middle East



- **Iraq** remains a country of HIGH concern and it is now joined by **Yemen**. The main reasons for this are the extant security threat environment, marked by the protracted armed conflict, as well as an increase in the impact of COVID-19 on operations.
- Sudan, Libya and **Syria** are currently in the MEDIUM concern category (down from HIGH last week for Syria); especially for Syria - although the security threat environment remains dominated by armed conflict – indications now are that travel restrictions have less impact on operations. Should a potential UN Security Council decision result in a negative impact on cross-border/cross-line operations, then Syria may return to the HIGH concern category.
- **Lebanon** remains on watch, despite not having formally returned scores that would put it in MEDIUM or HIGH categories. The main reason for this is the high potential for flaring up of civil unrest, and the presence of refugee camps which are at elevated health risk for COVID-19.

Security Situation Outlook

The focus of discussion in many countries of the region remains on easing of COVID-19 related restrictions and/or implementation of reopening/return-to-normal plans. Although several countries (i.e. Turkey, Jordan, Tunisia, Syria, Egypt, Iran, Israel, and Palestine) have either already begun or announced such plans, some Governments continue to exercise caution given that the **economic downturn has either already prompted the resumption of anti-government protests or increased the likelihood of such resumption** (i.e. in Lebanon, Tunisia, Iraq, Sudan).

As evidenced by the recent **protests in Tunisia and Lebanon** prompted by the economic repercussions of the restrictions, **it is still assessed that the economic pressures are likely to continue to drive the risk of unrest across the region**. In **Lebanon**, the Government is ostensibly facing challenges in addressing the situation, as disputes and accusations among the political elite delay significant decisions, such as adopting a new exchange rate system designed to slow the currency devaluation. The Government is increasingly criticized by opposition parties and civil society groups over its handling of the economic

crisis, as well as delays in enacting its financial reform plan and anti-corruption legislation. With the easing of COVID-19 related restrictions, rising inflation and unemployment as well as the rapid devaluation of the Lebanese pound will increasingly attract protesters as socio-economic conditions have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 outbreak, thus increasing the risk of civil unrest in the short to medium term, bearing the potential for violence. **In Tunisia**, protests driven by socio-economic hardships exacerbated by the COVID-19 outbreak were reported in several cities during the week under review.

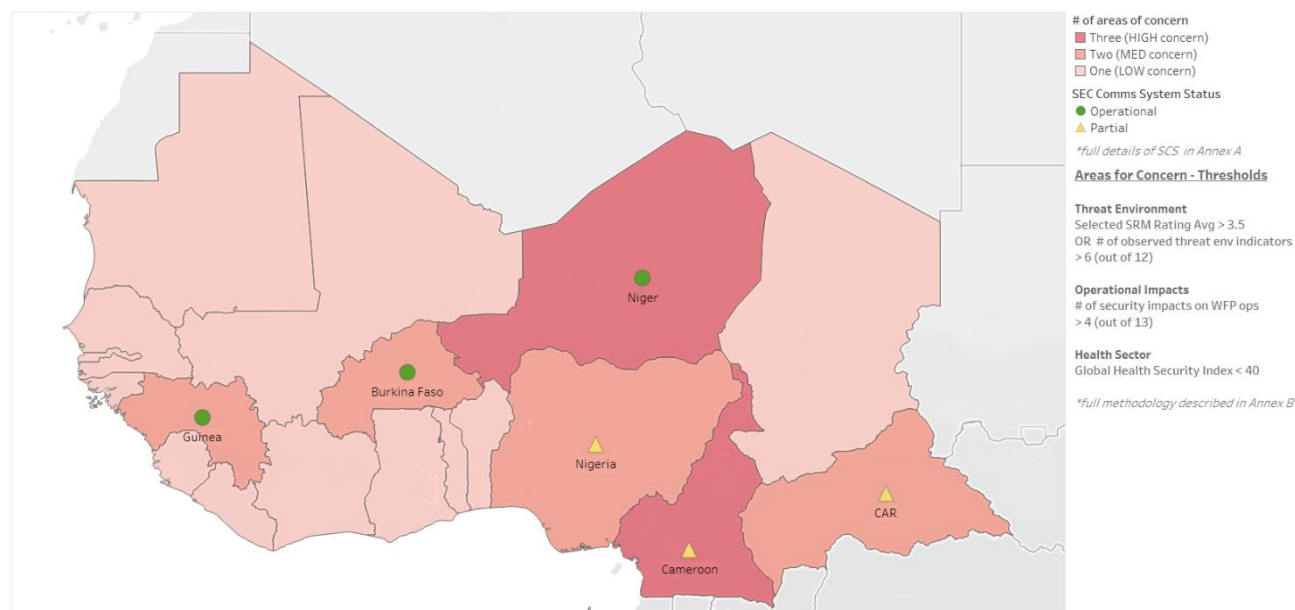
Reports suggest that there is an increasing risk of protests in the **Palestine** in the coming weeks due to the Israeli Government's stated intent to begin the process to annex of the West Bank from 01 July. The likelihood of protests and associated violence is rising as the Palestinian Authority has begun to ease COVID-19 movement restrictions.

