

JANUARY-JUNE 2021

COUNTRIES OF SPECIAL CONCERN

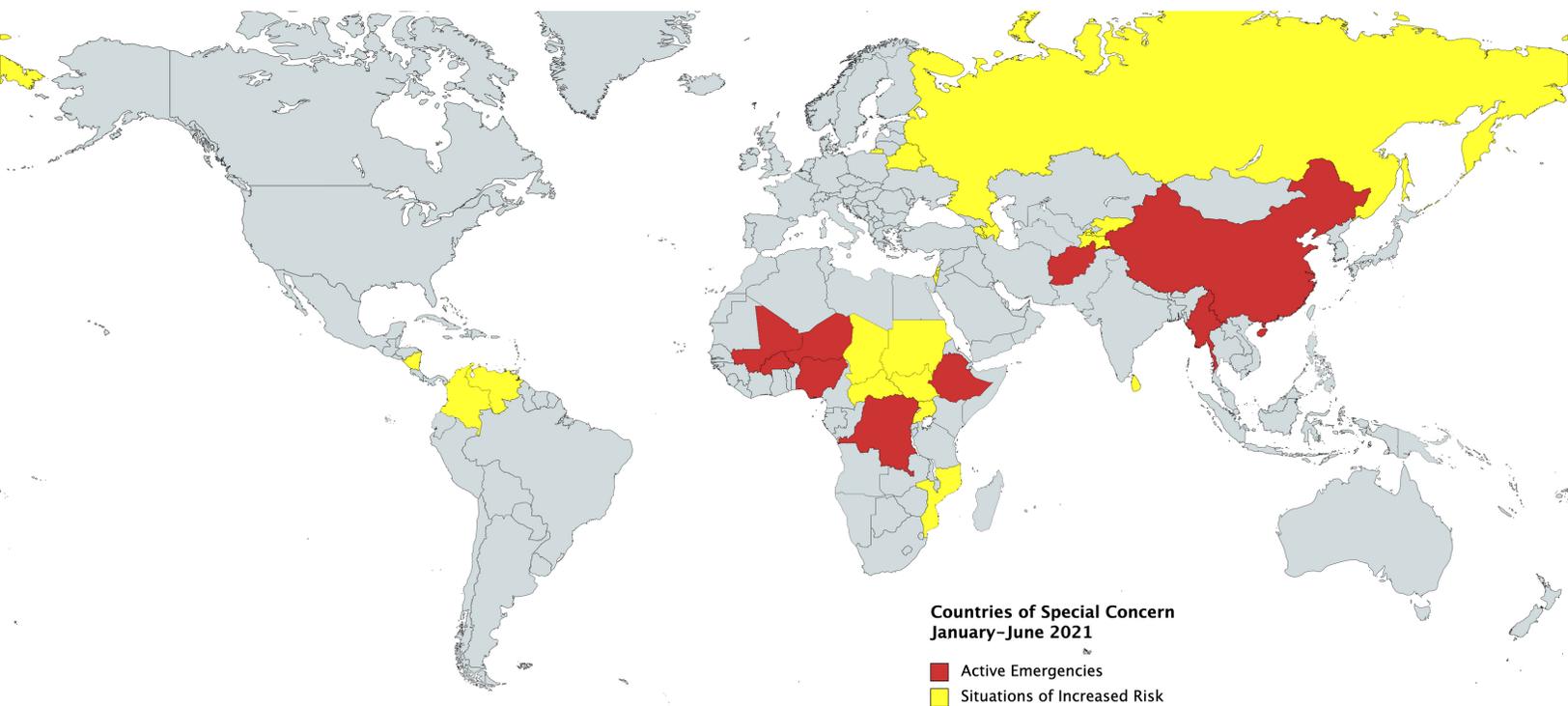
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GENOCIDE WATCH

"Genocide Watch exists to predict, prevent, stop, and punish genocide and other forms of mass murder. We seek to raise awareness and influence public policy concerning potential and actual genocide."



