Early Warning, Early Action, in Practice

Early warning assessment of Africa

Jos Meester
Bas Bijlsma
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CRU Report

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The Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael' is a leading think tank and academy on international affairs. Through our analyses, training and public platform activities we aim to inspire and equip governments, businesses, and civil society to contribute to a secure, sustainable and just world.

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Contents

Figures

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Executive summary

- This reports presents the results of Clingendael's Early Warning, Early Action (EWEA) scan of the African continent, assessing conflict risks over a 3-4 year period through a mixed-methods approach.
- The assessment of conflict vulnerabilities yielded several insights:
  - Although Ethiopia, Mozambique, Sudan and Niger are analytically in or close to conflict, they are often not recognised as such by the international community.
  - In contrast, Libya is frequently perceived as a conflict case, even though the situation has stabilised and conflict lines have shifted significantly.
  - Central and southern Africa frequently feature strong executives facing limited opposition, leading to political violence from state repression. West African countries and the Sahel show longer-term risks associated with state weakness, and face autocratic coups and insurgencies spilling over from neighbouring countries. In northern Africa, vulnerability is surprisingly low, as authoritarian responses have interacted with recent memories of post-Arab Spring repression and economic hardship (Morocco and Algeria in particular featured low vulnerability).

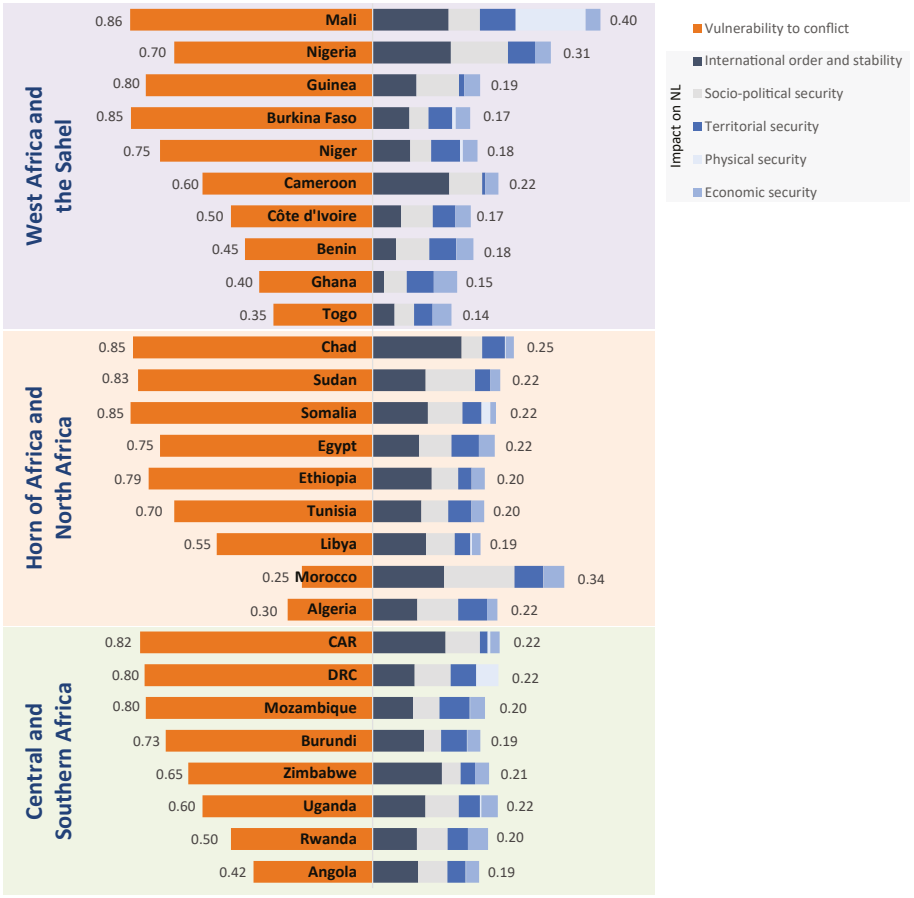
- The impact of conflict did not feature predominantly within regional dynamics, yet several important underlying factors could be identified:
  - Hard-security impacts relate to the peacebuilding presence of the Netherlands and its allies, rather than to threats affecting Dutch citizens.
  - The changing geopolitics of Africa, especially the rising presence of Russia at the expense of Western and French interests, stands out. Yet Russian influences frequently reflect a weakening relationship between Western actors and African countries rather than Russian strength. Chinese and Gulf influences are also on the rise.
  - Substantial risks are related to weak governance and rule of law. This particularly affects illicit trade and migration, and at times maritime connectivity. High domestic conflict vulnerabilities, poor governance and weak rule of law create the space for organised criminal actors to operate.
  - Ecological security risks feature prominently, but given the low carbon emissions of African countries risks are limited to diffuse biodiversity impacts.

- Combining the score and insights of both the vulnerability assessment and the impact assessment (excluding ecological impacts) suggests the prioritisation list on the next page.
  - The resultant prioritisation hinges heavily on variance in the conflict vulnerability dimension, as the impact of conflict shows limited variation.
  - Conflict resolution options may still exist in Sudan, Chad and Ethiopia, while in Nigeria and Mozambique opportunities may still exist to limit the extent of conflict across the country.
  - Egypt's vulnerability is high but unlikely to translate into conflict in the short term. Yet Egypt's impact score underestimates the country's role in migration management and maritime trade.
  - Libya features low, yet new risks are emerging as criminal dynamics increase, and resilience may flounder if fossil fuel prices fluctuate.
  - Morocco is placed firmly in the low vulnerability category yet the impact of conflict in Morocco on the Netherlands is one of the highest impact scores of all the countries analysed.

Pioritization list for early action

Country		Vulnerability	Impact (excl. ecological security)
Mali	Conflict resolution	0.86	0.40
Nigeria	Conflict resolution	0.70	0.31
Chad	Conflict resolution	0.85	0.25
Sudan	Conflict resolution	0.83	0.22
Somalia	Conflict resolution	0.85	0.22
CAR	Conflict resolution	0.82	0.22
DRC	Conflict resolution	0.80	0.22
Egypt	Conflict prevention	0.75	0.22
Mozambique	Conflict resolution	0.80	0.20
Ethiopia	Conflict resolution	0.79	0.20
Guinea	Conflict prevention	0.80	0.19
Burkina Faso	Conflict resolution	0.85	0.17
Burundi	Conflict prevention	0.73	0.19
Niger	Conflict prevention	0.75	0.18
Tunisia	Conflict prevention	0.70	0.20
Zimbabwe	Conflict prevention	0.65	0.21
Cameroon	Conflict prevention	0.60	0.22
Uganda	Conflict prevention	0.60	0.22
Libya	Conflict prevention	0.55	0.19
Rwanda	Conflict prevention	0.50	0.20
Côte d'Ivoire	Conflict prevention	0.50	0.17
Morocco	Low vulnerability	0.25	0.34
Benin	Conflict prevention	0.45	0.18
Angola	Conflict prevention	0.42	0.19
Algeria	Low vulnerability	0.30	0.22
Ghana	Conflict prevention	0.40	0.15
Togo	Conflict prevention	0.35	0.14

Regional breakdown of conflict vulnerability and the impact of conflict on the Netherlands



Abbreviations

AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
CAR	Central African Republic
CPC	Coalition of Patriots for Change
DDE	Sustainable Economic Development Department
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EEAS	European External Action Service
EU	European Union
EWEA	Early Warning, Early Action
FMO	Dutch Entrepreneurial Development Bank
GERD	Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam
JAS	*Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'adati wal-Jihad* (Boko Haram)
ISGS	Islamic State in Greater Sahara
ISIS	The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
ISSP	Islamic State Sahel Province
ISWAP (-GS)	Islamic State's West Africa Province (- Greater Sahara)
JNIM	*Jama'at Nusrat Al-Islam Wa Al-Muslimeen* (Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims)
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NGO	Non-Governmental Agency
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
RVO	Dutch Enterprise Agency
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States
WTO	World Trade Organisation

1 Introduction

Over the past three decades the interest in understanding, predicting and preventing violent conflict across different fragile and conflict-affected situations has soared. The focus on conflict prevention recognises not only the imperative of preventing the steep human costs associated with violent conflict and donor interests in stability in key regions across the world, but also rests on the idea that conflict prevention is cost effective. Such insights were recognised in the framing remarks of the World Bank's seminal Pathways for Peace report, stating that '*over the medium to long term, donors would save between US$2 and US$7 for each US$1 invested in prevention-related activities*'.[1] Hence, several European donors have recognised conflict prevention as a key goal in their foreign policy.[2] Notably, the government of the Netherlands prioritised conflict prevention as the first goal of its Integrated International Security Strategy (2018-2022).

Although the importance of conflict prevention is thus solidly entrenched in the international debate, its execution is no straightforward matter. Conflict prevention requires an understanding of conflict dynamics, detection of early warning signals, and the ability to initiate early preventive action across a wide variety of fragile and conflict-affected contexts. In theory, well funded and sufficiently flexible aid systems should be able to address emerging challenges in a timely fashion, foregoing the need for any forward-looking tools and methods. In practice, budgeting procedures work in (multi-) annual cycles, coordination systems take time, and the bureaucratic logic of ongoing programmes may resist the swift reaction required in a changing conflict context.

To overcome these constraints a variety of actors, such as the EU (EEAS's Conflict Early Warning System), Germany (PREVIEW Crisis Early Warning), and a range of academics and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), have developed early warning methodologies in order to inform and adjust conflict prevention efforts in a timely fashion. In 2018, the government of the Netherlands prioritised conflict prevention as the first goal of its Integrated International Security Strategy,

1 United Nations and World Bank (2018) *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive approaches to preventing violent conflict*, Washington DC: World Bank, p. 2.

2 Olsen, R. (2009) *The EU and Military Conflict Management in Africa: For the Good of Africa or Europe?*, International Peacekeeping, 16:2, p. 2.

and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence have since made significant investments in enhancing their ability to provide early warning signals to inform early action (EWEA). Through the PROGRESS research programme these ministries have commissioned the Clingendael Institute to support their activities to assess the risk of violent conflict and instability. This reports presents the results of Clingendael's EWEA scan of the African continent assessing conflict risks for a 3-4 year period to the Netherlands.

1.1 From theory to practice

The value of early warning signals and early action to prevent conflict is well entrenched, yet conflict can prove hard to detect. Although the past decades have seen vast improvements in quantitative analytical techniques, computing technology and data availability, the ability to accurately forecast conflict has remained noticeably limited.[3] While predictions regarding the continuation of conflict have somewhat improved, no accurate quantitative forecasting models predicting the onset of conflict are currently available.[4] This reflects the fact that conflict can take a wide range of forms, and can be sparked through a myriad of casual pathways. Moreover, conflict patterns and dynamics are contextual and likely to change over time, even within a single context.[5] As for instance in the case of Sudan, virtually all indicators were signalling potential conflict for decades before the recent protests and transition. '*Even close members of Bashir's entourage are puzzled as to how he managed to stay in power so long.*'[6] It is therefore nigh impossible to generate an accurate prediction of the onset of conflict, and potentially costly when one considers the consequence of misleading or incorrect forecasts. Interpreting early warning signals is thus not simply a matter of 'better' or 'more' data.

Over the past years, Clingendael has produced several methodological papers aiming to overcome the limitations to forecasting; these provide frameworks to analyse both a country's vulnerability to conflict and the impact such conflict

3 Chadefaux, T. (2017) *Conflict Forecasting and its Limits*. Data Science, 1:1-2, p. 7.
4 Cederman, L.E. and Weidmann, N.B. (2017) *Predicting Armed Conflict*. Science (American Association for the Advancement of Science), 355:6324, p. 474.
5 Chadefaux, T. (2017) *Conflict Forecasting and its Limits*. Data Science, 1:1-2, p. 7.
6 Waal, de A. (2015) *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa: Money, War and the Business of Power*, London: Polity Press.

would have on the Netherlands.[7] In order to overcome the weak predictive capacity of current technologies, the approach taken here moves away from attempting to estimate the likelihood of conflict and, instead, assesses a county's vulnerability to conflict. Vulnerability encapsulates the presence of factors associated with a range of casual pathways that could lead to conflict, drawn from a range of conflict theories. To subsequently prioritise countries for early action, it is equally important to assess the implications (or the cost) of conflict, although the assessment of impact in early warning approaches is often underdeveloped. The assessment presented in this report overcomes this deficiency through an impact assessment method building on the Dutch categorisation of key interests abroad, as recognised in the framework of the *Analistennetwerk Nationale Veiligheid*, centring around six vital interests to the Netherlands and its allies (United Kingdom, United States, France and Germany). Impact thus relates to various transmission belts that translate the consequence of conflict in a country to a negative change that affects Dutch interests.

The approach guiding this report thus aims to collect, structure and make accessible existing quantitative conflict indicators on a country basis, in order to provide a contextualised insight into the vulnerabilities faced in this country context. It takes into account indicators reflecting a wide variety of conflict theories and predictive models, including forecasting models, records of ongoing conflict, and the main conflict drivers drawn from current academic literature (political/institutional factors, economic factors, social factors and environmental factors). It subsequently validates and enriches the quantitatively derived vulnerability assessments through additional qualitative insights from in-country experts through a Delphi method, and further contextualises the results through a quantitative assessment of the impact of conflict in these countries on the Netherlands (for more details on the methodology used, see Appendices 1 and 2). The goals of the project are to:

- collect, structure, interpret and present existing analyses to make conflict indications more accessible
- link conflict risks to indicators of potential impact on the Netherland to support prioritisation for early action

7 Deen, B., *et al.* (2021) *From Indices to Insight: A proposal to enhance the risk assessment of the Dutch Early Warning/Early Action process*, The Hague: Clingendael; de Bruijne, K. (2021) *Costing Conflict: An early warning method to assess the impact of political violence on vital security interests*, The Hague: Clingendael.

- improve the Delphi method to collect insights on conflict vulnerability[8]
- propose a prioritisation list for early action.

1.2 Outline

This report presents the results of Clingendael's EWEA scan of the African continent. It first discusses various countries' vulnerability to conflict in Chapter 2, categorising countries into conflict resolution cases, conflict prevention cases and low vulnerability cases. This chapter also provides an overview of the key factors driving these countries' vulnerability to conflict. Chapter 3 assesses the impact of conflict in these countries on the Netherlands in comparison to other countries within the region. Chapter 4 recognises that not all Dutch state actors engaged in foreign policy can engage to the same degree on all vital Dutch interests abroad, and hence presents a view of conflict risks along the individual vital interests that jointly compose the impact assessment. The analysis concludes in Chapter 5, where a prioritisation of countries for preventive action is established and discussed, and lessons learned from the execution of this assessment are summarised.

8 For more details on the Delphi method used in this report, see Appendix 1.

2 Vulnerability to conflict

This chapter aims to start the discussion of conflict risk to the Netherlands by assessing African countries' vulnerability to conflict, which in the following chapter is combined with impact to form a fully fledged risk assessment. The vulnerability assessment draws upon both quantitative analysis and qualitative insights derived from the Delphi sessions with in-country experts. It presents the vulnerability scores of the countries discussed in the workshop series, categorises them into conflict resolution cases, conflict prevention cases and low vulnerability cases, and then discusses the key factors driving this vulnerability.

2.1 An overview of conflict vulnerability

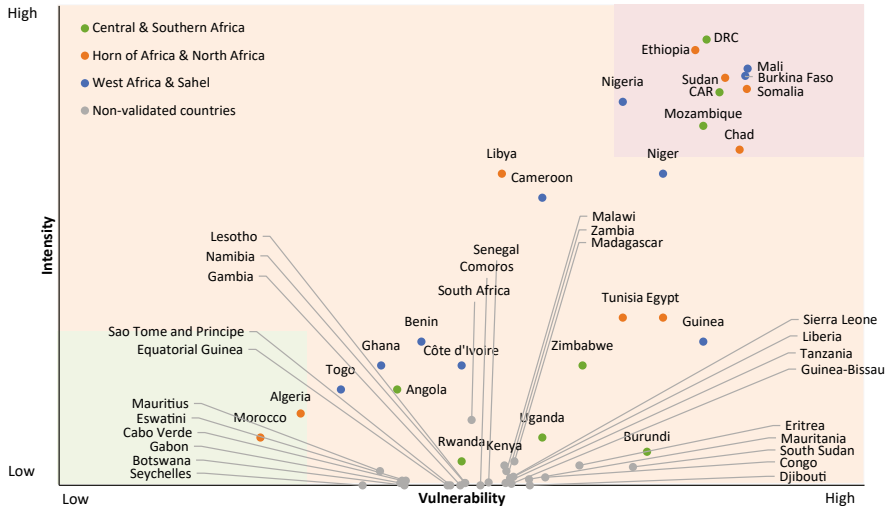
Based on the quantitative analysis, countries received scores for their vulnerability to conflict and the impact of conflict on the Netherlands. In order to account for potential data deficiencies, up to ten countries in each region were selected for further examination in the Delphi-based round tables. In order to establish a set of countries for the discussion, an initial list of countries with a high combined score on the vulnerability to conflict and impact of conflict on the Netherlands measures was created. The top countries in each region were shortlisted. These shortlists were subsequently adjusted manually to reflect countries' policy relevance to the Netherlands, and used to determine which countries would be discussed during the round tables.[9]

The assessment of conflict vulnerability was conducted during the regional round table sessions. An overview of conflict vulnerability is reflected in Figure 1. This figure reflects both the validated placement of countries discussed during the round tables (in colour by region), as well as the placement of non-validated countries (in grey). The analysis in this chapter focuses on countries subjected to validation in the round tables only. The figure shows the countries placed according to their vulnerability to conflict (x-axis) and the current intensity of

9 Countries not selected frequently featured low vulnerability, an exceptionally low impact on the Netherlands, or were small countries thus limiting the impact conflict in these countries might have. For more information on the methodology, see Appendix 1.

politically motivated violence (y-axis). This second axis was added in order to distinguish countries currently experiencing active conflict from countries where no active conflict is occurring yet, as programming opportunities in both types of countries differ greatly. Countries in conflict are characterised by substantial, ongoing, politically motivated violence, generally involving multiple actors, and likely to benefit more from peacebuilding initiatives, de-escalation pushes, and reconciliatory programming. Conflict prevention countries feature high vulnerability but no substantial ongoing political violence. Preventive programming is still feasible in these countries. Note, however, that countries may be fragile and move back and forth between categories over longer timeframes. Figure 1 breaks down into three fields: 1) a red field that includes conflict resolution cases; 2) orange fields including conflict prevention cases; and 3) a green field including low vulnerability cases. A quantitative overview of scores for all countries can be found in Appendix 3.