In **Sudan**, the Transitional Government is facing acute economic challenges to tackle, with inflation at almost 99 percent compared to 70 percent and 80 percent in February and March respective, in a sign of the rapidly deteriorating situation notably aggravated by COVID-19. The rise is largely down to changes in the price of basic goods such as food, as well as fuel. While for now this has not sparked protests on last year's scale, **the situation sustains a high likelihood of hardship demonstrations across the country.**

Armed conflicts are expected to continue in **Libya and Yemen** despite concerns over the spread of COVID-19 amid the weakened health systems. In **Libya**, the Libyan National Army's (LNA) has been accused by Government of National Accord (GNA) of the shelling of residential areas in Tripoli on 31 May, resulting in five civilian casualties and injuring at least 12 others. Although the UN Support Mission in Libya has announced that the two sides have agreed to resume ceasefire talks, no further specifics on dates for the next round of discussions is available. The LNA is likely to sustain its air and artillery strikes' on Tripoli and its surrounding areas in the short term, thus protracting hostilities on the eastern and southern frontlines of Tripoli. **In Yemen**, the fighting did not stop during Eid al-Fitr. Ansar Allah (AA) forces are expected to continue targeting Internationally Recognized Government (IRG) positions, especially in Marib governorate. In the southern regions, further clashes between the IRG and Southern Transitional Council (STC) forces are expected along Abyan's coastline, near Zinjibar and Shoaqrah. Despite multiple mediation tracks that are open (Saudi Arabia leadership in Riyadh and tribal interaction at the local level), confrontations between the STC and the IRG are likely, with a potential for expanding to Aden.

The threat of extremism/terrorism remains extant across the region. **In Syria**, further activity by the Islamic State (IS) has been recorded in eastern rural Homs. In a separate development during the week under review, the presence of suspected sleeper cells in the vicinity of Dara'a poses concern. **In Iraq**, recent IS attacks have been recorded in eastern and northern regions, mainly targeting Border Guard forces, possibly indicating increased IS capabilities and improved coordination. In addition, Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) counterterrorism operations in Karbala, Najaf and Muthanna highlight concerns over potential attempts by the IS to infiltrate into southern Iraq from the Anbar governorate. Meanwhile, the recent resumption of US-led Coalition airstrikes against IS hideouts in Iraq seems to indicate the renewed support of the Coalition forces for the Government of the newly appointed Prime Minister. **In Libya**, the IS issued a statement claiming responsibility for an attack on LNA positions in Traghan city, near Murzuq.

West Africa



- Cameroon is of HIGH concern due to the prevailing security threat environment, particularly in North West/South West Regions, and security operations impacts, most notably the capacity of authorities to provide security at delivery sites and the disruption of access negotiations.
- Niger is of HIGH concern due to the prevailing security threat environment and security operations impacts.
- Burkina Faso is of MEDIUM concern due to security operations impacts, particularly the capacity of authorities to provide security at delivery sites, especially in Soum province. Further to the deterioration of the operating context and the likely elevated security threats, this may prompt a shift to HIGH concern.
- Nigeria and the CAR are of MEDIUM concern due to the prevailing security threat environment (armed conflicts), while Guinea is also of MEDIUM concern due to the risk of civil unrest or crime.