Image Credit: Rahmat Gul (AP)



Active Emergencies

Afghanistan
 Central Sahel
 China
 Democratic Republic of the Congo
 Ethiopia
 Myanmar
 Nigeria

Situations of Increased Risk

Armenia/Azerbaijan
 Belarus
 Central African Republic
 Chad
 Colombia
 Israel/Palestine
 Mozambique
 Nicaragua
 Russia
 South Sudan
 Sri Lanka
 Sudan
 Tajikistan/Kyrgyzstan
 Uganda
 Venezuela



Countries of Special Concern: January – June 2021

Genocide Watch exists to predict, prevent, stop, and punish genocide and other forms of mass murder. Genocide Watch actively monitors the progression of genocides and genocidal processes around the world.

The purpose of this Genocide Watch report on Countries of Special Concern is to report on developments in countries with ongoing genocides, in countries at increased risk for genocidal massacres, and in countries of continued concern for genocidal violence. Based solely on developments over the past six months, the countries and regions of most concern are:

Active Emergencies - Afghanistan, Central Sahel (Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger), China, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Myanmar, and Nigeria.

Situations of Increased Risk - Armenia/Azerbaijan, Belarus, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Israel/Palestine, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Russia, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tajikistan/Kyrgyzstan, Uganda, and Venezuela.

To view previous Genocide Watch Countries of Special Concern reports, see: [Countries of Special Concern: July-December 2020](#) and [Countries of Special Concern: January – July 2020](#).

"Stages" refer to the ten genocidal processes monitored by Genocide Watch: [The Ten Stages of Genocide](#).

Active Emergencies

Afghanistan

Stages: Organization (5), Preparation (7), Persecution (8), Extermination (9)

As the United States (U.S.) moves forward with its [unconditional withdrawal](#) of troops from Afghanistan, Taliban and Islamic State militants are escalating their genocidal assault on civilians. The Taliban and Islamic State are actively targeting those who have aided the U.S. as well as ethnic and religious minorities, women, and civil society members who oppose their rule.

Much of the violence has been concentrated in [Shia neighborhoods](#), home to the Hazara minority. While the Hazaras have been targets of Taliban attacks for decades, the Islamic State-affiliate in Afghanistan is also carrying out genocidal violence against the group, killing at least [1,200 Hazara civilians](#) since 2015. In May 2021, an unclaimed [militant attack](#) on a Hazara girls' school in West Kabul left more than 90 students dead.

The Afghan militant groups are not targeting just Hazaras but have also intentionally targeted women in positions of power and civil society groups. Over the past six months, Taliban and Islamic State militants have assassinated several [female judges](#), [journalists](#), and [human rights defenders](#), creating a climate of fear and repression reminiscent of when the Taliban last controlled the country from 1996-2001. Several reports document that the Taliban is currently at their [greatest strength since 2001](#). With the looming U.S. retreat from Afghanistan, the country faces the immediate prospect of a return to Taliban-led fundamentalist rule marked by severe repression of women and minorities and genocidal violence. [Genocide Watch predicts](#) that Taliban genocide against the Hazara is imminent.

Central Sahel (Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger)

Stages: Organization (5), Polarization (6), Extermination (9)

Islamist militants have continued to wage a genocidal campaign targeting civilians across the central Sahel region of Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger.

Since 2015, jihadist militants operating in the region have killed more than 8,000 civilians, according to data from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project ([ACLED](#)). Despite the high numbers killed already, this year is on pace to be the [deadliest yet](#). Jihadist attacks in southwestern Niger have killed more than 400 civilians, including two massacres that killed [at least 100 civilians](#). In June, a mass killing carried out by jihadist-recruited child soldiers in northeast Burkina Faso left [at least 160 civilians](#) dead. The continued violence has exacerbated a regional [humanitarian and displacement crisis](#), with [more than two million people](#) internally displaced across the Sahel.