Figure 1 Categorisation of countries according to their vulnerability and intensity scores



Countries were placed along this matrix, distributed across the three categories based on the quantitative analysis. Experts in the workshops adjusted the placement of countries where necessary, making a distinction between countries considered to be in active conflict and those not currently in conflict. The placement along categories in Figure 1 reflects the final placement given a 3-4 year outlook, resulting in (validated scores only):

- **Conflict resolution:** Countries experiencing both highly intense political violence and high vulnerability to renewed/ongoing political violence. These present a risk of future escalation or spillover effects to other cases. They require conflict resolution rather than conflict prevention efforts. Countries included in this category are: *Burkina Faso, Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Somalia and Sudan.*

- **Conflict prevention:** Countries that score high on either intensity or vulnerability to political violence. In these cases, there still is potential for prevention. Countries included in this category are: *Angola, Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea, Libya, Niger, Rwanda, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda and Zimbabwe.*

- **Low vulnerability:** Countries with no scope for meaningful prevention programming given their highly limited vulnerability to political violence. This category consists of: *Algeria and Morocco.*

As is evident from Figure 1, several countries display a significant gap between their vulnerability and intensity score. This reflects the difference between the potential vulnerability to political violence and the current level of political violence. Countries with a significant gap (from larger to smaller gaps) are Burundi, Guinea, Uganda, Rwanda, Egypt, Zimbabwe, Angola, Tunisia and Côte d'Ivoire (see Figure 2 for an overview of their scores and the gaps). These countries may form an especially significant sub-categorisation of the broader conflict prevention category. Although this gap may be positive, as these cases experience relatively low levels of political violence in relatively vulnerable contexts, they also signal a potential for unstable situations where political violence may arise suddenly and substantially. Many of the countries that fall into this category feature a relatively authoritarian government with strong security forces and/or effective intelligence services, facing limited political challenges from society or opposition groups (Angola, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Uganda, Rwanda, Egypt, Zimbabwe). In the northern African cases (Egypt and Tunisia) the gap reflects a hesitancy among disaffected groups to protest, given recent memories of the Arab Spring and its subsequent violence. Vulnerability is thus quite acutely present, but political actors are either unwilling or unable to mobilise dissent. Many of the other cases noted reflect the success of incumbent political actors to monopolise the political space, while leveraging security actors to dismantle the most significant organisations and groups that

might oppose their authority. These cases are frequently marked by significant electoral violence, as opposition groups temporarily attempt to (re)form. Longer-term opposition is frequently not feasible, however, given effective repression and limited civic space. For most of the cases shown in Figure 2, experts noted significant longer-term risks associated with the governing actors' approaches, as in most cases vulnerabilities are prevented from escalating but are not resolved.

Figure 2 Countries with significant gap between their vulnerability and intensity scores

Country	Categorisation	Vulnerability	Intensity	Gap
Burundi	Conflict prevention	0.73	0.07	**0.66**
Guinea	Conflict prevention	0.80	0.30	**0.50**
Uganda	Conflict prevention	0.60	0.10	**0.50**
Rwanda	Conflict prevention	0.50	0.05	**0.45**
Egypt	Conflict prevention	0.75	0.35	**0.40**
Zimbabwe	Conflict prevention	0.65	0.25	**0.40**
Tunisia	Conflict prevention	0.70	0.35	**0.35**
Côte d'Ivoire	Conflict prevention	0.50	0.25	**0.25**
Angola	Conflict prevention	0.42	0.20	**0.22**

2.2 Conflict resolution cases

These are countries with high levels of vulnerability and conflict intensity – including countries which, for example, already host UN peacekeeping operations (e.g. Mali, DRC) and experience jihadist insurgencies and violent extremism (e.g. Burkina Faso, CAR, Somalia, Mozambique). The list also includes larger countries that suffer from violent internal conflict (e.g. Ethiopia, Nigeria, Sudan). These countries are well known for experiencing high levels of political violence, for being extremely fragile or for a combination of both factors. As was frequently noted during the round tables, most of these countries would not benefit (any more) from conflict prevention efforts. There are some minor exceptions in which violence may yet be prevented in selected areas within the country (e.g. Somalia) or small windows may exists to prevent a fragile agreement from breaking down (e.g. Chad). The countries are discussed here in the context of reducing the intensity of ongoing political violence.

The **DRC** faces significant vulnerability that is unlikely to be resolved, as the political and institutional strength to do so is unlikely to materialise. The DRC has failed to diversify its economy and remains largely dependent on natural resources. Some of these resources may be at risk given their high climate vulnerability, and a non-inclusive elite bargain preventing equitable development and improvements for social indicators. In the eastern DRC an increase in the number of armed groups is observed, and the region is beginning to witness the presence of the Islamic State. Significant displacement due to recurrent massacres in the region put further stress on the state. Tensions may rise, especially given upcoming elections. Additionally, geopolitical tensions between the DRC, Uganda and Rwanda complicate resolution efforts within the DRC. The consequences of these rivalries and the political violence it stimulates in the DRC may extend into Burundi.

In **Ethiopia**, the ceasefire between federal and Tigrayan forces appears to be holding, yet ethnic tensions are high across the country. This is due to the highly ethnicised federal structure and contested national identity. In the current constitutional arrangement, majority ethnic groups within the ethnically defined states have a privileged position, effectively encouraging political ethnic extremism. Any transition towards a more stable situation will therefore require a constitutional debate that addresses tensions beyond solely the Tigray region, as many more ethnic groups are contesting their disadvantaged positions. This is especially severe considering that minority ethnic groups may be able to call upon support from ethnic group members in another state where they do form a majority and hence control sizeable security forces. Additionally, the involvement of Eritrean forces in Ethiopia provides further escalation risks, while complicating resolution opportunities. Other potential destabilising factors, such as the filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and border disputes with Sudan, were not rated as a significant risk by experts, especially when compared to domestic tensions.

Political violence is widespread in **Mali**, with active conflicts in many areas of the country. Two successive coups (one against a civilian government, and the other by the same military junta against the civilian-led transitional government that took over after the first coup) since 2020 reflect the high level of political contestation, and readiness of Malian political actors to use force to seize power. The authoritarian turn by the coup government has alienated a range of regional and international partners, especially as the coup regime engaged the support of security actors aligned with Russia. This combines with the presence of a variety

of domestic armed actors in opposition to the central government as well as localised armed groups to create a vulnerable situation. Experts saw no scope to discuss preventive policy instruments, given overall agreement on its conflict resolution classification, high vulnerability and high ongoing levels of political violence.

Burkina Faso faces ongoing active conflict across the country. Two distinct coups in January 2022 and September 2022 are symptomatic of the serious political tensions in the country and the ongoing political impact of militant violence. The country is vulnerable, and violence intense. Additionally, the central government relies on support from a variety of other locally influential groups to maintain stability and, increasingly, on volunteer forces that have been credibly accused of civilian abuses and killings. Yet some of these groups face challenges from within their own group and/or from contesting militias. Given the high intensity of violence and high vulnerability, experts did not see any opportunities for preventive programming.

Although **Sudan** is frequently viewed as a country in transition, authoritarian factions in the transitional government are consolidating their power and attempting to prevent a transition towards civilian rule. Although at national level there is no active conflict taking place, across the country local and intercommunal conflict is intensifying (and proliferating since the military coup in 2021). Government institutions are dysfunctional, and shortage of goods such as fuel have become worse. With debt relief and international financial assistance on hold since the coup, the already dire economic conditions in the country have rapidly worsened over the past year. Sudan's vulnerabilities are interlinked with Chad's vulnerabilities. Both countries face significant and somewhat comparable pressures: 1) violence by the government and at societal level; 2) both countries score quite high in terms of intensity of violence; and 3) violence in both countries is related, as violence spills over from Sudan into Chad (and vice versa), as some armed actors in Sudan are partially based in and equipped from Chad. Additionally, climatic and environmental changes are occurring and taking their toll through border conflicts as well as farmer-herder conflicts and increasing climate-driven displacement. Finally, significant concerns are highly salient among Sudanese elites over Ethiopian, Eritrean and to some extent Egyptian attempts to destabilise Sudan.

Experts noted considerable regional differences in **Somalia**, with relatively low violence in the north contrasting with counter-insurgency efforts ongoing in

the south (although since then clashes in Laascaanood have partially reversed this pattern). Violence in the south appears to be changing, with growing clan-based violence against an insurgent that is increasingly being perceived as a criminal actor (Al Shabaab).[10] Although the decades-long fight against Al Shabaab appears to be making some progress in terms of territorial gains in recent years, this progress has come at the expense of arming various clans across the country. This raises memories of the earlier civil war, during which inter-clan warfare drove significant violence. Additionally, the country is currently facing a highly precarious food situation following a long draught, potentially leading to significant internal displacement and raising inter-clan tensions. Major vulnerabilities were also noted in the more stable north. Weak institutions could be circumvented for political reasons, but risk sparking clan-based violence in both Somaliland and Puntland. Proposals from the federal government to presidents of the federal member states to delay state elections in return for increased troop contributions to the coalition fighting Al Shabaab are particularly risky in this regard.

The **Central African Republic** is highly vulnerable, and has seen increasingly intense violence in recent years. With major socioeconomic vulnerabilities, CAR has one of the lowest GDP per capita levels globally, and around a quarter of the population is internally or externally displaced. Meanwhile the 2019 peace process has not fully resolved tensions, and the opposition Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC) is continuing to attack government military forces. Additionally, the country is facing great environmental vulnerability. Politically, the geopolitical situation in CAR has worsened with the entry of the Russian private military company Wagner. The introduction of Russian influences has intensified political violence in the country and may further destabilise the country should Russian mercenaries substantially threaten Western/French interests. Political violence is especially intense in rural areas rather than in the capital.

Nigeria is also close to the conflict prevention category, primarily because it scores lowest in terms of vulnerability of all conflict resolution cases. Highlighted risk factors included significant conflicts in the north, contestation between armed groups, response of state security forces, elections, extreme inequalities

10 Note that this is in part the consequence of a deliberate effort by the federal government to portray Al Shabaab as a criminal organisation.

and youth exclusion, and an apparent lack of political will to improve the situation. Plenty of potentially triggering events also occur due to violence associated with illicit trade and cattle raiding. The lack of escalation of violence given these severe vulnerabilities was puzzling to some experts, while others noted that Nigeria's strong state apparatus and its strong national identity were the main factors holding escalation at bay.

In **Mozambique** the compounding effect of multiple natural disasters and violence could lead to a deterioration in the socioeconomic situation and increasing displacement/migration. The country is thus highly vulnerable. The insurgency in the north has been ongoing for five years. The instability created may allow conflict to arise in the south as well, where the Islamic State has influence. Although some experts saw some signs of violence lowering in intensity with the deployment of Rwandan security forces, it could relapse if the root causes of conflict are not addressed.

The data demonstrates that **Chad** has the lowest intensity score of all conflict resolution cases. This puts it close to the conflict prevention category, reflecting the effect of reconciliation efforts but also noting their vulnerability due to their lack of inclusion in the national reconciliation dialogue. Major opposition groups were excluded from the dialogue, and discontent with the process remains among state security actors. During the workshop, experts noted the sizeable economic and environmental vulnerabilities fuelling local conflicts, spillover risks from Sudan, and major political and institutional challenges creating instability. Although national-level violence may have ended, significant violence still occurs in local areas by government actors, against government actors, and between societal groups.

Particularly vis-à-vis countries in this category, experts stressed that conflict dynamics vary significantly by area within the country, showing variation in intensity as well as drivers. Conflict dynamics thus need unpacking per the differing situations and varying entry points to conflict within different parts of the country. This is particularly true for Nigeria, but was also noted regarding Somalia, and is true for most larger countries as well (e.g. Ethiopia and the DRC). Ignoring this would lead to missing key issues, which would, in turn, risk overlooking key elements related to the vulnerability and intensity dimensions of political violence in these countries. This may render interventions ineffective or counterproductive.

2.3 Conflict prevention cases

This category consists of countries whose levels of vulnerability and conflict intensity are between low and high. Four clusters can be highlighted in this category. The first cluster of Niger, Libya and Cameroon scores much higher in terms of the intensity of political violence in the countries, and features complex and changing patterns of violence. In fact, **Niger** is almost in the conflict resolution category given its high vulnerability score due to instability in its neighbourhood (e.g. Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad, etc). The links with these neighbouring countries are strong; for example, the leadership of Nigerien militant groups is based partially in Mali. Additional tensions arise from local disputes (especially regarding access to resources and land) and can escalate, especially if combined with the presence of extremist groups manipulating these disputes in their own interests. Jihadist groups, such as Jama'at Nusrat Al-Islam Wa Al-Muslimeen (JNIM) and Islamic State Sahel Province (ISSP) (formerly known as Islamic State in the Greater Sahara or ISGS) are present in Niger. Niger also scores particularly high on economic and social vulnerability indicators. This also opens up Niger as a key transit point for illicit trafficking of gold and cocaine. Groups involved may be linked to political actors and can influence political dynamics within the country. Niger's openness to international cooperation and its role as key counterpart in the Sahel for many countries in the international community might mitigate some of the vulnerabilities faced by Niger, given the substantial international support the country can draw on.

Cameroon is somewhat less vulnerable than Niger, placing it slightly further away from the conflict resolution category. Yet there are serious differences across regions in Cameroon, making it hard to define a unified score for the whole country. In the northwest and southwest regions, intensity of conflict is very high (daily killings, though not on the scale of Mali and Burkina Faso), and vulnerability is quite high. The violence is related to the so-called Anglophone Crisis. Growing factionalization among rebel groups in the two regions may make conflict dynamics less predictable. In the extreme north, violence is high in intensity, though with variations over time. The violence is linked to the presence of Boko Haram and the strong military response of the state, which has so far focused on hard power, lacking soft-power elements. At national level, the main vulnerability is associated to the looming succession of 90-year-old President Paul Biya. Still, the risk of an institutional breakdown following a succession seems more limited as compared to Mali and Burkina Faso. Cameroon's economy is also affected by the security situation in the country, and especially at its

borders. In particular, conflict at the border with Nigeria is blocking economic development. Cameroon has some similarities with Nigeria: both feature high levels of political violence, with some risk factors at national level (e.g. elections/succession), on top of (usually localised) violence at sub-national level (e.g. conflict with Boko Haram, secessionist crises).

Libya is formally under a ceasefire, but low-intensity conflict is still ongoing. The previous conflict appears frozen, and there is a need for political action in order to avoid relapse. Key actors are mobilising/maintaining armed support, making relapse possible. Weapons abound across the entire country, as well as various armed groups controlling territory and constituencies. This can very easily drive political violence at local level. Yet Libya's vulnerability is shifting. On the one hand, the country has a relatively small (youth) population, and is seeing increasing income from oil and gas sales, which could be utilised to stabilise the country. On the other hand, government institutions have severely limited capacity to secure and control its territory, armed groups still proliferate, and arms abound within the population. Libya may have a financial cushion to dampen conflict, but conflict in Libya has partially revolved around control of economic resources and revenues rather than their volume. Nonetheless, losing oil export opportunities (due to domestic or foreign constraints) may quickly change Libya's economic position and affect conflict dynamics. If rents suddenly decrease, different groupings might attempt to protect or improve their revenue in other ways, or underlying ideological cleavages may return to prominence.

As it stands, however, profits in all sectors in Libya are booming. As a consequence, there appears to be a shift towards kleptocracy and illicit finance, and away from ideologically driven contestation. Libya is hence on the verge of a new cycle of violence, rather than in the process of resolving previous violent conflicts. Violence in the coming years will likely be motivated by short-term financial gains, potentially perpetrated by illicit and criminal groups. Nonetheless, a future escalation of violence is unlikely to be as severe as previous escalations. The main conflict vulnerabilities for the coming years lie with institutions potentially being eroded by illicit financial flows. There is less attention from the international community because the intensity of violence is low, oil production is high, migrants are blocked, and there is regional reconciliation in MENA. Geopolitical supporters of Libya's factions appear to be not interested in renewed violence and at times appear to be somewhat reconciliatory. Yet, the barriers to violence are low in Libya. Although

international backers may be significant in national-level conflicts, their support or opposition is of little significance in sub-regional conflict.

A second cluster includes Egypt and Tunisia, which stand out compared to other north African countries most notably due to severe economic vulnerabilities, climate issues and the Sinai conflict. Yet they feature surprisingly low ongoing political violence (compared to extensive vulnerabilities), likely rooted in a hesitancy to contest governance born out of experiences from the Arab Spring and highly securitised political environment. **Egypt** is a case in point, facing very high economic vulnerability. This vulnerability is considered by experts to be due to economic mismanagement, unsustainable debt, lack of revenues generated from the private sector, and rising unemployment among a large section of the population. The debt crisis affects both the real economy and the capacity of the government to address economic challenges. Markets suffer, as there is a lack of coordination between what the job market needs and what universities supply. Additionally, the Egyptian government used to give politically significant groups jobs on government-sponsored projects. Finally, growth has been mostly driven by foreign investments, which produce short-term gains but not necessarily stable economic growth. This approach has become financially unfeasible. Yet the link between economic issues and political violence is not as strong as one might expect in this case. The Egyptian government and security forces have accumulated substantial experience in dealing with dissent during economically hard times. Their relative success has entrenched the Egyptian military's position politically. As such, the Egyptian regime is quite resilient due to their willingness and ability to use violence. Additionally, memories of the Arab Spring and the subsequent period of conflict due to power struggles over state institutions appear to have reduced people's appetite for protest and revolution. A case in point could be found in the 2015-2016 economic crisis, which did not have a significant impact on the government's political position.