Security Situation Outlook

According to available open source data, the COVID-19 outbreak has changed the dynamics of violence and demonstrations in the region. By May 2020, **half of all incidents in countries without conflict witnessed civil unrest related to the pandemic**. The data shows an increase of COVID-19 related violence against civilians by state forces. Governments, notably in Guinea, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo and Benin, have used COVID-19 to alter the role of the opposition and manipulate upcoming elections. The increase in violence against civilians and in repression of the opposition pushing them towards the political periphery and so consequently potentially closer to non-state armed groups, particularly Salafi-jihadist groups, this may be facilitating their expansion throughout the region.

In **Mali**, restrictive measures proved to be compounding factors which further fuelled popular discontent with the Government. **Large-scale demonstrations** calling for the President to resign have been planned by a coalition of opposition parties and civil society organizations to take place on **05 June in Bamako**. Meanwhile, reliable sources claim that the President had reportedly left for France for health reasons, a

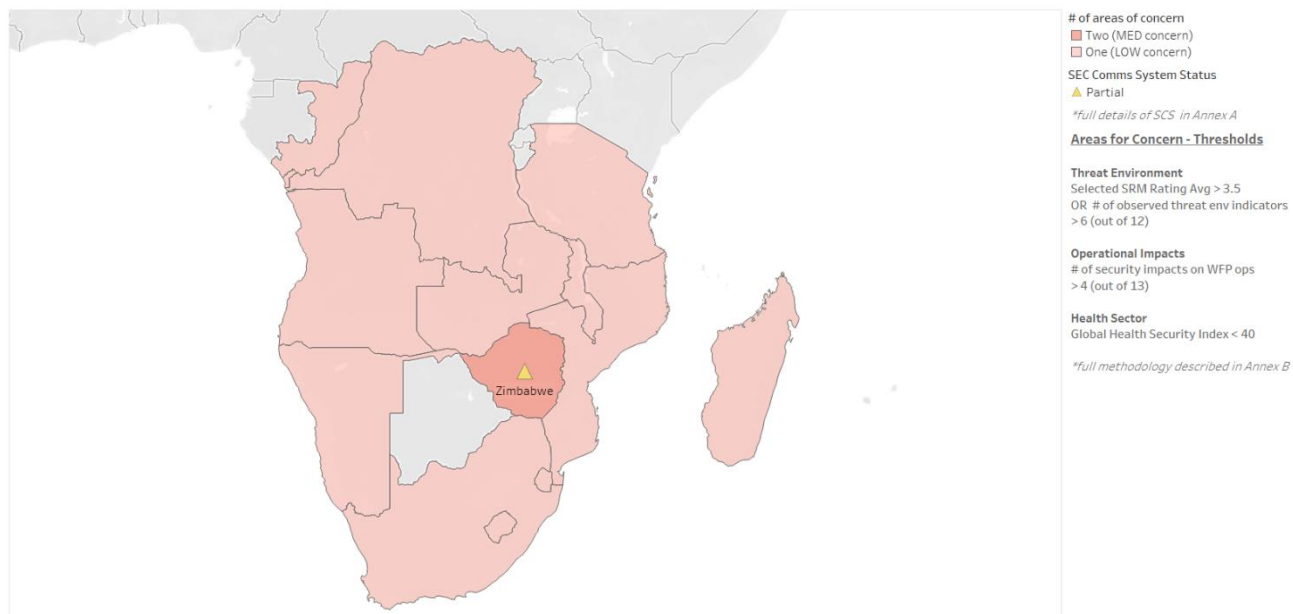
rumour that could enflame tensions and popular outrage on 05 June, with protests possibly turning violent. Regretfully, two MINUSMA peacekeepers died of COVID-19, the first deaths among some 100,000 UN peacekeepers deployed worldwide. The MINUSMA Sévaré camp remains in confinement after four suspected cases were reported. Timbuktu and Mopti/Sévaré continue to see a rapid spread of the virus, likely due to large public gatherings seen at the end of Ramadan.

Burkina Faso has already seen some unrest as hundreds of protesters demanding the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions (particularly the curfew) were dispersed by police using tear gas in the south-western city of Bobo-Dioulasso. In **Senegal**, while a protest in Cap Skirring (Ziguinchor Region) was not focused on COVID-19 issues, the escalation into clashes that left several people injured and serves as a reminder of an elevated likelihood that any civil protest in the region can degenerate into violence.