After its failed counter-terrorism mission, *Operation Barkhane*, France [announced an end](#) to its 5,100-troop presence across the Sahel, leaving a further power vacuum for jihadist militants to expand their genocidal campaign.

China

Stages: Discrimination (3), Organization (5), Persecution (8), Extermination (9), Denial (10)

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is committing genocide against the Uyghur Muslim minority in western Xinjiang province. [More than one million Uyghurs](#) were detained in concentration camps, where they were tortured and coerced into renouncing their religious and cultural practices.

Outside of the "re-education" camps, Uyghurs are subject to mass surveillance and [forced labor](#). The [goal of these policies](#) is to destroy the Uyghur people as a distinct ethnic, religious, and cultural group. The CCP continues its systematic destruction of the Muslim presence in Xinjiang. The Chinese state has destroyed two-thirds of the [mosques in the region](#).

Due to CCP policies aimed at suppressing Uyghur population growth, birthrates in Xinjiang [dropped nearly 50%](#) from 2017-2019. A June 2021 study found that this trend will continue and could result in a reduction in Uyghur births by up to [4.6 million](#) over the next two decades. These policies are in direct violation of Article II of the [Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide](#). Despite its prevention of Uyghur births and transfer of Uyghur children for Han Chinese "re-education," China [vehemently denies](#) its genocide.

The movement to call China's treatment of the Uyghurs what it is – genocide – has gained traction over the past six months with several governments including the United States, Canada, the Netherlands, and Lithuania making [such declarations](#). However, this diplomatic and economic pressure has yielded little change in China's genocidal policies and practices.

China has also continued its crackdown on minorities and political dissent in Tibet and Hong Kong. In Tibet, the CCP is [instituting policies](#) like those in Xinjiang to root out the threat of so-called "ethnic separatism." In Hong Kong, China's National Security Law, introduced in June 2020, has all but eliminated political freedom in the territory. At least [117 democracy activists](#), journalists, politicians, and students have been arrested over the past year. Most activists are now afraid to speak out against the Chinese repression.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Stages: Persecution (8), Extermination (9)

Violence continues to escalate in DRC's far eastern Ituri and North and South Kivu provinces. According to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project ([ACLED](#)), the fighting has killed more than 1,000 people since January 2021 alone. The government, militants, and local militias continue to target the country's [Banyamulenge, Hema, and other minorities](#).

The Ugandan based Islamist rebel group, the [Allied Democratic Force \(ADF\)](#), accounts for many of the massacres of civilians, [killing at least 200 civilians](#) through March 2021. The ADF has carried out further massacres since, killing at least 57 civilians in an [attack in late May](#). The ADF [claims ties](#) to the so-called "Islamic State" as part of a growing trend of jihadist militancy in sub-Saharan Africa. The ADF has launched attacks along with remnants of the Rwandan Interahamwe and the DRC's Mai Mai. It commits mass rape whenever it attacks a village. The surge in ADF attacks across eastern DRC prompted the government to declare a ["state of siege"](#) in the DRC's eastern provinces in May 2021. Government actions have thus far been ineffective in reining in the violence.

The eruption of [Mount Nyiragongo](#) near the regional hub of Goma in late May exacerbated regional instability, forcing up to [one million residents](#) to evacuate. The conflict combined with environmental displacement and the pandemic have catalyzed a humanitarian disaster with more than 27 million people, 1/3 of DRC's population, [facing acute levels of hunger](#).

Ethiopia

Stages: Persecution (8), Extermination (9), Denial (10)

In November 2020, the Ethiopian military invaded the country's northernmost regional state of Tigray in response to a Tigray People's Defense Force (TPLF) attack on an Ethiopian military base. The Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) and allied Eritrean troops have massacred [at least 1,900 civilians](#) in Tigray – with [Tigrayan officials](#) claiming the death toll stands at 50,000. The fighting has internally displaced [more than 1.7 million](#) people and forced more than 60,000 to flee to neighboring Sudan.