Next to its economic problems, Egypt is highly vulnerable to climate risks. Water shortages combined with a growing population, mostly in the Nile Valley, depending on agricultural livelihoods (experts estimate about 30% of people work in agriculture, and an additional 60% of livelihoods are indirectly related to the sector) and a heavy reliance on the declining Nile waters presents a clear risk. Nile waters have also been affected by the contested filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). However, experts did not believe any of the main stakeholders (Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan and international backers) would see major gains in active violent conflict over the GERD, and did not expect actions to escalate.

Finally, the Sinai insurgency has been ongoing since 2013, but with low intensity and limited popular support. It has not had an impact on the stability of the wider country, and may arguably have empowered the Egyptian military. Different tactics have been employed, but in terms of gaining the hearts of the local population and permanently eliminating the threat, the approach used by authorities has not been fully effective. The conflict is relatively severe for the people on the ground, as it prevents the population from accessing services. Moreover, Egypt is struggling with a substantial number of migrants and refugees, estimated by experts to around 4.5-7 million. Most of these are in transit, but some will remain in Egypt for five to ten years.

Tunisia is also highly vulnerable, and potentially more so than Egypt. While Egypt may be considered 'too big to fail' by some of its partners, Tunisia is a less significant player internationally and hence more at risk. The economic situation and outlook of Tunisia is among the worst in north Africa. The economy of the country is breaking down, and the country is on the verge of a sovereign default. Shortages of imported goods frequently occur, although they are currently being resolved. Meanwhile, there are no efforts to reform the economy. The Tunisian state also has less capacity than Egypt to resist and manage social problems, and it is not initiating a national dialogue with relevant opposition movements. The government has previously attempted to distract attention from its failures through scapegoating opposition groups and migrants. Yet, considering a new parliament has just been installed and a new constitution instated, this strategy may be hard to implement successfully in the near future. The alternative of shifting blame for policy failures to societal groups is possible, but may prove highly inflammatory and hence politically risky. Currently, although social unrest exists, the risk of violence from the grassroots level is low as the opposition is divided and lacks legitimacy from citizens, while incidents are generally low key. However, there is a high risk of violent repression from elites to quell any perceived discontent from below. This situation is complicated, as there are emerging divisions within some key institutions including the security forces. Yet historically there has not been as much political violence in Tunisia as in other countries, potentially limiting escalation potential. Finally, there is a terrorist challenge in Tunisia, but it remains a small and marginalised issue.

A third cluster can be found in the Sahel, featuring varying degrees of conflict spillover from one country to another (partially driven by climate change cause people to migrate southwards); internal vulnerabilities also contribute to this risk. Although many regimes in this group are relatively stable, a series of coups

in the region (Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso) may be setting a precedent for increasingly authoritarian governance. Interestingly, the scores for many of the states in this cluster are comparatively low, contrasting with the growing international attention towards spillover risks and violence from Burkina Faso.

Guinea is facing vulnerabilities due to potential spillover of violence from Mali and political instability from the central state itself. The current coup regime is fragile and faces multiple challenges to its authority related to the potential transition to civilian government. Transition efforts made to date have not been inclusive. Political unrest seems cyclical. Additionally, cocaine trafficking and competition for control over illicit trade trafficking rents among the security and political apparatus is a potential risk factor. The intertwining of criminal and government actors creates a peculiar set of incentives driving violence, and may create an opening for extremist organisations offering religious alternatives to a situation in which the rule of law is absent.

Benin is quite vulnerable. It struggles with a growing population, the impacts of climate change, growing competition over natural resources and spillovers of jihadist violence from the neighbouring Sahel. Domestically, dialogue between national authorities and Fulani communities over resource governance has faced difficulties. In the meantime, environmental degradation continues to push people south from the Sahel, effectively importing patterns of political violence from the Sahel into Benin. Although the government is not under serious threat from a political opposition, it has a very weak army unable to tackle spillover from the Sahel. Benin has not yet seen significant conflict-related deaths, but the northern JNIM incursions have proven contentious and some ISIS attacks have occurred as well. Unfortunately, experts noted that conflict and fragility have not been extensively studied in Benin, leaving knowledge gaps regarding details of its conflict dynamics and drivers.

In **Côte d'Ivoire**, the main security threat comes from attacks by armed groups in the north (jihadist spillover from the Sahel). This threat decreased, in part due to the surging military response in the north mitigating the risk, but attacks may come again in the future given that root causes were not effectively addressed. Additionally, neighbouring countries are facing an ongoing threat from armed groups that may spill over again. On the other hand, there is no big risk of violence from the centre. A powerful state and limited competition for power at the centre act as factors mitigating vulnerability. But political tensions are deeply entrenched and upcoming electoral cycles may stir up tensions. Ongoing

economic growth can act as factor mitigating vulnerability, but the unequal distribution of the benefits of this growth can also lead to tensions.

Conflict in Ghana and Togo is a relatively recent phenomenon. Similarly to Benin, **Ghana** is mildly affected by violence, which is largely imported from the Sahel. Ghana is generally ill prepared to face insurrections. Conflict in the country varies by location. Land and chieftaincy-related conflict occurs predominantly in the south, while the north is more volatile. Spillover risks from Burkina Faso, coupled with authorities' attitude of denial leads to a late response. Additionally, there are pockets of isolated local conflicts throughout the country. Other common challenges include growing population, climate crisis, and growing competition for resources (with environmental degradation pushing people south from the Sahel). The country lacks mitigation measures for agro-pastoral conflicts and protections for Fulani people. This risks people joining armed groups. These risks are somewhat mitigated due to an active and vibrant civil society. Ghana's relatively more open political system, with its history of peaceful transitions of power, makes the country somewhat less vulnerable. Ghana does see some limited post-election violence. Yet, the economic outlook for Ghana is poor, with limited youth employment opportunities potentially leading to recruitment by armed groups.

Togo is also only mildly affected by violence, which is largely perpetrated by groups stemming originally from the Sahel. However, while these groups intentionally move to new areas they recruit locally and exploit highly local fault lines. The country is generally ill prepared to face insurrections. The country faces some violent attacks in the north, including in relation to a jihadist presence. Tensions also occur with Fulani communities over border closures with other Sahel countries. These closures impede cattle herding and lead to cattle confiscations. However, a relatively stable and functional state (including relatively well organised armed forces) without a significant domestic challenger, and efforts being made to manage local conflicts linked to resource management, act as mitigating factors against vulnerability. The state has also undertaken efforts to resolve local conflicts and manage resource-driven conflict (including cattle migration). Nonetheless, the challenges facing Togo are considerable, and also include a growing population and a climate crisis. The latter not only raises competition over resources, but also raises migration concerns as environmental degradation pushes people south from the Sahel.

A final cluster featuring relatively low levels of political violence includes Zimbabwe, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda and Angola. These countries vary in their vulnerability, but share some features relating to a dominant regime not facing any significant organised opposition. As such, violence often stems from government repression rather than societal conflict. A first case is **Zimbabwe**. Zimbabwe faces low levels political violence but is highly vulnerable due to a weak economy and a shrinking space for civil society and political opposition. Zimbabwe relies on a strong military and intelligence able to quell dissent effectively to mitigate these vulnerabilities. Although there is an opposition within the country, it does not have an armed wing. Additionally, the scaling down of the civil disobedience campaign and the lifting of Covid restrictions have created tensions. As such, political violence will likely revolve around human rights violations on the part of the government, rather than outright political violence prevalent throughout the population. Elections in 2023 may see violent repression, as Zimbabwe has a history of pre- and post-election violence.

Uganda has seen substantial political violence contesting the incumbent president's role over the past year. This may intensify in the upcoming elections, or in the case of succession by the incumbent president's son. Violence has been especially pronounced in the north. Although Uganda has significant vulnerabilities, the current government has so far managed to contain them relatively effectively. The main risk thus considered would be a transition between governing actors. Other risks stem predominantly from Uganda's proximity to or involvement in a number of conflicts in the region, such as Chad, South Sudan and the DRC. All of these present some degree of risk to Uganda.

Burundi has weak institutions, as there is an overlap between one ruling party and the government. This has given way to increasing autocratic tendencies from the government, as institutional constraints are largely ineffective because the party overtakes the state bodies as an organising principle. Militarisation of the regime's youth group has facilitated additional repression, as it is perpetrating attacks against the population. The politicisation of institutions thus presents obvious risks associated with weak governance, but also mitigates some risks that might otherwise occur during political transitions, changes in constitution or where there is disagreement between government and military. Burundi's vulnerabilities are largely related to a stagnant economy, featuring a poor business environment, significant unemployment, weak development outcomes and a poor distribution of benefits (hence also inequality). Socially, Burundi is facing significant demographic pressures, coupled with high displacement and/

or migration, coupled with group grievances and a lack of respect for the rights of others. On a political level, the country scores poorly on many levels, including corruption, factionalization of elites, significant repression and a lack of respect for human rights, low state legitimacy, lack of accountability, lack of state service provision and a lack of freedom of information. Additionally, the country is facing natural disasters and risks associated with armed groups around the country.

The current regime in **Rwanda** is very stable. Substantial and effective security forces, strong institutions, a growing economy, a weak opposition and substantial international support shore up the regime's position. Although some potential vulnerabilities remain due to weak social cohesion, weak justice provision and unequal distribution of increasing economic growth, Rwanda appears to have been effective at ensuring security by exporting domestic conflict coupled with shrinking the space for civil society and repressing political opposition. Remaining vulnerabilities within Rwanda may be found in the high concentration of power and degree of personalised rule around the president, and Rwanda's sizeable security role in various regional conflicts potentially affecting the country itself. Neither factor, however, appears to be raising tensions within Rwanda at the moment. The main risk foreseen would occur if the current president's position were to weaken, given his central and personalised role in overcoming weak institutions and societal divisions in the country. Yet, experts noted that an accurate assessment of the current situation in Rwanda is difficult, given that very limited politically sensitive information is shared outside of inner-government circles.

Angola is seeing a limited degree of vulnerability due to the lack of basic service provision. But its strong security and defence forces are likely to limit the escalation of any unrest. Angola might see some public protests, but these are unlikely to be significant in the coming years. Protest against the government occur, but do not involve any organised armed actors. Additionally, the country has just gone through an election, which is the key catalyst for unrest in Angola.

2.4 Low vulnerability cases

This category includes countries that scored low in terms of both vulnerability and conflict intensity levels. This category includes Morocco and Algeria. **Algeria** is close to the conflict prevention category due to its vulnerability score. Experts noted that Algeria currently is more resilient than during the 2019 transition,

yet even the 2019 transition was managed without significant violence. Since then, the economic situation in Algeria has improved, primarily due to significant hydrocarbon revenues. A small increase in social spending has generated broad buy-in to the status quo at elite level and prevented protest from lower-income groups. Some economic concerns remain, especially due to occasional commodity shortages. Some internal violence occurs, such as terrorist groups in the hills or the Sahel spillover in the south, but this remains very limited and is unlikely to pose a significant threat to the regime or wider population.

Concerning **Morocco**, the experts noted that the country is resilient and relatively stable politically. Although there are some protests, they tend not to be systemic. There appears to be an acceptance of the status quo, with little indication of substantial fracturing or contestation. The economic situation is not acutely bad at present, but some commodity shortages are affecting low-income populations, and the impacts of climate change may also be felt.

The Western Sahara conflict with Morocco persists, with continuing tensions between the two countries. However, experts noted that it conflict is mostly confined to camps where Polisario is located and that casualties are fairly low. As a result, they concluded that the conflict is unlikely to pose a major risk in the near term and is unlikely to affect wider dynamics.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has set out an assessment of conflict vulnerability in the most policy-relevant African countries. Based on the quantitative analysis and Delphi sessions, it provides an overview of conflict vulnerability and separates out countries already in conflict from potential prevention cases. Interestingly, the view that arises from the data and expert insights suggests a range of countries as being in conflict which does not fully match the perceptions of these countries in the international community. Several countries considered to be in conflict according to the EWEA approach used here are viewed through a more positive lens internationally, with donors seeking opportunities to re-engage support to the central state (e.g. Ethiopia), stabilise (e.g. Mozambique) or support a transition (e.g. Sudan) rather than considering conflict resolution approaches. In the category of conflict prevention cases, several countries stand out for their close proximity to the conflict quadrant. Libya is one such case, for which experts noted the importance of reconsidering the prevailing perceptions of the

country given that it has stabilised somewhat but also has significantly different conflict lines than previously. For Niger, the main question arising was whether Niger's high vulnerability and intensity of ongoing conflict (bordering perilously close to a country in conflict) was sufficiently recognised in the international community's current approach to the country. Outside of these cases, the conflict prevention category featured interesting regional differences. Central and southern African cases frequently featured countries with a strong executive facing limited opposition, often locating the risks for political violence with state repression around election periods. West Africa and Sahelian countries featured more pronounced longer-term risks associated with state weakness in the face of autocratic coups and insurgencies spilling over from neighbouring countries. In contrast, the conflict vulnerability of northern Africa was lower than expected, given the strong authoritarian state responses in the face of a population with recent memories of the post-Arab Spring repression and economic hardship. In northern Africa, Morocco and Algeria in particular stood out for their exceptionally low vulnerability, making them the only two low vulnerability cases. Although the vulnerability of these countries is clear, it is insufficient to establish a prioritisation of countries for Dutch policy makers. Conflict in these countries will affect the Netherlands in different ways, depending on the ties these countries have with the Netherlands. The next chapter will therefore explore the impact that conflict in these countries might have on vital Dutch interests.

3 The cost of conflict to the Netherlands

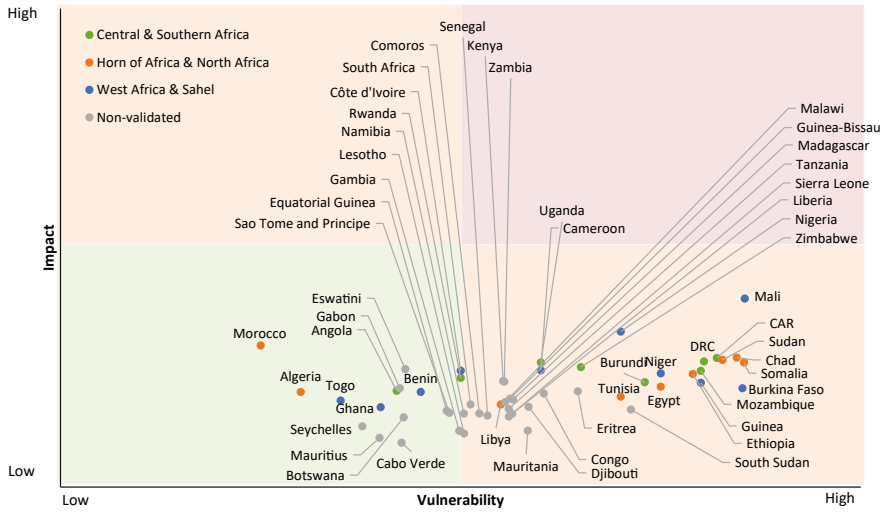
African countries' vulnerability to conflict provides half of the input required to establish conflict risks to the Netherlands. The other half, impact, is the focus of this chapter. It explores the impact of conflict in various African states on the Netherlands, and does so based on an impact framework built on the vital Dutch interests derived from the framework used by the *Analistennetwerk Nationale Veiligheid*. Combining vulnerability and impact yields the distribution found in Figure 3 (further details on the methodology and exact scores can be found in Appendices 1 and 2). In this figure, validated scores across the three regions are highlighted in colour; scores derived solely from the quantitative analysis are reflected in grey. The analysis in this chapter focuses on countries subjected to validation in the round table sessions only, although the discussion focuses on the quantitatively established impact of conflict in these countries on the Netherlands. An overview of all scores can be found in Appendix 3.

As is evident from this figure, conflict in African states has a relatively low impact on vital Dutch interests. Although many of the countries are highly vulnerable, none are highly impactful on vital Dutch interests. This reflects the fact that the impact indicators are scaled according to global minimum and maximum scores in order to facilitate comparisons and prioritisation across regions. For instance, no African country has trade ties with the Netherlands approaching the value of Netherlands trade ties with other Western nations. Similarly, a considerable range of impact measures are highly relevant to the Netherlands, but are simply not affected by African countries. For instance, indicators regarding cyber-attacks or demonstrations against the Netherlands score at negligible levels across the continent. Although several variables thus score consistently low for the Netherlands, this represents a relevant finding as in some cases similar measures relating to Dutch allies reflect higher risk scores (e.g. demonstrations against allies).

Although no country thus ranks as highly impactful, there are significant differences between countries both on their overall scores as well as through the lens of vital security interests. Although these scores may thus pose some questions about the prioritisation of Africa in foreign policy in general, they

provide a relevant point of departure for prioritisation of engagement with African countries. The rest of this chapter further examines the comparative variation between African countries on a regional basis, while the following chapter examines impact through the lens of different vital security interests.