In countries where cases of COVID-19 are increasing, there is growing dissatisfaction among the population over their Governments' actions to keep the population safe; resentments are particularly linked to burials of patients who die from the disease. In the **Central African Republic**, the relatives of the first deceased attributed to COVID-19 have protested against the restrictions placed on the victim's funeral by the Ministry of Health, that dictated that the remains would be buried under the supervision of the Red Cross and attendance would be limited. The relatives of the deceased reportedly gathered around the Community Hospital in Bangui, refused to comply with the instructions and demanded that they be allowed to carry out the funeral as per the normal practice. Riot police were mobilized to stop the crowd attempting to forcibly take the remains, and it was dispersed without any reported injuries. Similarly, the population of Diamaguène Sicap-Mbao (a suburb in the Dakar Region of **Senegal**) opposing the burial of a deceased COVID-19 patient on 27 May attacked and ransacked the ambulances of the Red Cross and the firefighters. There have been efforts by the authorities to combat the stigmatization of COVID-19 victims; however, the population increasingly perceives that the Government is not doing enough to keep them safe from the spread of COVID-19.

In **Nigeria**, the previously reported low-level tensions have persisted within the beneficiary community as some humanitarian supplies are delayed due to the COVID-19 outbreak. On 28 May, a demonstration was staged in an IDP camp in Bama town (Borno State), with beneficiaries requesting an immediate general aid distribution. The demonstration remained peaceful and subsided after one hour, following sensitization efforts led by humanitarian organisations and the community leaders. In Nigeria and any other country where programme delivery is delayed more than usual due to COVID-19 factors, further demonstrations are likely in IDP camps as well as host communities and may affect the acceptance levels of humanitarian workers.

Southern Africa



- Mozambique is of LOW concern countrywide; however, this concern rises to MEDIUM for Cabo Delgado due to the prevailing security threat environment in that province.
- Zimbabwe is of MEDIUM due to the risk of crime.

Security Situation Outlook

Crime and civil unrest remain the primary threats throughout the region, as previously assessed, with **incidents particularly likely to continue to increase in South Africa**. Socio-economic pressures exacerbated by COVID-19 increasingly affect the poorest parts of the populations.

In **Malawi**, hundreds of citizens repatriated from South Africa fled a quarantine centre in Blantyre this reporting week, claiming living conditions were unbearable. In addition to the concerns this creates over spread of the virus, this incident could also set a precedent, as hundreds of Malawian workers are still being repatriated, screened and put in quarantine; no other government-imposed measures are being used to prevent the spread of COVID-19. There have also been reports of Zimbabweans repatriated from neighbouring countries (numbering thousands), attempting to escape from mandatory quarantine.