The ENDF, Eritrean army, and Amhara militia forces have committed widespread and systematic atrocities across Tigray, including extrajudicial killings, [airstrikes](#) on civilian targets, torture, and sexual violence. Their violent assault has been genocidal in nature. At least [one-third of attacks](#) on civilians involve sexual violence by Ethiopian and Eritrean soldiers intent on "[cleansing the bloodlines](#)" of the Tigrayan people. The Ethiopian government has also instituted siege tactics on Tigray in order to [starve the population](#), leaving an estimated [900,000 people at immediate risk of famine](#).

Communal violence also continues across Ethiopia's [fractured ethnic regions](#), most notably in Oromia, Benishangul-Gumuz, and the Southern People's Nations, Nationalities and People's Region, and along the Eritrean border zone. In these regions, [ethnic-based massacres](#) have become increasingly commonplace.

Myanmar

Stages: Persecution (8), Extermination (9), Denial (10)

In a February 2021 coup, the Burmese military – the Tatmadaw – [seized control](#) of Myanmar, ousting the elected government led by [Aung Sung-Su Kyi](#). The Tatmadaw has been a vicious human rights violator and perpetrator of genocide against the country's Rohingya minority. Tatmadaw Commander Min Aung Hlaing, a [chief architect](#) of the genocide against the Rohingya, is now the de facto leader of the country.

In response to the military coup, a massive protest movement formed with the aim of restoring civilian rule. The Tatmadaw has responded to [protests](#) with brutal crackdowns and reprisals, frequently firing on unarmed civilians and detaining anyone who stands in their path. In total, the junta has arrested at least [5,000 people](#), and killed more than [860 civilians](#), including [dozens of children](#).

Rohingya who have fled to refugee camps in Bangladesh still live in [extremely dire conditions](#) and the threat of refugees being sent back to Myanmar remains serious. If Rohingya are forced back to Myanmar, they will face a high likelihood of further persecution by the military junta. Bangladeshi authorities have started to move Rohingya refugees to the low-lying island of [Bhasan Char](#), which poses a high risk of annual flooding and which has inadequate facilities for the Rohingya refugees.

Nigeria

Stages: Organization (5), Polarization (6), Extermination (9), Denial (10)

In the first six months of 2021, surging violence in Nigeria has left more than 1,600 civilians dead, according to [ACLED](#). Most of the victims have been Christians. As an Islamist insurgency continues largely unabated and insecurity mounts across the country, Nigeria is at immediate risk of further genocidal violence.

The UN recently updated its estimate of the direct and indirect death toll from jihadist violence in northeast Nigeria to more than [350,000 people](#). Despite the [death of Boko Haram leader](#) Abubakar Shekau in June, there is little reason to believe that either Boko Haram or its rival splinter group, the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), will stop their attacks on Nigerians. Recent [videos](#) show Boko Haram fighters pledging allegiance to ISWAP.

Violence against civilians has not been limited to Nigeria's northeast. In the country's northwest and "Middle Belt" regions there continues a combination of what the government has termed "armed banditry" and systematic genocidal assaults by Fulani jihadist militants against Christians. According to the International Committee on Nigeria, Fulani militants have [killed at least 11,500 Christians](#) since 2015.

Since January, there has also been [renewed conflict](#) in Nigeria's southeast between security forces and Igbo (Biafran) separatist groups. In June, after Twitter removed a tweet by President Muhammad Buhari [threatening a violent response](#) to the political unrest in the southeast, the Nigerian government [suspended the social media platform](#).

Situations of Increased Risk

Azerbaijan

Stages: Preparation (7), Persecution (8), Denial (10)

Tensions along the Armenia-Azerbaijani border have escalated since Azerbaijan's invasion of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) ended with a [November 2020 ceasefire](#) agreement that awarded Azerbaijan substantial territory in Artsakh.