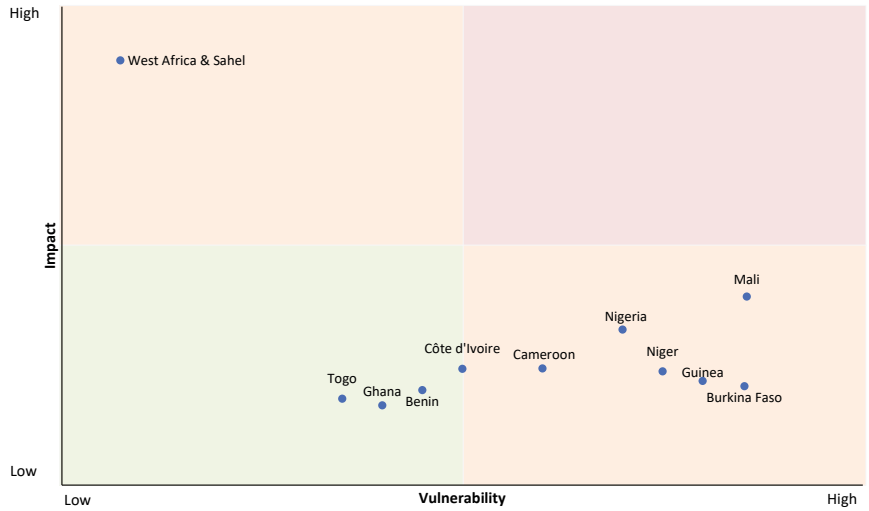
Figure 3 Impact and vulnerability scores by country



3.1 West Africa and the Sahel

West Africa and the Sahel scores comparatively high on several vital Dutch security interests, notably physical security, economic security, and international order and stability (see Figure 4). The comparatively high score on physical security interests is largely driven by Mali, which is considered a high risk given the frequent occurrence of politically motivated violence against the Netherlands and Dutch allies, and the high number of Dutch citizens involved in peace operations who are thus at risk. A minor contribution is also made by Burkina Faso and Niger, with low scores for political violence against Dutch allies (e.g. France). These risks thus reflect the active role of the Netherlands in peace operations within Mali, as well as growing anti-French sentiment manifesting as violence in some of the most vulnerable states in the Sahel region.

Figure 4 West African and Sahel countries' vulnerability and impact scores



The threat to Dutch economic interests in the region reflects more diverse threats. On the one hand, conflict in Nigeria presents considerable risks linked to the fossil fuel reserves located there (as well as Dutch involvement in it), but has virtually no impact through other indicators. Other risk factors in this area are derived from maritime indictors. Conflict in Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo presents risks to the Netherlands given their considerable role in maritime traffic, hosting significant ports that may become inaccessible should conflict break out. From this list, Benin and Ghana are joined by Guinea when it comes to piracy risks. The frequency of piracy attacks in the territorial waters near these states is comparatively high, scoring well beyond Somalia and matched only by Angola and Mozambique. Conflict in these countries thus presents a risk, as it could weaken national coast guards and might increase incentives for piracy as alternative livelihoods weaken in a context where there already is a market for piracy.

Although the region's impact is also driven by risks associated with international order and stability, it should be noted that the score on this vital interest is low when compared to central and southern Africa and the Horn of Africa and northern Africa. For west Africa and the Sahel, risks in this area are high, due to the exceptionally high frequency of interstate and trans-state military skirmishes experienced by Mali and Nigeria (although other states do not experience similar

dynamics).[11] This may reflect the tensions over state responses to spillover violence. On the other hand, the region scores comparatively low on risks related to human rights and civil liberties. While some countries show relatively severe human rights risks (e.g. Cameroon, Guinea and Mali), quite a few other countries in the region score low compared to African standards (e.g. Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Niger). Finally, scores on international order and stability are also driven up due to increasing activities by geopolitical adversaries of the Netherlands in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Niger and Nigeria. This reflects drives predominantly from China (many partners through trade, FDI and south-south cooperation), Russia (especially in Mali), and Turkey (soft-power approach through the G5) to expand their influence in the region. Although the rise of influence from other geopolitical actors is relatively widespread, it should be noted that it appears to be less pronounced than in other regions included in this analysis.

Outside of these regional patterns two countries stand out for their high impact score and vulnerability score: Mali and Nigeria. Mali scores average or higher than the rest of the region on all vital security interests. The high score on the physical security related to the Dutch role in peace operations in the country, as well as the high score on international order and stability, have already been explored above. Yet Mali also scores on territorial impact. This is reflected in high scores on nearly all indicators of this variable. There have been sizeable demonstrations and actions against Dutch allies in Mali (although not against the Netherlands itself), due to the anti-French platform launched by the coup regime following its fall-out with Western (and regional) partners. Instead, the regime has built increasingly close ties with Russia, which has allowed for a presence of the private military company Wagner in support of the regime. Additionally, Mali has a high state expenditure on defence. Although this indicator is designed to estimate a country's military threat to the Netherlands, it is unlikely that for Mali these high expenditures would translate into a direct threat against the kingdom. In terms of more irregular armed threats, Mali scores high due to the presence of Islamist armed actors who may have an ambition to establish a caliphate, including ones linked to ISIS. Mali also hosts a Dutch embassy, creating somewhat of a risk to the Dutch diplomatic network. Finally, Mali's impact on the Netherlands is also elevated because of its role as a transit country for migrants to the EU, although

11 The HIIK database notes three trans-state skirmishes ongoing in 2021. Skirmishes across Mali and Nigeria involve ISWAP/ISWAP-GS, across Nigeria and Chad involves JAS-Boko Haram, and skirmishes across Mali and Burkina Faso involve JNIM and AQIM.

it seems unlikely that Mali is implementing effective migration management aligned with EU policy.

Nigeria, another country already in conflict, scores negligible scores on its impact on Dutch physical security but does show some threats on the territorial impact measure. Some demonstrations and actions against Dutch allies have taken place in Nigeria, as well as negative statements made by Nigerian political actors about Dutch allies. The country has a relatively low defence spend (as a share of GDP), but does have Dutch diplomatic representation. Along the international order and stability indicator, Nigeria features a poor human rights record, involvement in interstate and trans-state military skirmishes, and a degree of involvement with geopolitical adversaries. The impact of conflict in Nigeria is most notable on the socio-political interests of the Netherlands. Nigeria is significant for both the number of migrants moving from the country to the EU, as well as the number of migrants transiting through the country. Additionally, Nigeria has sizeable criminal markets and transnationally operating criminal actors. These criminal actors are engaged in the smuggling of various goods (including narcotics), trafficking people (for both labour and sexual exploitation), forging documentation, and cybercrime. Additionally, Nigerian actors are involved in monitoring their diaspora abroad. It should be noted though that both Nigerian and Mali are already considered to be in conflict (see Chapter 2), and hence (some of) these impacts may already be materialising.

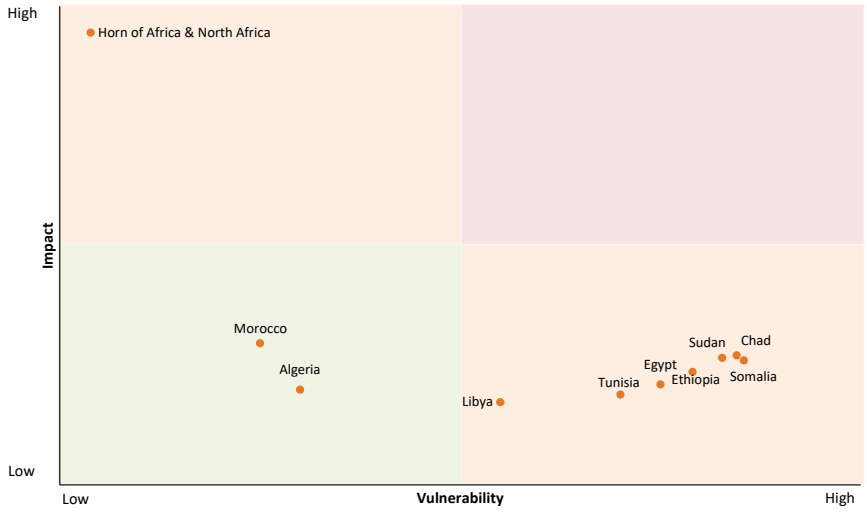
Of the countries not in conflict, Cameroon and Niger appear to combine a high vulnerability with a high impact score. Both countries have vastly different impact profiles. Niger scores slightly above regional average on the territorial impact dimension due to its high defence expenditures (as a share of GDP), likely related to the presence of Islamist groups which might harbour an ambition to establish a caliphate (notably *Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen*, *Islamic State in the Greater Sahara* and *Boko Haram*). Additionally, Dutch diplomatic representation in the country potentially raises the risks to the Netherlands should there be any conflict. Next to these risks, Niger poses an exceptionally high risk through its ecological impact. Niger is known for its exceptional biodiversity, and features high use of renewable energy. Conflict in Niger might thus indirectly contribute to climatic conflict risks. In contrast, Cameroon's scores are comparable to regional averages on most vital security interests, except for an especially high conflict impact through the international order and stability dimension. This higher score is predominantly a consequence of the poor human rights situation and highly constrained space for civil society. In practice, this has translated into violent

repression of opposition groups, as well as human rights violations committed by security actors combatting insurgencies within the country.

3.2 North Africa and the Horn

The impact scores for most countries in north Africa and the Horn of Africa are relatively low, with all highly vulnerable countries settling in the centre of the lower right quadrant (as can be seen in Figure 5). Although no highly vulnerable country stands out strongly, a low vulnerability country, Morocco, reflects the highest impact on the Netherlands. This high score is heavily drive by its role as a migration country. Morocco scores near maximal scores on several indicators on the socio-political impact dimension due to its sizeable diaspora, coupled with foreign interference attempts and disinformation campaigns targeting this diaspora. Additionally, Morocco plays a considerable role as both a country of origin for migrants to the Netherlands and the EU, as well as functioning as a transit country for migrants from elsewhere. Furthermore, Morocco is also notable for the significant criminal markets and transnational criminal actors which it hosts. These factors, coupled with a poor human rights record and weak civil liberties, breaking with Dutch normative aims, position the country ahead in terms of impact from even severely conflict-affected states such as Ethiopia, Sudan and Libya.

Figure 5 The Horn of Africa and north African countries' vulnerability and impact



Following Morocco, a range of countries in conflict follows (Chad, Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia). Virtually all of these countries' impact ratings are derived from two factors. First, they feature high levels of renewable energy use due to a poor fossil-based energy infrastructure. Although these countries score high on this dimension, it is unlikely that conflict will create a shift towards increased fossil fuel use (and hence CO2 emissions) that would be significant on a global scale. Second, these countries feature a longstanding very poor human rights record, which may be further aggravated should autocratic regimes be able to consolidate. This may lead to increasing outward migration and refugee movements. Additionally, these dynamics coincide with interstate and trans-state military skirmishes and growing geopolitical alignments with the Gulf, China and Russia.[12] Although Russian influences may be somewhat novel (although by no means new, given Cold War alignments), the role of Russia is also the most limited. Russia offers very little in terms of political finance, investments or trade, something highly sought after by most Horn states. The rising role of Russia is thus best seen as a reaction seizing upon disrupted relations between these countries and the EU and the US.[13] Chinese influences across the region are relatively longstanding, based primarily on trade and south-south cooperation. China is interested in access to the African market, both for export and to acquire resources, while leveraging its relationship with a variety of countries for diplomatic clout. Interestingly, Chinese influence in its staunchest ally, Ethiopia, may perhaps be at an all-time low following the ousting of the TPLF (Tigrayan People's Liberation Front) government in 2018.[14] On the diplomatic front, China's reluctance to restructure the debts of financially distressed countries during the pandemic has further damaged its diplomatic standing. Finally, Gulf influences are a longstanding feature of the region, given the fact that the main Gulf countries (Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates) consider the region vital to their security interests. Although the depth of these relations varies by country, most capitals in these countries feature significant political finance originating

12 Ethiopia is involved in interstate military skirmishes in border disputes with Sudan (*Al-Fashaqa* triangle) and saw Eritrean troops active in the country's conflict with Tigrayan forces. Sudan sees frequent movement of armed groupings across its Chadian border. Somalia faces ongoing border disputes with Kenya over offshore oil and trans-border armed groupings in Al Shabaab. Additionally, Chad is facing cross-border movement of JAS-Boko Haram. These countries are involved in other unresolved interstate and trans-state issues as well, but these did not have a high salience in 2022.

13 Guido, L. and de Bruijne, K. 2022. *The Russians are coming! The Russians are coming?*, CRU Report June 2022, The Hague: Clingendael, p. 11-14.

14 Meester, J. '*Designed in Ethiopia' and 'Made in China*', CRU Report February 2021, The Hague: Clingendael, p. 6.

in the Gulf.[15] Sudanese security actors maintain strong ties with several Gulf patrons, while the Somali elections are generally marked by major Gulf donations in favour of various political factions. Of these countries, Ethiopia has perhaps been least influenced by Gulf finance, but appears to have attempted to make a considerable pivot towards the Gulf under Prime Minister Abiy, especially as the economy shrunk during the Tigray war.[16] Finally, in some locations (e.g. Mogadishu, Port Sudan) smaller actors such as Turkey and Qatar are attempting to establish or maintain a significant footprint.[17]

Finally, the remaining countries (Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya) feature scores mostly in line with regional averages on each vital security interest. In turn, regional averages here are in line with the average of other regions except for three dimensions: physical security, economic security and ecological security. Physical security scores are negligible across the region, with virtually no actions or protest against the Netherlands or its allies (save in Somalia). Ecological scores are similarly low for all countries save the four mentioned above, reflecting limited biodiversity that might be lost in conflict due to arid climates, as well as limited use of renewable energy – given the abundance of fossil reserves in many of these countries. Finally, the region impinges little on Dutch economic interests due to negligible levels of imports and exports (although sectoral exceptions exist, such as horticulture in Ethiopia), the absence of significant maritime harbours, and the virtual disappearance of piracy in the Horn. It should be noted, however, that this neglects the increasingly important role of Algeria as a gas supplier to the EU following the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Although the volume of gas supplied may be limited, its strategical significance has risen sharply. Besides gas supplies, the only indicator highlighting any economic risks to the Netherlands is the relatively sound business environment in some of these countries, creating a situation in which conflict in these countries could prevent Dutch entrepreneurs from seizing investment opportunities.

Conflict in most countries in the region thus appears to have little impact on Dutch security interests, yet Dutch and EU engagement in a number of these countries is still substantial. Although these two factors may contradictory, it should be noted that the impact measure used here does not take into account

15 Meester, J. et al. (2018) *The Riyal Politik*, The Hague: Clingendael

16 Interview with a senior diplomat, The Hague, 2021.

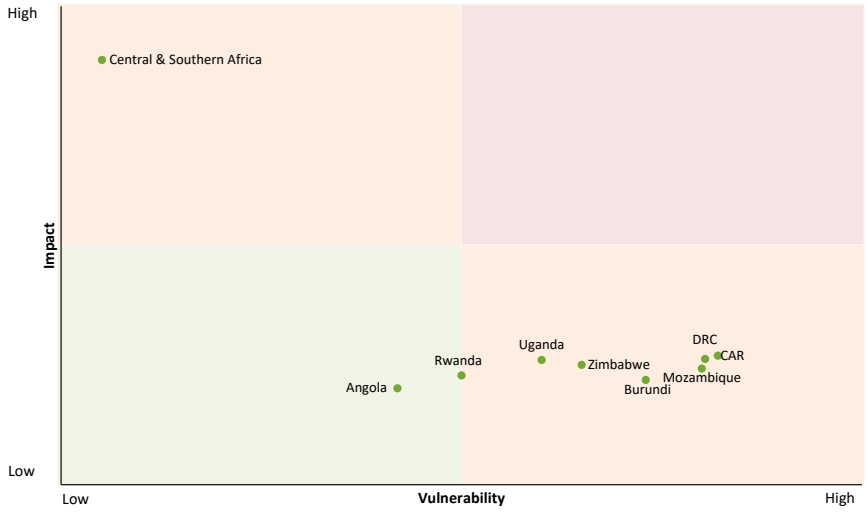
17 Meester, J. et al. (2019) *Turkey in the Horn of Africa*, The Hague: Clingendael, p. 2.

three factors. First, the measure does not consider the volume of trade through the Gulf of Aden, Red Sea and, eventually, Suez Canal, as it originates from elsewhere outside the region. Trade through this channel is highly impactful for the Netherlands as a trading nation, and similarly draws other geopolitical actors into the same space (in addition to EU member states and the US, notably China and United Arab Emirates). Second, the impact measure used in this analysis considers migration as one impact factor among others and does not reflect the dynamics in the EU foreign policy debate which gives high priority to migration due to the threat it poses to EU unity. Third, the measure does not take into account colonial legacies, which may incentivise Dutch allies to maintain a specific interest in these countries that is otherwise not based upon territorial or physical security threats.

3.3 Central and southern Africa

The impact scores for central and southern Africa are highly comparable to those of the other regions, scoring comparatively average on five of the six security dimensions and featuring no single country strongly out of line with the rest (see Figure 6). The only security interest on which this region stands out is the ecological impact measure, reflecting a very high degree of biodiversity potentially at risk should there be any conflict, as well as the extensive adoption of renewable energy (thus risking higher CO2 emissions should conflict break out).

Figure 6 Central and southern African countries' vulnerability and impact



In contrast to the high potential ecological impact stands the low socio-political impact of conflict in the countries of this region. These countries have a very limited impact on migration, given the limited transit through the DRC, CAR, Rwanda and Angola and a very limited number of migrants originating from these countries. Unsurprisingly, none of these countries is linked to a significant diaspora population in the Netherlands, meaning that foreign interference attempts and disinformation campaigns originating from Uganda and Rwanda have less impact. Although the limited role in migration – hence lowers scores, it should be noted that these countries do harbour major transnational criminal actors and a considerable criminal market. Additionally, many of these countries have poorly developed airports, thus presenting a risk of accessibility should conflict arise. Finally, Mozambique deserves special attention, given its possible intention to undermine Dutch territorial interests, its role in the drug trade towards the EU and the presence of Wagner.

Several countries in the region stand out. First, the DRC scores exceptionally high compared to its regional peers in relation to both territorial and physical security interests. This is due to several demonstrations and high levels of political violence targeted at Dutch allies (notably France and the UN). Tensions with the international community have risen over the years, and also present a risk to the Netherlands due to its diplomatic presence in the country. Second, the CAR stands out due to its high impact score on the international order and stability score. The CAR (jointly with Somalia) has the worst human rights and civil liberties record in the entire group of African countries included in this analysis, compounded by the presence of Wagner forces in a country already experiencing internal conflict and at odds with the international community. The DRC's decision to allow the entry of Wagner may reflect a lack of willingness to rebuild relations with Western partners, and is likely to present a future roadblock, as Wagner tends to entrench itself economically in the countries it operates in. It thus presents a clear threat to French regional interests in particular.