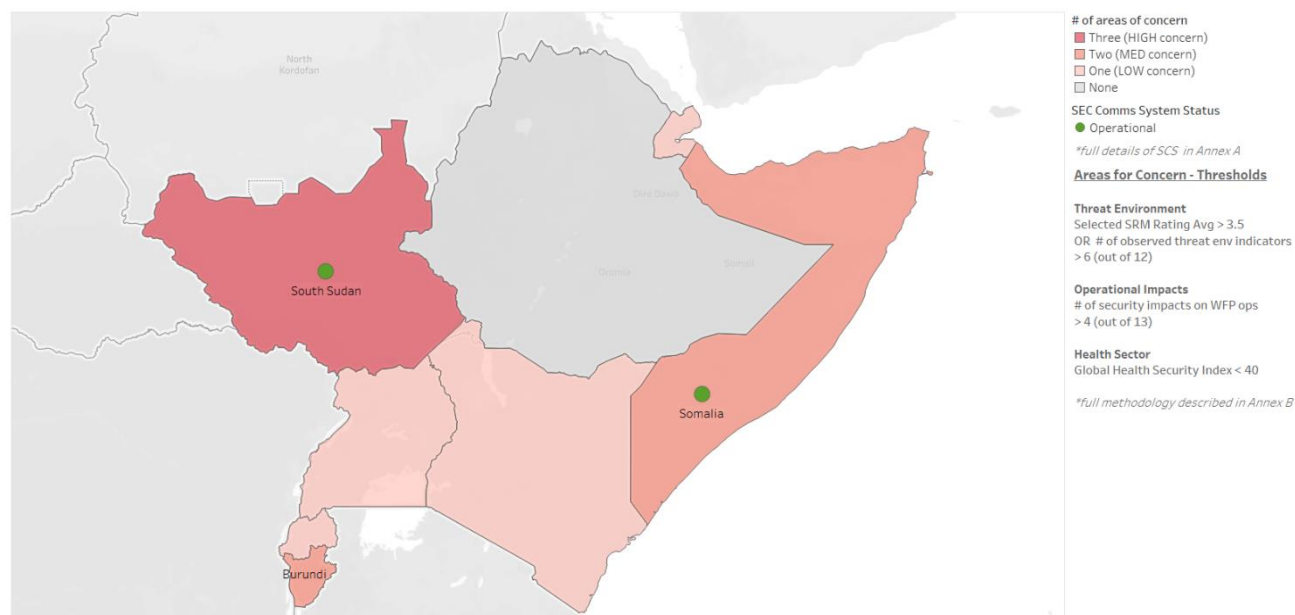
Despite the Government having eased some COVID-19 measures in **Zimbabwe**, tensions remain high. Essential workers are frustrated by what they perceive to be unnecessary movement restrictions, especially since security forces are allegedly using the situation to run racketeering schemes and prey on the population, with demands for bribes at checkpoints being common. Those involved in the informal sector bear the brunt of these illicit practices.

On the political front, it is perceived that the **authorities in Malawi intend to use COVID-19 as a means to cling to power**: on 01 June, the President, who is running again in the upcoming elections, asserted that Malawians need to choose between having elections or fighting COVID-19. Declarations such as these, combined with the controversy surrounding the elections and the possibility that international flight restrictions will limit the participation of international observers, will add to the existing strained political climate. Further heated political rhetoric between the ruling party and the opposition is expected, with a **likely escalation into confrontations and incidents of civil unrest**.

The COVID-19 outbreak is progressing steadily in the **DRC**, with slightly over 3,000 cases located mostly in the west of the country. The local media have reported that one humanitarian worker contracted the coronavirus in Lubumbashi (second largest city of DRC, in Haute-Katanga province), increasing the likelihood that aid workers might be blamed for spreading COVID-19. Moreover, with a new Ebola outbreak registered this week in the north-western Equateur province, the Government's ability to respond to **multiple health emergencies, as well as the ongoing armed conflict** in the east of the country is likely severely diminished. This increases the general threat level to all humanitarians operating in the country.

Monitoring of security developments in northern **Mozambique** continues, as attempts to contain the outbreak in **Cabo Delgado** province will be superimposed on the already **volatile security environment** that has led to growing distrust towards the authorities.

Eastern Africa



- South Sudan is of HIGH concern due to the prevailing security threat environment, which is dominated by acts of criminality and intercommunal violence. The impact on humanitarian operations, and on access issues, is generated or exacerbated by COVID-19.
- Somalia is of MEDIUM concern due to the prevailing security threat environment and continued armed conflict and terrorism threats. Burundi is also of MEDIUM concern due to the crime and unrest variables of the security threat environment.

Security Situation Outlook

For most countries in the region, there has been no significant change to the Security Situation Outlook since the previous week. Early signs of a possible shift on the political track have been noted in South Sudan, while Burundi continues to be monitored for post-electoral deterioration.

With three of **South Sudan's** five Vice-Presidents having tested positive for COVID-19, the **potential for political destabilization has increased**. In a landscape where mistrust is prevalent between various groups that make up the Transitional Government, should any key stakeholder's capacity be affected or called into question, it could affect the delicate balance of power and create conditions for a sharp increase in insecurity. Meanwhile, since containment measures – which are often not observed – are failing to prevent a rapid rise of reported cases. The National Committee on COVID-19 has reportedly requested the Presidency to **consider imposing a countrywide lockdown** so people can be screened in Juba. Such a move would have serious implications on the humanitarian community's ability to continue supply chain and programme delivery activities.