The Azerbaijani government has increased its hateful anti-Armenian rhetoric on mass media. Its propaganda includes a shocking "[Military Trophies](#)" Park in Baku, which displays the helmets of dead Armenian soldiers alongside mannequins of Armenian soldiers with hooked noses and disfigured faces. Azerbaijan has begun a systematic campaign of vandalizing and destroying [Armenian churches and cultural sites](#) in the newly acquired territories of Karabakh.

Azerbaijani forces killed [one Armenian soldier](#) on May 25th during a shootout in the Armenian province Gegharkunik, and recently captured [six Armenian soldiers](#) on May 27th in the same area. There have also been reported border incursions by Azerbaijan along the border of the Syunik Province in the south.

Belarus

Stages: Preparation (7), Persecution (8)

Across Belarus, a mass protest movement against the nearly three-decade rule of President Alexander Lukashenko has continued in 2021 despite [violent crackdowns](#) on protestors by security forces. Journalists, protesters, and opposition leaders are frequently beaten, tortured, and imprisoned by the Lukashenko regime. Belarus is the only European country that practices [capital punishment](#). The government gives families of prisoners no execution or burial date if authorities do carry out the death penalty.

On May 23, 2021, the Belarussian government diverted Ryanair Flight 4978 into a forced landing in Belarus to detain opposition journalist [Roman Protasvich](#), in violation of International Civil Aviation law.

Central African Republic

Stages: Organization (5), Polarization (6), Persecution (8)

In late December 2020, a rebel coalition led by former president and war criminal François Bozizé sought to [upend elections](#) and seize power in the Central African Republic. In January, rebels attacked the capital Bangui and the surrounding areas, forcing officials to declare a "[state of emergency](#)."

In the period since, renewed violence between security forces, rebels, and foreign mercenaries from the Russian Wagner Group, has forced more than [200,000 people to flee](#). Amid the fighting, armed groups and security forces have carried out massacres, including the February killing of at least [14 civilians at a religious site](#). The UN has accused Russian mercenaries of [committing war crimes](#), including extrajudicial killings and torture. More than 2.8 million people in the CAR, more than half the country's population, are now in desperate need of [humanitarian assistance](#) and protection.

Chad

Stages: Organization (5), Polarization (6)

In April, [rebels killed Chad's president](#) of more than three decades, Idriss Deby. In the day prior to his death, Deby was elected to a sixth term in office in a vote marred by political repression and a boycott by the

opposition. After his killing, Deby's son assumed control in circumvention of the constitution. Security forces have since led a [violent crackdown](#) on activists seeking the implementation of democracy and civilian rule in Chad.

Chad has also witnessed continued ethnic violence misleadingly framed as “herder-farmer” conflict, with [35 civilians killed in communal clashes](#) in February. The tensions between Fulani Muslim herders and often non-Muslim farmers presents a threat of future escalation of targeted ethnic violence in southern Chad.

Colombia

Stages: Organization (5), Persecution (8)

Despite the 2016 peace agreement between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the Colombian government, armed militia groups continue to attack [civilians](#), particularly [human rights leaders](#) and indigenous groups. Between January and June of 2021, armed militias killed 83 civilians. In some rural areas, these groups serve as the [de facto police force](#), imposing strict limitations on civilians. Armed groups exact brutal consequences for those who do not comply with their extortion, including forced labor, sexual violence, and murder. Armed groups frequently carry out massacres and extrajudicial killings of civilians, with 175 [reported victims](#) in the last six months. Violence in border regions, including Norte de Santander and Nariño, reached [record levels](#) in 2021.

Colombian state security forces perpetrate [human rights abuses](#) against civilians. During the mass protests that began in April 2021, police forces used [excessive force](#) against demonstrators, including firing into crowds of protesters. Human rights groups have reported dozens of deaths, disappearances, arbitrary detentions, sexual assaults, and serious injuries related to the protests.