The remaining two countries that stand out due to their relatively high impact scores, namely Uganda and Zimbabwe, do so primarily because of their relatively high economic impact. Although trade with these countries is very limited, in line with most other countries analysed here they are noted for their relatively well developed business environment. Conflict in these countries thus presents risks to Dutch entrepreneurs aiming to capitalise on investment opportunities. This may be especially relevant to Zimbabwe, given the considerable number of Dutch entrepreneurs already involved in the country. Zimbabwe (but not Uganda) also

stands out on the international order dimension due to the substantial presence of China, both economically and politically. This may present further challenges to economic development favourable to the Netherlands, especially in the area of resource extraction. Finally, Zimbabwe features a poor human rights record, due largely to substantial electoral violence – among other causes.

3.4 Conclusion

Combining countries' vulnerability with their potential impact on vital Dutch security interests provides insights into the risks presented by the occurrence of conflict in these countries. As is evident from the analysis above, although many African states are highly vulnerable to conflict, such conflicts have a relatively low impact on vital Dutch interests compared to Dutch interests elsewhere. A considerable number of impact indicators are simply not affected by African countries. Yet, although overall scores may be low, there are significant differences between countries.

Several countries stand out for their impact, for example Mali, Nigeria and Morocco. Yet, the risk profiles vary strongly between countries. Risk profiles also do not appear to be particularly comparable across regions, reflecting differences in development and political dynamics across countries. The discussion presented here thus predominantly highlights how regional dynamics result in different impacts across countries, and especially how these impacts are subsequently translated through country contexts to the Netherlands. However, the discussion does not provide clear thematic entry points for programming. The following chapter therefore highlights conflict risks to the Netherlands, organised along vital security interests.

4 Sectoral perspectives on vital Dutch interests

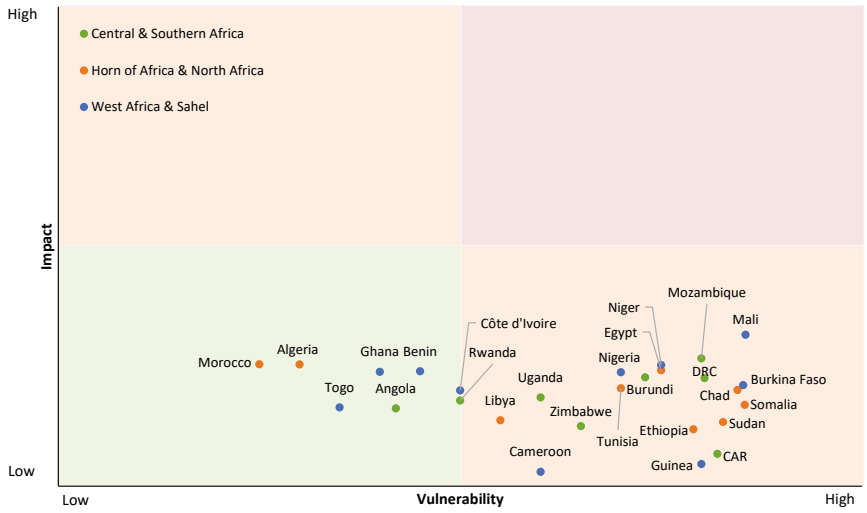
Although a single priority list of countries based on a framework taking into account all vital Dutch interest abroad is key to ensuring that Dutch foreign policy actors engage in a coordinated fashion along an integrated approach, not all of these actors can engage to the same degree on all interests. Economic actors such as the Sustainable Economic Development Department (DDE) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Dutch Enterprise Agency (RVO) and the Dutch Entrepreneurial Development Bank (FMO) may be able to achieve more impact in those countries with whom the Netherlands has substantial economic ties. In contrast, the Ministry of Defence may have more scope to engage on issues related to territorial security, physical security, and the international legal order and stability. It may thus be of value to not only consider the countries where the Netherlands has significant interests, but also to compare the prioritisation to those countries where a specific agency has the scope to act in a way relevant to one or more of the six Dutch interests. In this chapter, the analysis will thus be broken down according to the Netherlands' vital interests abroad, not to reprioritise the overall list but to establish which countries have scope to act on different themes. The analysis in this chapter focuses on countries subjected to validation in the round tables only, although the discussion focuses on the quantitatively established impact of conflict in these countries on the Netherlands. An overview of all scores can be found in Appendix 3.

4.1 Territorial security

Territorial security relates to (the potential to make) threats against the territorial integrity of the Netherlands, other members of the kingdom, and key allies (France, Germany, US, UK). This includes military threats and terrorist attacks as well as non-violent threats such as initiating cyberattacks, sanctions or demonstrations. As can be seen in Figure 7, no African state presents a significant risk to Dutch territorial integrity. Many indicators related to these interests remain at, or close to, 0, in line with the fact that most African states to not have significant offensive capabilities that could threaten the Netherlands. None of the countries under investigation has witnessed demonstrations against

the Netherlands, initiated actions hostile to the Netherlands, or undertaken explicit attempts to undermine the Dutch international position. While some African countries maintain high defence expenditures as part of their overall budget, these expenditures seem to be predominantly motivated by internal, local interstate or trans-state conflict.[18] None of these countries appears to be building up military capabilities designed to threaten Dutch territorial interests. Additionally, no country has been held responsible for cyberattacks on the Netherlands.

Figure 7 Countries by impact on territorial security and vulnerability



The remaining risks to Netherlands territorial integrity are therefore more indirect. Nineteen of the 27 countries analysed here have Dutch diplomatic representatives who may be at risk should major internal conflict arise.[19] Additionally, 12 countries host armed groups that might harbour ambitions to

18 Countries with defence expenditure as a share of the overall budget higher than the African average are Algeria, Morocco, Burkina Faso, Mali, Chad, Tunisia, Uganda, Burundi, Central African Republic and Niger.

19 The countries with diplomatic representation are Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burundi, Chad, DRC, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

establish a caliphate.[20] While none of these groups is currently explicitly stating hostile intentions targeting the Netherlands, longer-term risks may arise should these organisations shift focus from domestic to international issues.

The primary risk to the Netherlands appears to be risks against Dutch allies in some countries. In the DRC, Mali, Burkina Faso, Morocco and Chad there have considerable demonstrations against foreign influence (especially French). This reflects wider anti-French sentiments in the Sahel region, coupled with increasing authoritarian governance and a turn of several governments to non-Western geopolitical allies. This may be especially relevant when combined with the presence of violent extremist organisations, such as in Mali and Burkina Faso, as the declining degree of inclusive and effective governance may provide these organisations with a relevant growth opportunity. In a similar fashion, Zimbabwe also bears mentioning, although protests in Zimbabwe directed at international actors seem marginal compared to protests against the Zimbabwean government itself.

Finally, Libya, Mali and Somalia also score high on indicators measuring tensions between Dutch allies and these countries. This reflects tensions between Dutch allies and the coup government of Mali, the statements from Germany and the US against non-recognised governments and officials in Libya (notably Haftar aligned), as well as US tensions with non-state actors in Somalia. In all cases, scores reflect ongoing efforts to intervene diplomatically, financially or militarily in domestic conflicts.

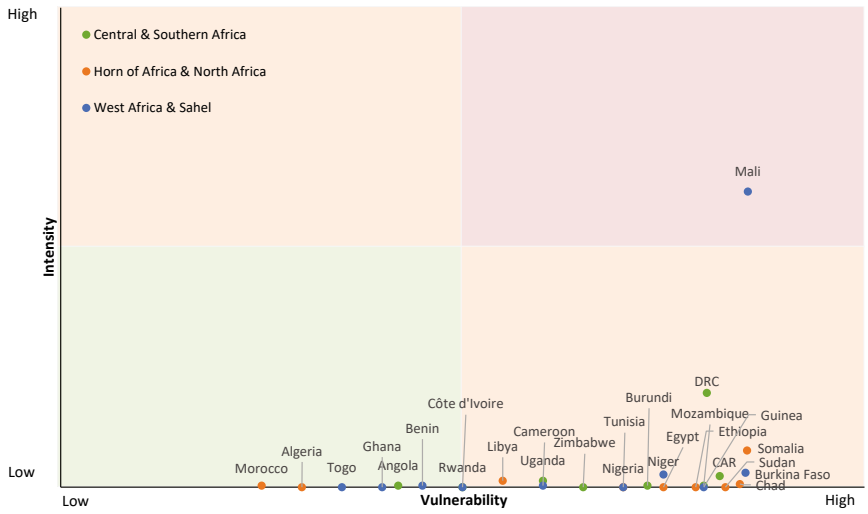
4.2 Physical security

Physical security relates to (the potential to make) politically motivated threats against citizens abroad, whether from the Netherlands, other parts of the kingdom, or from key allies (France, Germany, US, UK). As can be seen in Figure 8, most countries score very low on this dimension, reflecting the fact that relatively little politically motivated violence has occurred against Dutch citizens in recent years. The main exception to this is Mali, which scores high. Mali scores high on all indicators of this dimension as the only country featuring violence

20 These countries are Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ghana, Libya, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia and Togo.

against Dutch targets, with the largest number of Dutch citizens involved in peacekeeping missions and considerable political violence being directed at Dutch allies. This reflects the presence of the Netherlands and its allies in the peacekeeping operations in a country experiencing major internal conflict as well as rising anti-Western (and anti-French) sentiments.

Figure 8 Countries by impact on physical security and vulnerability

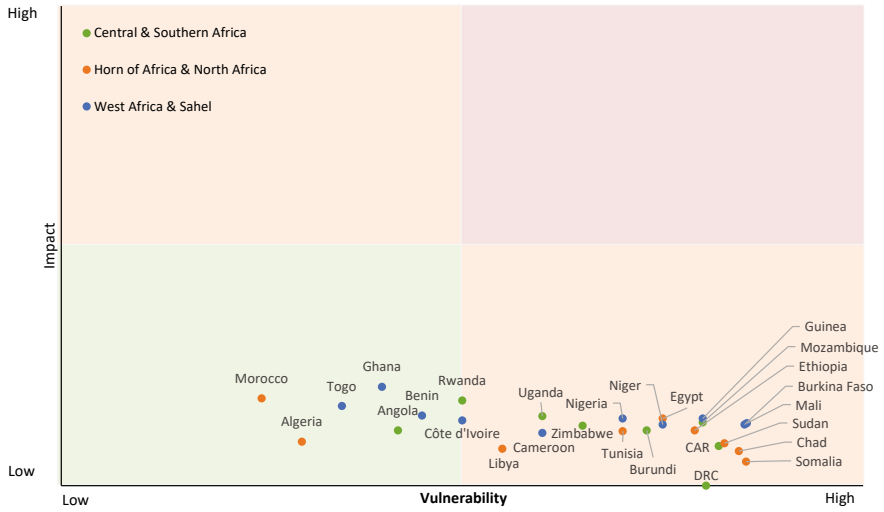


Other countries score negligible values on all indicators, save five. The first four of these (the DRC, Burkina Faso, Niger, CAR) are to some degree experiencing dynamics similar to those in Mali, with rising anti-Western sentiment being driven by increasingly authoritarian governments, as well as a turn towards other geopolitical actors and increasingly authoritarian governance. The lower scores reflect the more limited peacekeeping efforts deployed in these countries coupled with the degree of anti-Western sentiment. Somalia represents the final country displaying significant political violence involving allies, unsurprisingly given the international involvement in both the fight against Al Shabaab and the establishment of local police forces.

4.3 Economic security

Economic security relates to Dutch trade interests, and is based on indicators relating to import/export flows and fossil fuel reserves, as well as maritime indicators. As can be seen in Figure 9, African countries score low on this dimension. This reflects the fact that although Dutch trade with Africa is substantial, it is comparatively little in comparison to trade with non-African partners. Closer examination of the indicators making up this dimension reveals that three indicators are most influential. First, the ease of doing business drives part of the variation, as opportunities might be lost if countries with comparatively good business environments were to degenerate into conflict. Countries such as Ghana, Morocco, Rwanda, Uganda and Egypt are notable in this regard. Besides factoring in investment opportunities lost, this dimension also takes maritime trade into consideration. Countries with highly developed harbours that form important connection points along maritime routes thus raise impact scores.[21] These countries include Togo, Egypt, Morocco, Ghana and Benin. Reflecting similar concerns, this variable also indicates piracy risks. Piracy incidents primarily affect the major maritime hub of Ghana, as well as more minor hubs in Angola and Guinea.

Figure 9 Countries by impact on economic security and vulnerability



21 This indicator does not take into account the volume or value of imports/export, only a country's harbour connectivity index.

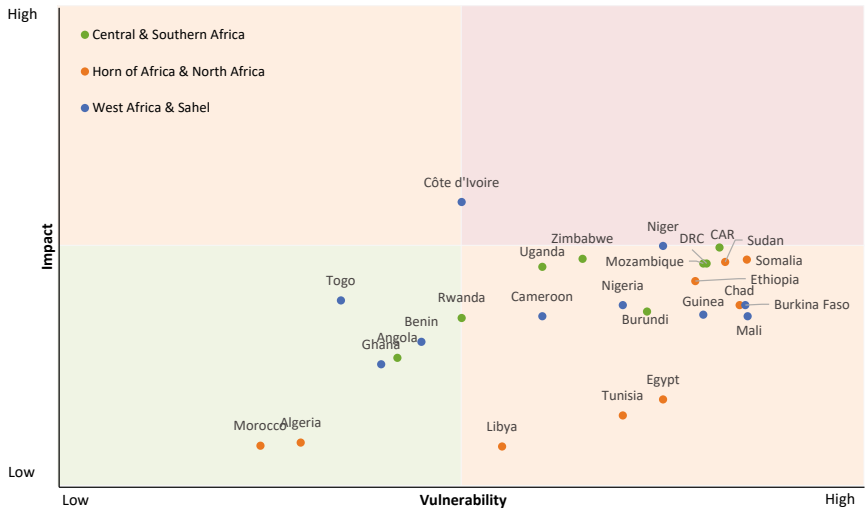
As mentioned previously, due to economic interests in these countries being limited, the distribution of countries along this dimension is strongly clustered. A close look at the minor differences on this dimension highlights Ghana, Morocco, Rwanda and Togo. Apart from Rwanda, all of these are countries with low vulnerability scores, a relatively developed business environment and a well connected harbour. In the case of Ghana, piracy risks are factored in. Rwanda stands in contrast, with its significantly higher vulnerability due to highly authoritarian rule combined with a lack of civic space. Furthermore, its higher scoring is not derived from its maritime connectivity (the country is landlocked), but from its exceptionally well structured business environment (compared to other countries in this sample).

In the cluster of higher vulnerability countries, Egypt, Ethiopia and Nigeria stand out given their prominent role in economic policymaking on Africa. The scoring for Egypt clearly underestimates Egypt's role in maritime connectivity, due to its lack of a significant harbour while still hosting the strategic Suez Canal. Outside of its maritime role, however, the country scores relatively low. The business environment in Egypt is only slightly better than in other countries in the sample, due to the heavy involvement of government (and military) companies in its economy. Similarly, hydrocarbon reserves are present, but limited when compared to other countries, and ongoing trade with the Netherlands is negligible compared to other Dutch trade relations. This does, however, highlight the absence of Algeria in this grouping, which has a limited trade balance with the Netherlands but does provide an increasingly strategically relevant alternative to Russia for liquefied natural gas (LNG) supplies. The position of Ethiopia highlights similar considerations: while the country features a reasonable business environment that has allowed for Dutch entrepreneurs to invest considerably (for Ethiopian standards) and enter the horticulture sector, trade between Ethiopia and the Netherlands is very limited. Its significance to Dutch trade might be under-represented, however, as horticulture exports may be transported to destination countries straight away. In this way, significant proceeds may accrue to Dutch companies without resulting in major trade figures between the two countries. Finally, Nigeria is notable given its exceptional hydrocarbon reserves, contrasting with relatively average scores on other indicators. Although these hydrocarbon reserves may warrant some strategic considerations in their own right, a reconsideration may be relevant given the fact that the exploiting company (Shell Plc) is no longer a Dutch entity as of 2022.

4.4 Ecological security

Ecological security relates to a country's role in climate change. It consists of indicators related to emissions and the use of renewable energies, as well as the presence of important natural environments featuring significant biodiversity. As can be seen in Figure 10, most countries score markedly higher on this variable than on previous impact indicators. This variable highlights some striking differences. First off, all of these countries have extremely low CO2 emissions per capita. From a climate change perspective, very limited risks thus exist. There are some exceptions with far higher emission levels, however, in particular Libya and to a lesser extent Algeria and Egypt.

Figure 10 Countries by impact on ecological security and vulnerability



Second, renewable energy consumption is very high in all these countries except in Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. Within this group of countries using high levels of renewables, two sub-groupings can be identified. Countries in this groups feature either an extremely poor energy and transport infrastructure necessitating inhabitants to set up their own energy provision (e.g. Somalia), or a stark difference in urban and rural energy infrastructures (e.g. Rwanda). Although renewable energy consumption is high in both cases, the former features even higher levels than the latter. Conflict in the former is unlikely to push a shift towards fossil fuels, as the high reliance on renewables is frequently

either a consequence of conflict or a reflection of high transport costs which will not improve during conflict. Countries in the latter sub-grouping may present some risks in case of conflict affecting urban areas, although in most cases CO2 emissions are likely to remain low by global standards.