In **Burundi**, the **humanitarian operating environment has not changed significantly** in the aftermath of the elections. However, the outgoing President, whose wife has reportedly contracted COVID-19, continues to tie low COVID-19 numbers in the country to the wisdom of the ruling party and 'the hand of God'. However, it remains to be seen if the virus was widely spread during the election campaign, and if some members of the Government will use news of the First Lady's illness to push for establishment of containment measures. Such measures would likely be a useful means for deterring any **unrest related**

to the ongoing opposition's appeal over the election results, with the ruling by the Constitutional Court expected this week.

In **Somalia**, sustained attacks by Al-Shabaab are now lending credence to earlier speculations that the group could **take advantage of the shifting focus toward COVID-19 to launch strikes**. The concern that the group will also **intentionally disrupt COVID-19 medical interventions** is not unfounded: in 2011 and 2012, Al-Shabaab resisted the delivery of relief aid during the famine that left at least 260,000 people dead. Emerging evidence shows that the group's persistent attacks are already impacting the COVID-19 response.

In **Uganda**, the outbreak remains on an upward trend, with **cross-border cargo drivers and their contacts among the most infected**. Schools will also continue to be affected, as the Government has rescinded its plan for a phased reopening of schools starting this week. In **Rwanda**, transportation will also continue to be affected as travel between provinces and the capital Kigali (including motorcycle passenger services) did not resume as planned.

Central and Southern America



- Haiti, Honduras and Guatemala are of MEDIUM concern due to their prevailing security threat environments, where civil unrest and crime hold the potential for major impacts on humanitarian operations.

Security Situation Outlook

This week, the WHO identified Central and South American countries as ‘the intense zones’ for COVID-19 transmission, with significant rise in cases registered in Colombia, Chile, Peru, Bolivia. As per previous assessments, **civil unrest remains the primary threat** through the region as sporadic and small-scale protests were reported in Colombia, Honduras, Guatemala, Chile, Ecuador and Bolivia.

In **Colombia**, protests were reported in several cities, including Bogota, Cucuta, Quibdo and Quimbayala, as the population criticised the Government’s economic response to the outbreak and transporters demanded the lifting of restrictions. Protests against COVID-related restrictions took place in **Chile**, with civil society groups criticising the Government’s inability to contain the spread of the outbreak. Similarly, in **Honduras**, roadblocks by people demanding government support were reported in Tegucigalpa, Comayagua, Olancho, Danli Paraiso and Colon. In **Ecuador**, the latest round of austerity measures amid the COVID-19 outbreak sparked nationwide protests last week in defiance of the restrictions. In **Bolivia**, political tensions have eased following a cross-party agreement to postpone elections until September, lowering the likelihood of related protests. However, protests against quarantine measures and fuel shortages took place in La Paz Department. In **Nicaragua**, express burials continue to be reported despite the government announcement that pandemic is under control.

It is likely that **sporadic and small-scale demonstrations** triggered by the discontent among populations throughout South and Central America will continue in short term, leading to some disruptions. Protests have the potential to increase in scale, intensity or frequency if public grievances are not addressed. Reports of corruption among government officials are likely to further alienate the population, particularly in **Colombia** where 14 out of 32 officials are undergoing investigations and in **Bolivia** where the Minister of Health was arrested on allegation of corruption in public procurement.

In **Haiti**, the low inhibiting context is facilitating gang-related movements and fighting between gang leaders to control territories where port facilities are located. The Haitian National Police, already under-

staffed, has reportedly seen 25 percent of police personnel having contracted COVID-19, which notably affects its operational capacity and consequently affecting the inhibiting security context.

Additionally, **Guatemala** and **El Salvador** have been hit by the Tropical Storm Amanda, causing infrastructure destructions. Overall, the region's vulnerability is amplified due to the hurricane season, which is posing additional challenges to the authorities' capacity to deal simultaneously with natural disaster relief and COVID-19.

Other Regions



- No countries display significant security concerns.

Security Situation Outlook

Despite the gradual easing of the COVID-19 response measures, protests against government-imposed restrictions further inspired by the French Yellow Vests movement took place in several cities of **Italy** during the week under review. Although no clashes have been reported, several participants have been stopped by the police for violating COVID-19 response measures (i.e. use of masks and social distancing). **In France**, police in Paris dispersed thousands of Yellow Vests protestors as they took the streets to support the rights of illegal migrants in spite of COVID-19 restrictions.