Israel/Palestine

Stages: Discrimination (3), Polarization (6), Persecution (8)

In May, Hamas launched a barrage of rockets at Israel in response to Israel's planned eviction of Palestinian residents from the [Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood](#) of east Jerusalem. Israel responded with bombing of Gaza aimed at destroying tunnels and homes of Hamas leaders. The subsequent 11-day conflict left [256 Palestinians in Gaza dead](#). Hamas rockets killed 13 civilians in Israel. Both sides committed war crimes, with Hamas indiscriminately [firing more than 4,000 rockets](#) on Israeli civilians and Israel conducting nighttime bombing raids without warning and evacuating civilians.

The Israel-Gaza conflict spurred demonstrations in the West Bank, where the Israeli Defense Forces killed [34 Palestinians in May](#), the highest monthly toll in more than a decade. Palestinian protesters called for the resignation of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, who responded [with a brutal crackdown](#), arresting suspected dissidents, including one prominent critic who was killed while being taken into custody.

Mozambique

Stages: Extermination (9)

Over the past six months, [the Islamist insurgency](#) in Mozambique's northernmost Cabo Delgado province has continued to escalate. Fighting between Islamic-State linked jihadist militants and Mozambican security forces alongside allied foreign mercenaries (including members of the Russian Wagner Group) has killed more than 3,000 people and [displaced nearly 800,000 residents](#) of Cabo Delgado. All sides of the conflict have [committed war crimes](#), including summary executions, abductions and arbitrary detentions, burning of homes and villages, looting, and sexual violence.

A [major militant offensive](#) in the town of Palma in March killed dozens of civilians and forced an estimated [40,000 of Palma's 75,000 residents](#) to flee as militants [massacred and beheaded civilians](#). The persistent conflict has created a [massive humanitarian crisis](#) with nearly one million Mozambicans facing severe risk of famine due to violence and displacement.

Nicaragua

Stages: Organization (5), Polarization (6)

President Daniel Ortega led the Sandinista Marxist revolution that overthrew the corrupt Somoza dictatorship in 1979. He was defeated in the election of 1990. He returned to power in 2006 and has ruled Nicaragua with his wife since then. Ortega is currently leading a brutal crackdown on opposition leaders and protestors. [Starting in 2018](#), journalists, students, politicians, and activists protested the corrupt and dictatorial regime of Ortega and his wife/Vice President [Rosario Murillo](#). Since the crackdown began, security forces have killed more than [300 Nicaraguans](#) and forced more than 100,000 to flee the country.

In preparation for the November 7, 2021 Nicaraguan general election, Ortega has detained all [five opposition candidates](#) running for President, claiming that the candidates are plotting a coup against him. The Ortega regime uses police and organized mobs to intimidate activists and [arrest opposition leaders](#).

Russia

Stages: Polarization (6), Preparation (7), Persecution (8), Denial (10)

On August 20, 2020, government-sponsored agents of the Federal Security Service (FSB) poisoned [Alexey Navalny](#), a founding member of the Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBC), a leading Russian opposition figure and "the man Vladimir Putin fears most."

After six months of recovery in a hospital in Germany, Navalny returned to Russia in January 2021. He was immediately [detained](#) at the airport on fabricated charges of violating his parole. Navalny was subsequently sentenced to three years in prison by a Moscow court. Navalny's arrest has led to tens of thousands [protesting in streets across Russia](#), demanding the release of Navalny and protesting the rampant corruption in Putin's regime. State security forces have responded to the protests with brutal force, often beating and detaining unarmed demonstrators. Police have incarcerated an [estimated 3,000 people](#) in connection with the demonstrations. Russia has again become a police state.