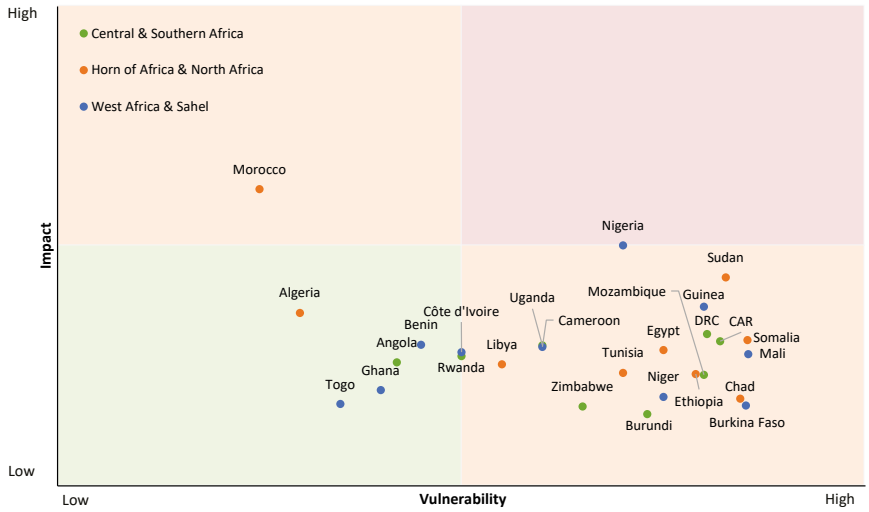
Third, the biodiversity indicator reflects considerable regional differences, with northern Africa and the Horn of Africa scoring substantially lower than other regions. On this indicator, Niger, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, CAR and Côte d'Ivoire stand out for their high biodiversity. This prompts the question of how to consider Dutch interests on the ecological dimension within Africa. Although a subset of countries scores high on renewable energy use, conflict is unlikely to make the risks of major CO2 emissions materialise for any country. Biodiversity is thus the only strategic consideration remaining, but the relationship between biodiversity in Africa and its impact on Dutch natural environments is indirect, diffuse and long term. Its integration with other Dutch foreign policy interests is not straightforward, especially not if one considers the preservation of ecosystems that might transcend country borders.

4.5 Socio-political security

Socio-political security relates to a range of dynamics through which countries affect socio-political conditions in the Netherlands. Notable indicators are the presence of a diaspora, disinformation activities, migration flows and indicators relating to transnational organised crime. As can be seen in Figure 11, many countries score noticeably high on this dimension. Scores on this dimension are heavily influenced by criminal networks, migration dynamics and flight connectivity. On the first point, many of the countries included in this analysis host major criminal markets and transnational criminal actors. Nigeria, DRC, CAR, Sudan, Somalia, Libya, Mozambique and Cameroon stand out, yet none of the countries in the analysis score low compared to global scores. While the criminal dynamics in some of these countries may have a predominantly regional focus (e.g. Somalia), others reflect major human trafficking, arms smuggling and/or drug trading routes that affect the EU and the Netherlands (e.g. Sudan, Mali, Niger, Algeria, Morocco). Although the consequences may fall predominantly in the realm of policing activities in the Netherlands, an actor not particularly active in Dutch foreign policy, these represent very real concerns for vital Dutch interests, as organised crime networks may undermine domestic Dutch governance. Interestingly, although the situation may vary by country, criminal

supply routes are strongly linked to other aspects influenced by Dutch foreign policy, such as governance, infrastructure development and maritime trade; for instance, Dutch efforts to develop the harbour of Benin coincide with an increase of illicit trade through the harbour given its new higher efficiency. Alternatively, one can consider the way violent extremist organisations tend to benefit from poor state governance, a factor which jointly facilitates smuggling through rising corruption and weakening state control over territory. Countries scoring high on these indicators may thus be particularly interesting countries from the perspective of a range of vital Dutch interests.

Figure 11 Countries by impact on socio-political security and vulnerability



A second factor driving high scores on this dimension is related to migration. Several countries stand out in this regard. Morocco scores exceptionally high compared to global standards on the size of its diaspora in the Netherlands. Morocco, jointly with Ethiopia and Egypt, also scores exceptionally high due to its role as a country of origin for migrants coming to the Netherlands. Morocco and Egypt also play a significant role in migration to other EU countries (especially France), and are joined in this role by Algeria, Tunisia and Nigeria. Furthermore, these countries (except Ethiopia, but including Sudan, Niger and Libya) also

play important roles as migration transit countries.[22] Of these countries, risks are further elevated for Morocco due to disinformation campaigns and foreign interference attempts stemming from the territory.

Finally, a number of countries' scores on this dimension are elevated due to their high flight connectivity, a measure reflecting the difficulty of reaching a country by air. Poorly connected countries present a risk that Dutch citizens might be cut off from family abroad. Most countries score relatively high on this dimension, save those countries with a large diaspora in the EU. The risks along this dimension are thus limited, as they appear to diminish as the number of potentially affected citizens in the EU grows.

Overall, the socio-political vital security interest reflects a number of highly policy-relevant vulnerabilities, and clearly highlights several risks (migration and criminality) strikingly salient in several countries under study (especially Morocco, Nigeria, Sudan and Guinea). Yet different aspects of this indicator fall into different policy domains, including those of the police, ministry of justice and security, and a range of other agencies not traditionally engaged in foreign policy formulation and implementation. The operationalisation of these security interests may thus be particularly challenging, despite the relatively clear signal presented.

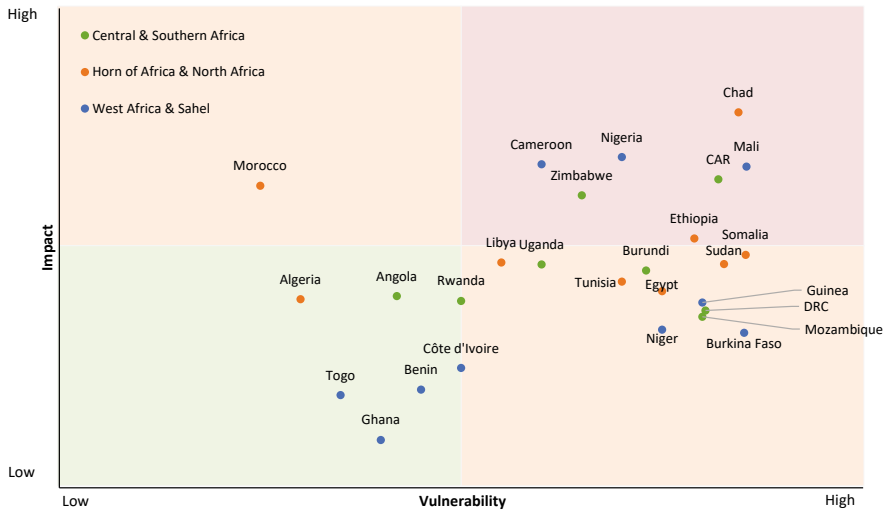
4.6 International legal order and stability

International legal order and stability relates to the role of the Netherlands in upholding the international legal order. It includes indicators relating to domestic conflicts within countries, the influence of geopolitical adversaries (China, Russia and several smaller states), countries' human rights record, and cases filed with the World Trade Organization (WTO). As can be seen in Figure 12, many African states rank relatively high on this dimension. In particular, the many countries classified as conflict resolution cases rank highly due to the increased prevalence of severe and extensive human rights violations; examples include Chad, Mali,

22 Transit countries to the Netherlands identified here are Morocco, Nigeria, Sudan, Algeria, Egypt, Somalia, Tunisia, Cameroon, Guinea, DRC and Côte d'Ivoire. Transit countries to the EU identified here are Morocco, Nigeria, Sudan, Algeria, Rwanda, CAR, Mali, Angola and Benin. Identification is based on the estimated share of migrants to the Netherlands or EU respectively transiting through this country.

CAR, Nigeria and Ethiopia. In most of these cases, addressing issues related to international law is difficult at best due to ongoing violent conflict and more recently, a reduced influence from Western countries. Ethiopia might form an exceptional case. Although the war in Tigray has undoubtedly aggravated the human rights situation in the country, it should be noted that even before this period the international community had not been particularly active in addressing the state's poor human rights record. This is especially notable, given Ethiopia's high reliance on official development aid and the fact that the Netherlands is one of the biggest investors in that country. Despite this leverage, Ethiopia's role in regional peacekeeping missions and its comparative success in achieving the development goals seem to have been sufficient to shield it from pressure over its poor human rights record.[23]

Figure 12 Countries by impact on the international legal order and stability and vulnerability



While it may be difficult to stimulate adherence to international law in countries currently in conflict, a number of countries not facing significant violence also rank poorly on their human rights record. In most cases, this reflects their highly

23 Lanfranchi, G. and Meester, J. (2022) *The Clash of Nationalism and the Remaking of the Ethiopian State*. The Hague: Clingendael.

repressive regimes. Cases in point are Libya, Burundi, Cameroon, Egypt, Rwanda and Zimbabwe. Given that these countries are currently not in conflict, their poor record may present a significant risk should the situation in the country worsen.

Of these countries, Libya, Egypt and Rwanda are especially notable given the high degree of international community involvement in these countries. Although Libya may be in a rather fragile state, it should be recognised that a significant proportion of human rights abuses is related to migration management. Given the high degree of EU involvement on this issue, it should be of high concern in migration policy discussions.[24] Risks also exist outside of the migration sector, and are especially precarious given the rise of criminal networks in Libya in the face of weak governance. Egypt stands out as well, considering its relative importance for both Western actors and Gulf partners. For both groups, Egypt has a significant role as a regional security actor. For EU countries this relates to secure borders and migration management, while for Gulf actors this relates to investments of logistics, repression of rival versions of political Islam, and securing maritime roots for oil and gas exports. Egypt thus relies on considerable financial support from the EU and the Gulf (and the US), with consequences when it comes to domestic repression of opposition groups. Despite EU policy on democracy, human rights and justice, in practice stability appears to be prioritised over international law.[25] The third country, Rwanda, is also under a highly repressive government with a poor human rights record. Yet, Rwanda is very stable, and a capable security actor contributing to peacekeeping forces in its region. It has been able to garner considerable international buy-in into its non-inclusive governance model, recently even resulting in the United Kingdom establishing a policy to transfer migrants and refugees from the UK to Rwanda.[26] Each of these cases thus presents a potential conflict between vital security interests.

As well as the human rights dimension, this interest also encompasses states' propensity towards interstate and trans-state conflict, the rising influence

24 Molenaar, F. et al. (2017) *A Line in The Sand: Roadmap for sustainable migration management in Agadez*. The Hague: Clingendael

25 Zahran, A. (2019) *EU's democracy promotion in Egypt before and after Arab uprisings*, in Review of Economics and Political Science.

26 British Red Cross (2023) *Information on the policy to send asylum seekers to Rwanda: Here's what we know so far,* https://www.redcross.org.uk/get-help/get-help-as-a-refugee/information-on-the-policy-to-send-asylum-seekers-to-rwanda (visited 3-3-2023).

of geopolitical adversaries and WTO complaints. Only several states score significantly on the interstate and trans-state conflict dimensions (Mali, Nigeria, Ethiopia, and to a lesser extent Chad, Libya and Uganda). This largely reflects long-standing regional cross-border conflict dynamics related to foreign support for armed political actors, and armed political actors with constituencies spanning borders.[27] In the Sahelian countries, these dynamics predominantly relate to the conflict between central governments and armed groups operating across state boundaries. There are many latent border disputes in the Horn of Africa, and the funding of domestic armed actors by foreign countries is not uncommon. The intensity of such issues waxes and wanes depending on the extent to which foreign states seek to intervene in other states' domestic affairs, as well as the ability of central governments to control armed groups in their own territories. One example is in the *Al-Fashaqa* triangle disputed by Ethiopia and Sudan. Following a dormant period, tensions reignited as Amhara militias saw their influence in Ethiopian federal politics grow, prompting them to reignite claims to territories outside of their current ethnic federal state borders. In contrast to the varying scores on interstate and trans-state conflict, the WTO complaints measure scores minimal for all countries – reflecting the fact that none of these countries are involved in WTO arbitration.

Finally, the international legal order and stability dimension also includes an indicator on increasing influence of geopolitical adversaries. This indicator registers growing influence across virtually all countries in this sample, especially in CAR and Mali (i.e. the Russian presence discussed above), as well as Chad and Uganda (softer support from Russia). Russian presence in other African countries is limited, however, as Russia appears to capitalise on fraying relations between African states and Western countries, recognising its limited capacity as a geopolitical actor.[28] In other countries, the increasing geopolitical influences generally relate to China or in some cases Gulf states (especially in north Africa and the Horn of Africa). Exceptions to this wider trend can be found in Benin, Ghana, Togo and Egypt. Note that Egypt scores relatively low despite maintaining strong ties with geopolitical adversaries, reflecting its apparent inability to prioritise issues of concern (e.g. the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam) on the agendas of its foreign backers. Although the engagement of

27 Most of these disputes are long standing and well documented. Indexing the wide range of such disputes, beyond those currently salient, is unfortunately beyond the scope of this paper.

28 Lanfranchi, G. (2022) *The Russians are coming! The Russians are coming? Russia's growing presence in Africa and its implication for European policy.* The Hague: Clingendael.

geopolitical actors across Africa to some extent reflects the geopolitical interests of these patron countries, it should also be recognised that for many African countries a non-alignment policy is key to extracting as many external resources as possible to finance domestic politics and development initiatives.

4.7 Conclusion

While a single prioritisation of countries based on an integrated framework of all vital Dutch security interests abroad is key to ensuring a coordinated foreign policy, the breakdown of countries along different vital interests presented here shows that risk profiles vary strongly across each interest. Some breakdowns show very little variation in impact scores across countries (e.g. economic security, territorial security) reflecting the limited risks along these dimensions, while others show a substantial degree of variation reflecting strongly differentiated risk profiles (e.g. physical security, ecological security, socio-political security, and international legal order and stability). Closer examination of these variables yielded several underlying factors driving the risk profiles of a considerable number of countries. First, most hard-security risks were closely related to the peacebuilding presence of the Netherlands and its allies. While this may seem to be an obvious conclusion given that an armed presence comes with risks, it also reflects the need to guard against the presence of major deployments to form a legitimating factor in their continued deployment. The physical security dimension derived here is conceptually sound, but in practice for the African context reflects negligible values for all countries. This reflects the limited potential impact on the physical security of Dutch citizens stemming from these countries. The only countries that stand out on this dimension do so because of anti-Western sentiment combined with the presence of Dutch citizens involved in Dutch peacebuilding missions. Over-reliance on this dimension to determine priority intervention locations risks a cycle in which an growing Dutch presence leads to further increases in potential impact and subsequently into a further increasing presence. Although the risks to Dutch citizens in these countries is significant and warrants consideration, the wider impact profile of a country should be kept in mind when deciding on the applicability of deploying additional resources.

A closely related factor to the hard-security risks identified is the changing geopolitical context in Africa, and especially the rising presence of Russia at the expense of, especially, French interests. However, it should be kept in mind

that the rising Russian presence largely reflects the poor relationships between Western actors and the affected countries, rather than Russia's capacity. Chinese and Gulf influences are also on the rise, but are not necessarily in opposition to Dutch interests in African countries. In many cases, Chinese influences are aligned to Chinese economic concerns related to access to African markets and access to resources. Gulf countries are frequently concerned with rising influences of Islamic actors that could pose an ideational threat to their own governance model (notably the Muslim Brotherhood and Iran-aligned groupings).

Further risks across African countries are related more closely to governance and local police capacity. Many countries examined here play a significant role in illicit trade and smuggling networks related to migration to the EU and to international criminal markets. This to some degree intersects with maritime connectivity, as improved connectivity not only supports Dutch trade interests but also creates efficiency gains for illicit trade. In many cases, high domestic conflict vulnerabilities, poor governance and weak rule of law create the space for organised criminal actors to operate in these sectors.

Finally, two Dutch security interests stand out for their high-risk profiles contrasting with practical difficulties of addressing them. Ecological security risks feature prominently, especially for the Sahel, west Africa, central Africa and southern Africa. Yet, given low carbon emissions, these risks are largely biodiversity related and thereby not easy to relate to impacts in the Netherlands. This makes them difficult to operationalise. Poor human rights practices are common across the African continent, including in countries partnering closely with the Netherlands and the EU. For both risks, the question arises if and how they should be prioritised in practice.

5 Conclusion

The government of the Netherlands prioritised conflict prevention as the first goal of its Integrated International Security Strategy. Yet in order to take meaningful and early action, a wide array of quantitative and qualitative insights need to be integrated into a policy relevant analysis. This report presents the outcomes an EWEA scan of the African continent assessing conflict risks for a 3-4 year period. The analysis aims to provide a comprehensive overview of conflict risks, by combining countries' vulnerability to conflict with the impact such conflict might have on the Netherlands. In doing so, it builds on both quantitative and qualitative data, while ensuring comparability of assessment across countries. This analysis commenced with an assessment of African countries categorisation in conflict resolution cases, conflict prevention cases and low vulnerability cases. It subsequently combined this assessment with various interpretations of impact on the Netherlands in line with vital Dutch security interests.

This chapter connects back to the findings of the analysis, and presents a prioritisation list for early action, based on countries' conflict vulnerabilities and the impact of such conflict on the Netherlands. It also presents a number of lessons that have been learned in the course of the implementation of this project, in order to improve subsequent EWEA analyses.

5.1 Prioritisation list for early action

The assessment of conflict vulnerabilities yielded several insights. First, several countries considered to be in conflict according to the EWEA scan are viewed through a more positive lens internationally, notably Ethiopia, Mozambique, Sudan and Niger (the latter bordering on conflict, but not categorised as such at this point). In contrast, Libya challenges prevailing perceptions in a contrasting direction, given the fact that it has stabilised and that conflict lines have shifted significantly. Outside of these standout cases, several regional differences arose. Central and southern African regions frequently featured countries with a strong executive facing limited opposition, leading to political violence from state repression to emerge as a leading risk. In west Africa and the Sahel more longer-term risks associated with state weakness, and face of autocratic coups and insurgencies spilling over from neighbouring countries featured

prominently. Finally, the vulnerability of northern African countries provided a contrast. Vulnerability appeared to be surprisingly low, as authoritarian responses interacted with recent memories of the post-Arab Spring repression and economic hardship. In this regard, Morocco and Algeria stood out for their exceptionally low vulnerability.