The risk of demonstrations evolving into **civil unrest** remains low. However, response by law enforcement personnel to demonstrators, including dispersal in order to enforce social distancing, may lead to clashes. Forceful enforcement of COVID-19 restrictions may be perceived as a violation of the right to protest.

In the **United States**, demonstrations against COVID-19 restrictions have been overshadowed by protests and civil unrest, triggered by the killing of an African American man by police in Minneapolis. While most daytime protests have been largely peaceful, violence has occurred nightly. In response, officials have imposed night-time curfews in nearly 40 cities (including Washington DC and New York City) and deployed approximately 5,000 National Guard personnel across 15 states and in the national capital. In a separate yet related development, a widespread campaign against police violence and racism has been reported worldwide in support of the protests in the US. The most notable and crowded ones those organized in the **UK and Germany**, where protests took place, despite the COVID-19 lockdowns and those measures that prohibit large gatherings.

The **risk of cyber-criminal activity** (especially fraud of COVID-19 related items and scams) **is expected to remain elevated**, and European countries have therefore foreseen a programme of collaboration between their law enforcement bodies. EUROPOL has issued a report on **drug-related crimes**, noting several trends, including increase in violence aggravated by territorial feuds over drug distribution in several countries, augmented use of dark web markets and **organized crime groups'** adaptation of their *modus operandi*. In addition, surface web and social media, as well as secure encrypted communication applications now appear to be playing a more prominent role in the sourcing of drugs even at users' level. Home deliveries, less face-to-face dealing and less reliance on cash as a form of payment seem to be increasing for individual transactions and it is possible that these behavioural changes will persist over the

longer term. In a separate development, the looming of a post-pandemic economic recession continues to represent a concern with reference to all the possible opportunities of money laundering that organized crime syndicates can exploit, as noted in previous weeks' assessments. In addition to the real estate and construction sectors, cash-intensive businesses such as restaurants or beauty salons are now being monitored.

The likelihood of extremist/terrorist acts remains low although terrorist groups can resort to manipulating the narrative about the global pandemic in order to attract new sympathizers. As noted in previous weeks' reports, lockdown measures have resulted in increased time spent on the internet and online communication, thus heightening the risk of lone-wolf attacks and recruitment, fostered by online propaganda. In **France**, a man has been apprehended by the police following close monitoring of his online activity, which indicated the frequent sharing of hate speeches on social media and suspicious collection of information about a synagogue in Limoges.

Annex B: Methodology

1. Global Health Security Index rating. This is on scale of 100. Countries with a rating below 40 are highlighted as being of 'health concern'.

2. Threat Environment. Two measures are used, either of which can identify a country as being of 'threat environment concern':

- **SRM Threat Level.** The average of two threat levels from the SRM is used: civil unrest, plus either conflict or crime, depending on which is more relevant to operations in each country's context. For those countries with multiple SRM areas, the average across all areas is used. Those countries with a final averaged level of 3.5 or above are highlighted.
- **Threat Environment Indicators.** Countries with 6 or more indicators of a deteriorating threat environment are highlighted. The indicators monitored are: Anti-Gov't unrest; Violent enforcement of COVID measures; Expression of anti-foreign sentiments; Expression of anti IDP/refugee sentiments; Attacks on foreigners linked to COVID; Attacks on IDP/refugees linked to COVID; COVID-related intercommunal violence; Looting of commercial centres due to shortages/lawlessness; Looting of humanitarian assets due to COVID shortages; Increase in threats/robberies due to shortage/lawlessness; Political destabilization due to COVID outbreak

3. Security Operations Impacts. Countries with 4 or more impacts to security operations are highlighted as being of 'security operations concern'. The list of recorded impacts includes: Crowd control challenges due to COVID panic; Operations impeded by Gov't COVID restrictions; Bureaucratic impediments due to COVID response; COVID-linked security Incidents; Disruption of outsourced security services; Authorities unable to provide location security ; Authorities unable to provide movement security; Staff shortages causing operational disruptions; Access negotiation impeded; civilian-military deconfliction functions reduced; Insufficient funding for support to COVID response; Over 50% of security personnel positions affected by vacancy, leave, illness, government-imposed quarantine, or remote working out of country.

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