South Sudan

Stages: Polarization (6), Extermination (9)

South Sudan continues to be divided between Dinka and Nuer leaders and their ethnic allies. Both sides carry out genocidal massacres of the other side. South Sudan has been engulfed in ethnic conflict since its independence in 2011. The Dinka President Salva Kiir dismissed the Nuer Vice President Riek Machar in 2013, accusing him of planning a coup d'état. Bilateral genocide began shortly thereafter.

Despite ongoing peace talks and a fragile ceasefire agreement, the Government of South Sudan led by President Salva Kiir has not stopped its attacks on the [Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition](#) led by Vice President Riek Machar. The South Sudanese military, SPLM-O militias, and other armed groups carry out [extrajudicial killings of civilians](#). State security forces [arbitrarily detain](#) political dissidents. Armed groups regularly commit genocidal massacres and sexual violence, targeting civilians along [ethnic lines](#). [Intercommunal violence](#), raids, and other attacks [are frequent](#), [killing hundreds](#) and [displacing thousands](#). From February to May 2021, ethnic militias killed at least [444 civilians](#). Interethnic tension and violent clashes continued throughout June, [killing dozens](#). [Approximately 2 million](#) South Sudanese are internally displaced, and 2.2 million more have fled the country since the beginning of the conflict in 2013.

Sri Lanka

Stages: Organization (5), Persecution (8), Denial (10)

The [August 2020 Parliamentary elections in Sri Lanka](#) gave the Sinhala Buddhist nationalist Rajapaksa brothers firm control over the national and local governments. The brothers have long targeted the Tamil ethnic minority in the country. They actively support hate groups that have targeted Tamils with hate speech and incitements to ethnic violence. The Rajapaksa brothers and their political party, the Sri Lanka People's Party, continue to block investigations and justice for the crimes against humanity committed by the Sri Lankan army and the terrorist Tamil Tigers (LTTE) during the 1983 - 2009 [civil war](#). No truth commission has been organized, as called for by the UN Human Rights Council in 2014 and by the previous Sri Lankan government of [President Maithripala Sirisena](#) in 2015.

[Islamophobia](#) continues to rise in Sri Lanka. Buddhist monks, Sinhalese nationalists, and local hate groups have increased their campaign of incitement and persecution against Sri Lanka's Muslim community. Mobs have vandalized mosques and Muslim businesses and the government has [jailed several Muslim activists](#). The COVID-19 pandemic has been popularly blamed on Muslims. A [forced cremation policy](#) of COVID victims imposed by the Sri Lankan government denied Muslims their rights to hold Islamic burials.

Sudan

Stages: Preparation (7), Persecution (8), Extermination (9)

Sudan's transitional government, headed by both civilian and military leaders after the 2019 ouster of longtime dictator, Omar al-Bashir, has been unable to ensure peace in Sudan. Among Sudan's current leaders is Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, a.k.a. Hemetti, leader of the Janjaweed who committed genocide in Darfur. The [Rapid Support Forces](#) (RSF), a state security force that is only a new name for the Janjaweed, continues to commit [atrocities](#), including rape, murder, and torture of civilians and peaceful protesters. [The RSF](#) and [Arab militias](#) carry out massacres of non-Arab Sudanese. They attack internally displaced persons camps in Darfur and other regions. Over [2.5 million people](#) are internally displaced persons (IDPs). They live in IDP camps with limited access to food, shelter, and water. Since UNAMID, the joint UN/African Union peacekeeping mission, was withdrawn in 2021, IDPs remain extremely vulnerable to armed attacks.

Militia attacks and displacements have escalated in the first half of 2021. Interethnic conflicts between Arab and non-Arab groups have killed hundreds, with outbreaks of violence in [January](#), [April](#), and [June](#). By April 2021, violence displaced more than [237,000 people](#), about five times the number of people displaced in the entirety of 2020.

Tajikistan/Kyrgyzstan

Stages: Organization (5), Polarization (6)

In April, [ethnic clashes](#) erupted on the contested border between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan in the Fergana valley. The violence began in the border village of Kok-Tash in Leilek province after a local dispute over a security camera placed by Tajikistan authorities on the Kyrgyztan side of the border.