The impact of conflict did not feature predominantly in regional dynamics, yet several important underlying factors could be identified. First, hard-security repercussions appear to be related to the peacekeeping presence of the Netherlands and its allies, rather than threats stemming from these countries affecting citizens within the Netherlands. Closely connected is the changing geopolitical context in Africa, and especially the rising presence of Russia at the expense of Western and French interests. However, it should be kept in mind that Russian influence largely reflects poor relationships between Western actors and African countries. Chinese and Gulf influences are also on the rise, but are not necessarily in opposition to Dutch interests in Africa. Second, substantial risks stemming from the African continent are related to governance and rule of law. Many countries feature risks related to illicit trade and migration, at times intersecting with maritime connectivity. In many such cases, acute domestic conflict vulnerabilities, poor governance and weak rule of law create the space for organised criminal actors to operate in these sectors. Third, two security interests stand out for their high-risk profile that contrast with their indirect impact on the Netherlands. Ecological security risks feature prominently, but given the low carbon emissions of African countries these risks are limited to biodiversity impacts with an unclear impact-pathway on the Netherlands. A final consideration relates to the poor human rights record of many countries in Africa, some of which are significant partners of the Netherlands and the EU.

Figure 13 Prioritisation list of early action countries

Country		Vulnerability	Impact (excl. ecological security)	Combined score
Mali	Conflict resolution	0.86	0.40	0.34
Nigeria	Conflict resolution	0.70	0.31	0.22
Chad	Conflict resolution	0.85	0.25	0.21
Sudan	Conflict resolution	0.83	0.22	0.19
Somalia	Conflict resolution	0.85	0.22	0.19
CAR	Conflict resolution	0.82	0.22	0.18
DRC	Conflict resolution	0.80	0.22	0.18
Egypt	Conflict prevention	0.75	0.22	0.16
Mozambique	Conflict resolution	0.80	0.20	0.16
Ethiopia	Conflict resolution	0.79	0.20	0.16
Guinea	Conflict prevention	0.80	0.19	0.15
Burkina Faso	Conflict resolution	0.85	0.17	0.15
Burundi	Conflict prevention	0.73	0.19	0.14
Niger	Conflict prevention	0.75	0.18	0.14
Tunisia	Conflict prevention	0.70	0.20	0.14
Zimbabwe	Conflict prevention	0.65	0.21	0.13
Cameroon	Conflict prevention	0.60	0.22	0.13
Uganda	Conflict prevention	0.60	0.22	0.13
Libya	Conflict prevention	0.55	0.19	0.10
Rwanda	Conflict prevention	0.50	0.20	0.10
Côte d'Ivoire	Conflict prevention	0.50	0.17	0.09
Morocco	Low vulnerability	0.25	0.34	0.08
Benin	Conflict prevention	0.45	0.18	0.08
Angola	Conflict prevention	0.42	0.19	0.08
Algeria	Low vulnerability	0.30	0.22	0.07
Ghana	Conflict prevention	0.40	0.15	0.06
Togo	Conflict prevention	0.35	0.14	0.05

Combining the score and insights of both the vulnerability assessment and the impact assessment suggests the prioritisation list in Figure 13 (an overview of all scores can be found in Appendix 3). This list excludes the data derived from the ecological impact measure, given its highly diffuse and unclear impact pathway on the Netherlands. This measure rests partially on measures of renewable and fossil energy sources, but given negligible energy use and emissions in African countries these impacts are unlikely to materialise. The other component of this measure, biodiversity, is more significant but not clearly related to an impact on Dutch biodiversity.

The resultant prioritisation hinges heavily on variance in the conflict vulnerability dimension, as the impact of conflict shows limited variation. This leads to some higher vulnerability countries dropping towards the bottom of the list due to their low impact scores (e.g. Benin, Angola and Ghana). The list combines the

qualitatively different conflict resolution cases and conflict prevention cases. In the conflict resolution cases, the potential impact of conflict on the Netherlands may already be materialising, while for conflict prevention cases options for prevention may still exist. The high listing of conflict resolution cases thus highlights the importance of seizing conflict resolution options should they arise. Such options may still exist in Sudan, Chad and Ethiopia, while in Nigeria and Mozambique there may be opportunities to limit the extent of conflict.

In the conflict prevention category, several countries warrant further consideration. Egypt stands out, given its high vulnerability, earning it a high spot on the list. Yet, expert insights suggest that the extensive vulnerabilities faced by Egypt are unlikely to translate into conflict in the short term. Egypt's impact score appears to underestimate the impact of conflict, given the fact that the scoring on this variable does not recognise Egypt's role in migration management (due to limited migrants passing through) and maritime trade (due to the lack of major harbours). Egypt's prioritisation thus warrants further discussion, especially in light of the opportunities available to act. In contrast, Libya features much lower than expected. This reflects the fact that rising prices for fossil fuels have significantly altered conflict dynamics in the country, lowering its vulnerability. Yet, new risks are emerging as criminal dynamics increase while fossil fuel prices may fluctuate and Libyan government institutions remain extremely weak. Finally, Morocco and Algeria were placed firmly into the low vulnerability category by experts throughout the analysis. Yet the impact of conflict in Morocco on the Netherlands is one of the highest impact scores of all countries analysed, given its importance to migration, diaspora in the Netherlands and criminal markets. As such, close monitoring on the continued low vulnerability of Morocco may be in order. For Algeria, it should be kept in mind that its strategic significance following the Russian invasion of Ukraine is not reflected in these scores. Although economic ties between Algeria and the Netherlands may be limited, Algeria is an important alternative supplier of LNG given European attempts to diversify away from a reliance on Russia.

Country priorities have traditionally been set from a regional perspective. Creating a prioritisation list on a regional basis makes sense from an engagement perspective, as the prioritisation can be closely related to ongoing multi-donor initiatives, activities of regional organisations, while engaging with cross-border dynamics, and other operationally relevant factors. However, risks to Dutch interests do not necessarily follow regional patterns. Figure 14 presents three regional longlists. While regional strategies may be key organisational

documents, it should be considered whether the additional entry points derived from a regional approach come at the expense of a misallocation of resources. Moreover, the regional definition of Dutch priority setting may introduce a set of bureaucratic procedures and interests not fully in line with vital Dutch interests.

Figure 14 Regional prioritisation list of early action countries

Country		Vulnerability	Impact (excl. ecological	Combined score
Mali	West Africa & Sahel	0.86	0.40	0.34
Nigeria	West Africa & Sahel	0.70	0.31	0.22
Guinea	West Africa & Sahel	0.80	0.19	0.15
Burkina Faso	West Africa & Sahel	0.85	0.17	0.15
Niger	West Africa & Sahel	0.75	0.18	0.14
Cameroon	West Africa & Sahel	0.60	0.22	0.13
Côte d'Ivoire	West Africa & Sahel	0.50	0.17	0.09
Benin	West Africa & Sahel	0.45	0.18	0.08
Ghana	West Africa & Sahel	0.40	0.15	0.06
Togo	West Africa & Sahel	0.35	0.14	0.05
Chad	Horn of Africa & North Africa	0.85	0.25	0.21
Sudan	Horn of Africa & North Africa	0.83	0.22	0.19
Somalia	Horn of Africa & North Africa	0.85	0.22	0.19
Egypt	Horn of Africa & North Africa	0.75	0.22	0.16
Ethiopia	Horn of Africa & North Africa	0.79	0.20	0.16
Tunisia	Horn of Africa & North Africa	0.70	0.20	0.14
Libya	Horn of Africa & North Africa	0.55	0.19	0.10
Morocco	Horn of Africa & North Africa	0.25	0.34	0.08
Algeria	Horn of Africa & North Africa	0.30	0.22	0.07
CAR	Central & Southern Africa	0.82	0.22	0.18
DRC	Central & Southern Africa	0.80	0.22	0.18
Mozambique	Central & Southern Africa	0.80	0.20	0.16
Burundi	Central & Southern Africa	0.73	0.19	0.14
Zimbabwe	Central & Southern Africa	0.65	0.21	0.13
Uganda	Central & Southern Africa	0.60	0.22	0.13
Rwanda	Central & Southern Africa	0.50	0.20	0.10
Angola	Central & Southern Africa	0.42	0.19	0.08

5.2 Lessons identified

This report represents the latest iteration in a series of EWEA efforts undertaken by Clingendael and the Dutch Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence. In past few years, several methodological papers have been produced providing frameworks to analyse both countries' vulnerability to conflict and the impact such conflict could have on the Netherlands; a pilot was implemented to test the

practical application of the frameworks.[29] This report covers the findings of the first continent-wide assessment and was thus presented with the task of scaling up the approach developed in previous years. Based on the experiences of this project, several lessons emerged that were critical to ensure a smooth execution:

- **Expert attendance:** The round table workshop was quite an intensive process, requiring significant time and effort from experts both in preparation for and during the workshop. The selection of experts was key to ensuring meaningful debate on each country as well as cross-regional comparability. Experts unexpectedly not attending the workshop can present a substantial risk to the validity of the findings. The most effective mitigation strategy proved to be the active and personal involvement of round table leads leveraging their research network and reputation to entice experts to attend. This method was supported by the participating ministries leveraging their connections to raise the profile of the event, and by providing experts with a stipend for the time invested. Furthermore, attendance was tracked ahead of time by verifying which experts had taken the requested pre-workshop actions (e.g. filling out the survey and the reimbursement form), and replacing experts that had not taken these actions in a timely fashion.

- **Country selection:** The selection of countries did not follow a rigorous approach. Theoretically the highest scoring cases on the quantitative measure are likely to be the most relevant cases for further examination. Practically, however, ongoing initiatives and other efforts may raise the policy salience of several lower-scoring countries as well, making a closer examination of these countries relevant to determine whether a continued engagement can be justified. However, this presents a trade-off in which attention to high-risk countries is potentially sacrificed in favour of attention towards donor darlings. While the analysis of both cases has value, a more systematic approach to the country selection for the Delphi sessions might allow for a more optimal allocation of research efforts.

- **Ongoing conflict:** The analytical framework used in this project focused on countries' vulnerability to future conflict, yet some policy relevant countries

29 Deen, B., *et al.* (2021) *From Indices to Insight: A proposal to enhance the risk assessment of the Dutch Early Warning/Early Action process*, The Hague: Clingendael; de Bruijne, K. (2021) *Costing Conflict: An early warning method to assess the impact of political violence on vital security interests*, The Hague: Clingendael.

were already in conflict. In order to ensure a meaningful discussion on these countries' vulnerability during the workshop, a variable relating to current conflict intensity was added. This variable reflected the past year's incidences of political violence. Although the addition of this variable was highly effective in dealing with the qualitatively different situations among conflict resolution cases, at times it created the potential for distraction during workshop discussions. As country experts tended to compare countries within their cultural regions, they effectively used the most violent cases in the region as a benchmark for the maximum scores on conflict intensity. Yet not all regions contained cases with equally violent conflict. There is thus a risk of over- or underestimating intensity scores, depending on the conflict intensity of the most severe conflict case in a country. This did not affect the overall assessment of conflict risks, which focused on vulnerability and impact, but not intensity. It did, however, create a minor distraction during the workshops, prompting the question of whether the role filled by the intensity measure could be further streamlined.

Appendix 1 Methodological notes

In order to support the Dutch government in its ambition to enhance its ability to detect and interpret early warning signals and in order to improve conflict prevention efforts, Clingendael has developed several methodological approaches which have been piloted in recent years. With a strong methodological basis and a range of lessons learned from the pilots in earlier years, this appendix analyses the operationalisation at scale of early warning efforts. It first sets out the approach taken to quantitatively estimate African countries' vulnerability to conflict and the impact such conflict has on the Netherlands. Following that, it describes the qualitative Delphi method used to enrich the vulnerability indicators with timely and grounded insights from local experts.

Quantitative analysis

The past decades have seen vast improvements in quantitative analytical techniques, computing technology and data availability, yet the ability to accurately forecast conflict has remained decidedly limited.[30] Although predictions regarding the continuation of conflict have somewhat improved, no accurate forecasts of the onset of conflict are currently available.[31] This reflects the fact that conflict can take a wide range of forms, and can be sparked through a myriad of casual pathways. Moreover, conflict patterns and dynamics are contextual, and are likely to change over time even within a single context.[32] It is therefore almost impossible to generate an accurate prediction of the onset of conflict, especially when taking into account that predictions of this nature could prove misleading if they were incorrect.

30 Chadefaux, T. (2017) *Conflict Forecasting and its Limits*. Data Science, 1:1-2, p. 7.

31 Cederman, L.E. and Weidmann, N.B. (2017) *Predicting Armed Conflict*. Science (American Association for the Advancement of Science), 355:6324, p. 474.

32 Deen, B., *et al.* (2021) *From Indices to Insight: A proposal to enhance the risk assessment of the Dutch Early Warning/Early Action process*, The Hague: Clingendael.

The approach taken here thus moves away from attempting to estimate the likelihood of conflict, and instead assesses a county's vulnerability to conflict. Vulnerability encapsulates the presence of factors associated with a range of casual pathways that may lead to conflict, drawn for a range of conflict theories. This approach aims to collect, structure and make accessible existing quantitative conflict indicators on a country basis, in order to provide a contextualised insight into the vulnerabilities faced in this country context. It takes into account indicators reflecting a wide variety of conflict theories and predictive models, including forecasting models, records of ongoing conflict, and the main conflict drivers drawn from current academic literature (political/institutional factors, economic factors, social factors and environmental factors).

In order to prioritise countries and regions it is equally important to assess the implications (or the cost) of conflict as well as the vulnerability to conflict. While impact (combined with vulnerability) is an essential component of risk, the assessment of impact is often underdeveloped in early warning approaches. What interests are at stake is assumed rather than explicitly considered, if considered at all. As noted in the methodological report upon which this approach is based, '*Developing an impact assessment method is complicated for two reasons. First, methods need to be tailor-made for specific (national) interests. After all, instability in Libya will have different effects for France, Italy or Egypt. This requires explicit definitions of vital interests and a detailed specification of how potential instability might affect them. Second, impact assessment methods are often unavailable or are so specialized (e.g. only within the intelligence community) that there is very little fruitful exchange on how best to devise impact methods.*'[33] The method chosen here builds upon the Dutch categorisation of key interests abroad, as recognised in the framework of the *Analistennetwerk Nationale Veiligheid*, centring around six vital interests. Impact thus relates to various transmission belts that translate the consequence of conflict in a country to a negative change that affects Dutch interests. Each vital interest acts as an impact lens through which an analyst would assess the importance of violent conflict in a particular country for the interests of the Netherlands.

33 de Bruijne, K. (2021) *Costing Conflict: An early warning method to assess the impact of political violence on vital security interests*, The Hague: Clingendael.

For an in-depth conceptualisation of the dimensions and indicators, please see the reports *From Indices to Insight: A proposal to enhance the risk assessment of the Dutch Early Warning/Early Action process* and *Costing Conflict: An early warning method to assess the impact of political violence on vital security interests*.[34] For more details on the operationalisation of each indicator, please see Appendix 2. Most of the data was collected through an automated protocol or API. Where such methods were not possible, variables were manually processed and uploaded to the dashboard. For a select few variables, existing data was not available, in which case experts were asked to provide ratings directly. Following the entry of the data, all variables were standardised to ensure simple comparability. The standardisation process included two key steps:

- **Scaling:** Data ranges were adjusted scores ranging between 0 and 1. In cases where the source data consisted of a scale, rescaling was conducted based on the theoretical minimum and maximum values of the original scale. Where no scale was present in the source data, maximum values were set by the global maximum value observed on this measure in each year.
- **Direction:** Where required, indicators were reversed, in order to ensure that a high score in all cases related to a higher expected vulnerability to conflict or a higher impact on the Netherlands.

Expert validation through Delphi

The main objective of the Early Warning and Early Action (EWEA) project is to support the conflict prevention and peacebuilding policies of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence. This was done initially by developing a cross-country comparable data-driven system highlighting conflict vulnerability across countries. This data was further sharpened through a series of workshops drawing out additional expert insights. The workshops discussed the vulnerability and resilience of countries to political violence in Africa (but not the impact of conflict on the Netherlands). The continent was divided into three sub-regions which were each covered by a separate workshop to keep the scope per workshop manageable.

34 Deen, B., *et al.* (2021) *From Indices to Insight: A proposal to enhance the risk assessment of the Dutch Early Warning/Early Action process*, The Hague: Clingendael; de Bruijne, K. (2021) *Costing Conflict: An early warning method to assess the impact of political violence on vital security interests*, The Hague: Clingendael.

Methodologically, the workshops were structured according to a Delphi methodology. Unlike conventional surveys, the Delphi method consists of an iterative and interactive consultation: a panel of participants is consulted during several rounds, and in each of these rounds the panel receives viewpoints from the previous round while taking positions once again with respect to the previous results (controlled feedback process). In this way participants are aware of the opinions of the entire panel. They can then provide complementary feedback and refine the results.[35] Where a conventional survey measures the prevalence of a variety of opinions among a population, the Delphi methodology incentivises experts to pool insights and information in order to arrive at a better understanding of a phenomenon than any expert could have provided on their own.

The innovative aspect of the Clingendael Delphi methodology was its ambition to integrate quantitative data with the expert assessments as an additional step. This would help to account for the wide variety of ways in which conflict and violence occur and allow for the quantitative data to be integrated with the qualitative assessments of country experts. Experts were therefore given access to the quantitative data through the EWEA dashboard, their own scoring, and an analysis of the gap between the two. Following structured interactions the experts were able to adjust their views on key issues. By focusing conversations with experts on the overlap and differences between their opinions, the group worked towards a converging position. This process will facilitate a solid evidence base for decision making based on early warning, guided by a methodological workshop lead and a regional expert.