[Over the next three days](#), Tajik and Kyrgyz mobs attacked each other and destroyed property. Violence spread from Leilek province to other locations along the border zone. The Tajikistan military eventually entered the border region, set up roadblocks and fired mortars into Kyrgyz settlements, killing dozens, including several children. At least 36 Kyrgyz and 19 Tajiks were reportedly killed in the skirmishes. 40,000 Kyrgyz persons were evacuated or displaced from the border zone. Both sides agreed to [a ceasefire](#) on May 1, 2021 and committed to demilitarization of the border.

Uganda

Stages: Discrimination (3), Polarization (6), Persecution (8)

Minority ethnic groups, including the Batwa and Maragoli populations, are marginalized and subjected to discrimination. The Ugandan government [does not recognize the Maragoli community](#) as Ugandan and denies members [national identity cards](#). Since the government displaced the Batwa from their homelands in the 1990s without compensation, [the Batwa group](#) has been unable to depend on its traditional methods of [hunting and gathering](#), seriously threatening the survival of the group. Batwa minority groups have also experienced [exploitation and violence](#) in the DR Congo and Rwanda.

LGBTQI+ Ugandans face severe discrimination. Ugandan law provides [no legal protection](#) against discrimination for LGBTQI+ individuals. Same-sex sexual relations are illegal, and Ugandan courts punish "offenders" with up to [life in prison](#). Politicians and other authorities [incite hatred and violence](#) against the LGBTQI+ community. LGBTQI+ Ugandans are frequent victims of [harassment](#), [beatings](#), and [murders](#). In May, the Ugandan Parliament passed the [Sexual Offenses Bill](#), which criminalizes same-sex sexual acts.

Security forces regularly commit major [human rights abuses](#), including beatings, extortion, and extrajudicial killings of civilians. Unlawful killings and police brutality have increased in the past year as security forces have used the enforcement of lockdown measures as a pretext for [further abuses](#). Police forces arbitrarily detain and torture political dissidents. Conditions in detention centers are inhumane and some detainees are subjected to [forced labor](#).

Human rights abuses increased surrounding Uganda's January 14, 2021 election. Security forces backing incumbent President Yoweri Museveni [harassed, attacked, and killed](#) protesters, journalists, and supporters of Museveni's opposition. Government police and military forces have been [abducting](#) and [torturing political dissidents](#) following the election.

Venezuela

Stages: Polarization (6), Persecution (8)

Venezuelan security forces are carrying out a systematic campaign of violence targeting political opponents of the Maduro regime. Security forces have killed [tens of thousands](#) of civilians and committed [egregious human rights abuses](#) and [crimes against humanity](#), including forced disappearances, torture, sexual violence, and [arbitrary detention](#). The Maduro regime carries out [extrajudicial killings of civilians](#), targeting human rights defenders and protesters.

[Armed groups](#) use violence to control the lives and everyday activities of Venezuelans in parts of Caracas and in other regions of the country, often with the consent or cooperation of [government-backed forces](#). These groups commit serious [human rights violations](#) with impunity, including murders, disappearances, and forced labor. Armed groups have made explicit threats to carry out "[social cleansing](#)" of "[undesirable](#)" [populations](#) such as suspected criminals and drug addicts.

Government security forces committed murders of at least [486 civilians](#) between January and June 2021. [In March](#), Venezuelan state security forces launched an attack on Colombian armed groups in Apure, a border region, [displacing thousands](#). During the offensive, Venezuelan forces committed "[egregious abuses](#)" of human rights, including torture and extrajudicial killings. Amid a man-made humanitarian and economic crisis millions of Venezuelans cannot access food, basic healthcare, or water. [More than 5.4 million](#) Venezuelans have fled the country.

For more information about countries of special concern, visit the [Genocide Watch website](#).
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