The first Delphi iteration began before the workshop. Experts were asked to score key aspects of the conflict risks and dynamics in each country within the scope of the workshop by completing a questionnaire before the workshop. The questionnaire asked the experts to score the intensity of political violence and the instability potential that might drive political violence in the coming years (political/institutional, economic, social, environmental) for each country. The project team analysed the acquired insights from this first Delphi iteration which would in turn be shared with the experts before the workshop took place.

35 M. Turoff, 'The Policy Delphi', in H. A. Linstone and M. Turoff (eds.) (2002) *The Delphi Method: Techniques and Applications*, Boston: Addison-Wesley Publishing, p. 80-96.

The first section of the workshop evaluated findings based on the vulnerability data and expert input received from the completed pre-workshop questionnaires. The key output of this analysis included a first classification of countries perceived be already experiencing high-intensity political violence and cases that might do so in the future. This classification formed the starting point of the workshop discussions. Through a mix of group work and plenary conversations, the classification was discussed and adjusted where necessary. The results of this round were, in turn, validated again through a second and third round of expert scoring.

The second section of the workshop zoomed in on those countries not already experiencing intense political violence, in order to define cases most at risk of political violence in the coming years. This was done by reviewing and – where necessary – adjusting the vulnerability scores. Cases where experts did not converge were highlighted during this second section of the workshop. Again, through a mix of group work and plenary discussions, the experts validated findings and facilitated adjustments of scores to work towards expert consensus.

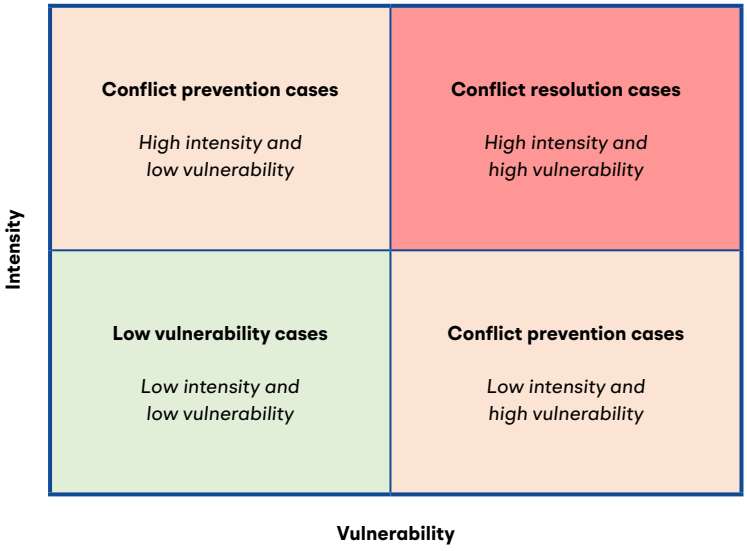
The classification structuring the workshop is based on two key factors: the intensity of and vulnerability to political violence. Based on these two variables, countries are categorised as conflict resolution cases, conflict prevention cases or low-/no-priority cases (see Figure 4).

- **Conflict resolution cases:** These countries are experiencing highly intense political violence and are highly vulnerable to renewed or ongoing political violence. These countries have two roles within early warning approaches: first, these cases present a risk of future escalation or spillover effects to other cases; second, these cases are already experiencing high levels of political violence and thus require conflict resolution rather than conflict prevention efforts.

- **Conflict prevention cases:** These countries score high on either intensity of or vulnerability to political violence. These countries are relevant to policy makers because there is still potential for conflict prevention – for example, by addressing underlying structural factors that shape vulnerability to political violence or by helping to contain dynamics that could trigger or drive the escalation of conflict towards further political violence.

- **Low vulnerability cases:** During the workshop the experts were also asked to highlight cases where they see no or low vulnerability for early warning, and thus no scope for prevention programming, given their very limited vulnerability to political violence.

Figure 15 Classification matrix



By limiting the geographic scope of the workshops to sub-regions on the African continent, sufficient space was generated to allow for in-depth and coherent discussions to take place on the relevant countries as well as regional and cross-border issues. In order to facilitate an in-depth and contextualised discussion that included regional dynamics and potential spillover effects, countries were grouped by geographical, cultural, political and economic proximity, and limited to a maximum of ten countries per workshop in order to retain ample time to discuss each country in sufficient depth. In order to establish a set of countries for the discussion, an initial list of countries with a high combined score on the vulnerability to conflict measure and the impact of conflict on the Netherlands measure was created. The top ten countries in each region were selected, and subsequently adjusted manually to ensure that a policy-relevant set of countries was discussed in the workshops.

Each workshop included a maximum of 15 experts who are given access to the quantitative data.[36] Experts were selected by the round table hosts, and were drawn from the networks of Clingendael, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence. Round table hosts were regional experts themselves, with substantial field experience across the area covered by the round table they presided over. Invited experts all had significant field expertise in the countries under discussion to ensure that the discussion focused on the vulnerabilities within these countries rather than perceived risks regarding the countries from a European perspectives. The selection of experts aimed to have three or more experts per country context, covering political/institutional, economic, social and ecological developments.[37] The following three workshops were conducted:

- **North Africa and the Horn :** 16 experts joined on 8 December 2022, discussing *Somalia, Sudan, Libya, Morocco, Chad, Ethiopia, Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia.*

- **Central and southern Africa:** 10 experts joined on 13 December 2022, discussing *Central African Republic (CAR), Uganda, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda, Burundi and Angola.*

- **West Africa and the Sahel:** 15 experts joined on 14 of December 2022, discussing *Nigeria, Mali, Guinea, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Togo, Benin and Ghana.*

36 Experts were country and/or regional experts with various backgrounds and areas of expertise covering the thematic drivers of political violence. Experts had significant in-field experience, or originated from the countries and regions under discussion. Participants received a reimbursement. Additionally, an optional pre-workshop online 'walk-in' session was conducted to allow participants to raise issues and questions before the workshops.

37 Although the expert selection aimed for three experts per country, this was not achieved for a few countries in southern and central Africa due to participants confirming attendance but not participating.

Appendix 2 Codebook

Vulnerability

The table below shows the variables which fall under the vulnerability category. There are three types of variables in this category: forecasting, recording events, and drivers of conflict and violence. The table shows the type under which each variable falls. It also gives the variables descriptions along with the sources of the data.

Type	Variable name	Description of the variable	Source
Forecasting	**Mass killing**	The risk of mass killings indicator assesses the risk of occurrence of new mass killing, not of the continuation or escalation of ongoing episodes. A mass killing occurs when the deliberate actions of armed groups in a particular country (including but not limited to state security forces, rebel armies, and other militias) result in the deaths of at least 1,000 non-combatant civilians in that country over a period of one year or less. The civilians must also have been targeted for being part of a specific group.	United States Holocaust Memorial Museum – Early Warning Project
	Highly violent conflict	The variable expresses the statistical risk of violent conflict in a given country in the coming 1-4 years. The GCRI covers 22 variables in six dimensions (social, economic, security, political, geographical/environmental, demographic) reflecting structural conditions correlated to the occurrence of highly violent conflict.	European commission – Global Conflict Risk Index (GCRI)
	Violent conflict	The variable expresses the statistical risk of violent conflict in a given country in the coming 1-4 years violent conflict. The GCRI covers 22 variables in six dimensions (social, economic, security, political, geographical/environmental, demographic) reflecting structural conditions correlated to the occurrence of violent conflict.	European commission – Global Conflict Risk Index (GCRI)

Type	Variable name	Description of the variable	Source
Forecasting	**Chance of one-sided violence**	A forecasting indicator that generates monthly probabilistic assessments of the likelihood that fatal political violence will occur in each country and 55x55 km location throughout Africa – during each of the next 36 months.	UCDP – ViEWS
	Chance of non-state violence	A forecasting indicator that generates monthly probabilistic assessments of the likelihood that fatal political violence will occur in each country and 55x55 km location throughout Africa – during each of the next 36 months.	
	Chance of state-based violence	A forecasting indicator that generates monthly probabilistic assessments of the likelihood that fatal political violence will occur during each of the next 36 months.	

Type	Variable name	Description of the variable	Source
Recording events	**State-based violence**	Casualties due to state-based violence	UCDP – Events recorded
	Non-state violence	Casualties due to non-state violence	
	One-sided violence	Casualties due to one-sided violence	UCDP – Events recorded
	Ongoing conflict	A record of events of conflict between a government and a non-governmental party, with no interference from other countries	
	Conflict intensity	This variable records the intensity of conflict events where national power (meaning the power to govern a state) is the main conflict item and in which material or immaterial goods are pursued by conflict actors via conflict measures.	HIIK – Conflict barometer
	Total events of political violence	The ACLED dataset contains disaggregated incident information on political violence, demonstrations, and select related non-violent developments around the world. Political violence events reported by ACLED are defined as 'the use of force by a group with a political purpose or motivation'.	ACLED

Type	Variable name	Description of the variable	Source
Drivers of conflict and violence	**Public sector management and institutions**	A cluster of indicators (known as cluster D or governance cluster) that covers property rights and rule-based governance; quality of budgetary and financial management; efficiency of revenue mobilisation; quality of public administration; and transparency, accountability and corruption in the public sector.	World Bank – CPIA
	Institutional coping capacity	One of three dimensions of risk in the INFORM Risk model. It measures the ability of a country to cope with disasters in terms of formal organised activities and the effort of the country's government as well as the existing infrastructure that could contribute to the reduction of disaster risk.	European commission – INFORM Risk
	State legitimacy	The state legitimacy indicator considers the representativeness and openness of government and its relationship with its citizenry. The indicator looks at the population's level of confidence in state institutions and processes, and assesses the effects where that confidence is absent, manifested through mass public demonstrations, sustained civil disobedience, or the rise of armed insurgencies. Additionally, it evaluates the integrity of elections, how representative the government is of the population, the government's openness and it is ability to exercise a state's basic functions.	Fund for Peace – Fragile States Index
	Public services	The public services indicator refers to the presence of basic state functions that serve the people. This may include the provision of essential services, the state's ability to protect its citizens, the level and maintenance of general infrastructure. The indicator further considers to whom services are provided – whether the state narrowly serves the ruling elites.	Fund for Peace – Fragile States Index
	Human rights	The human rights and rule of law indicator considers the relationship between the state and its population insofar as fundamental human rights are protected and freedoms are observed and respected. The indicator looks at whether there is widespread abuse of legal, political and social rights, along with internal use of the military for political ends or repression of political opponents. The indicator also considers outbreaks of politically inspired (as opposed to criminal) violence perpetrated against civilians.	Fund for Peace – Fragile States Index
	Security apparatus	The security apparatus indicator considers security threats to a state (e.g. bombings, battle-related deaths, rebel movements, mutinies, coups or terrorism) and serious crime factors(e.g. organised crime and homicides) along with the perceived trust of citizens in domestic security. The indicator reference can extend beyond state traditional security actors (e.g. state-sponsored or state-supported private militias). The security apparatus can also include deep state agencies (e.g. secret intelligence units). For more information go to: https://fragilestatesindex.org/indicators/c2/	Fund for Peace – Fragile States Index

Type	Variable name	Description of the variable	Source
Drivers of conflict and violence	**Factionalized elites**	The factionalized elites indicator considers the fragmentation of state institutions along ethnic, class, clan, racial or religious lines, as well as brinkmanship and gridlock between ruling elites. It also factors the use of nationalistic political rhetoric by ruling elites. The factionalized elites indicator measures power struggles, political competition and political transitions, and where elections occur will factor in the credibility of electoral processes (or in their absence, the perceived legitimacy of the ruling class).	Fund for Peace – Fragile States Index
	External intervention	The external intervention indicator considers the influence and impact of external actors in the functioning – particularly security and economic – of a state.	Fund for Peace – Fragile States Index
	Regime type	The regime type indicator is designed to capture the effect of the democratic U-curve, where anocracies are seen as inherently less stable than autocracies and democracies (Hegre, 2001). The indicator classifies regimes into seven types: full autocracy, partial autocracy, partial democracy with factionalism, partial democracy, full democracy, transition, and foreign intervention. For the EWEA methodology the variable captures the degree of executive recruitment and party competition.	European Commission – Global Conflict Risk Index
	Repression	The repression indicator reflects the highest level of repression noted from scores among Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the US State Department.	Political Terror Scale Project
	Militarisation	Militarisation is the third domain of the Global Peace Index which measures a country's level of negative peace. The domain includes seven indicators related to a country's militarisation reflecting the link between a country's level of military build-up and access to weapons and its level of peacefulness, both domestically and internationally. Comparable data on military expenditure as a percentage of GDP and the number of armed service officers per head are gauged, as are financial contributions to UN peacekeeping missions.	Institute For Economics And Peace – Positive Peace Index
	Free flow of information	One of eight pillars in the Positive Peace Index, the free flow of information pillar is measured by three indicators: 1. Freedom of the press: A composite measure of the degree of print, broadcast and internet freedom; 2. Quality of information: measured by government dissemination of false information domestically; 3. Individuals using the internet (% of population).	Institute For Economics and Peace – Positive Peace Index

Type	Variable name	Description of the variable	Source
Drivers of conflict and violence	**Good relations with neighbours**	One of eight pillars in the Positive Peace Index, the good relations with neighbours pillar is measured by three indicators: 1. Law to support equal treatment of population segments in terms of relationships with domestic neighbours; 2. International tourism, which is measured by number of tourists; 3. External intervention of external actors in the security and economic functioning of a state.	Institute For Economics and Peace – Positive Peace Index
	Voice and accountability	Voice and accountability captures perceptions of the extent to which a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media.	World Bank – Worldwide Governance Indicator
	Political stability and absence of violence	Political stability and absence of violence/terrorism measures perceptions of the likelihood of political instability and/or politically motivated violence, including terrorism. This table lists the individual variables from each data source used to construct this measure in the Worldwide Governance Indicator.	World Bank – Worldwide Governance Indicator
	Control of corruption	Control of corruption captures perceptions of the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as 'capture' of the state by elites and private interests.	World Bank – Worldwide Governance Indicator
	Economic management	A cluster of indicators (known as cluster A) covers the quality of three closely related policy areas: monetary and exchange rate, fiscal, and debt. The CPIA score for the economic management cluster and the components of this cluster reflect the overall prudent stance of policies in countries, the flexibility of policies to respond to shocks, and the appropriate use of policy buffers.	World Bank – Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act (CPIA)
	Structural policies	A cluster of indicators (known as cluster B) covers policies affecting trade, the financial sector and the business environment. Policies affecting trade, the financial sector and the business environment are covered under this cluster.	World Bank – CPIA
	Socio-economic vulnerability	The socio-economic vulnerability indicator falls under the vulnerability dimension of the INFORM Risk index. The socio-economic vulnerability category tries to measure the (in)ability of individuals or households to afford safe and resilient livelihood conditions and well-being. These in turn dictate whether people can live in safe houses and locations as well as maintain adequate health in terms of nutrition and preventive medicine to be resistant to increased health risk and reduced food intake in the case of disasters.	European Commission – INFORM Risk

Type	Variable name	Description of the variable	Source
Drivers of conflict and violence	**Inequality**	The uneven economic development indicator considers inequality within the economy, irrespective of the actual performance of an economy. For example, the indicator looks at structural inequality that is based on group (such as racial, ethnic, religious or other identity group) or based on education, economic status or region (such as urban-rural divide). The indicator considers not only actual inequality, but also perceptions of inequality.	Fund for Peace – Fragile States Index
	Brain drain	The human flight and brain drain indicator considers the economic impact of human displacement (for economic or political reasons) and the consequences this may have on a country's development. It may involve the voluntary emigration of the middle class or forced displacement of professionals or intellectuals who are fleeing their country due to actual or feared persecution or repression.	Fund for Peace – Fragile States Index
	Development and distribution	Probability – drivers of conflict and violence: The variable is constructed based on the average of four variables: GDP per capita (current US$); Gini index of foreign direct investment; net inflows (% of GDP); and exports of goods and services (% of GDP). It reflects the openness of the economy and income inequality.	World Bank – World Development Indicators
	Provision and employment	The variable is constructed based on the average of five variables: dietary energy supply adequacy; domestic food price index; prevalence of undernourishment; domestic food price volatility; unemployment total (% of total labour force) (modelled ILO estimate). It reflects food insecurity and unemployment rates.	World Bank and FAO – World Development Indicators & FAO STAT
	Human capital	One of eight pillars in the Positive Peace Index, the high levels of human capital pillar is measured by three indicators: 1. share of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET); 2. number of researchers engaged in research & development (R&D); 3. healthy life expectancy (HALE)	Institute for Economics and Peace – Positive Peace Index
	Social drivers of conflict	Compound score based on averaging the scores of: CPIA gender equality rating, CPIA equity of public resource use rating, CPIA building human resources rating, and CPIA social protection rating	World Bank – CPIA
	Vulnerable groups	One of three dimensions of riskin the INFORM Risk model. The vulnerability dimension addresses the intrinsic predispositions of an exposed population to be affected or susceptible to the damaging effects of a hazard. Vulnerable groups is one of the two categories aggregated through the geometric average.	European Commission – INFORM Risk

Type	Variable name	Description of the variable	Source
Drivers of conflict and violence	**Group grievance**	The group grievance indicator focuses on divisions and schisms between different groups in society – particularly divisions based on social or political characteristics – and their role in access to services or resources, and inclusion in the political process.	Fund for Peace – Fragile States Index
	Demographic pressures	The demographic pressures Indicator considers pressures on the state deriving from the population itself or the environment around it. For example, the indicator measures population pressures related to food supply, access to safe water, and other life-sustaining resources, or health.	Fund for Peace – Fragile States Index
	Refugees and IDPs	The refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) indicator measures the pressure on states caused by the forced displacement of large communities as a result of social, political, environmental or other causes, measuring displacement within countries, as well as refugee flows into others. The indicator measures refugees by country of asylum, recognising that population inflows can put additional pressure on public services.	Fund for Peace – Fragile States Index
	Ethnicity	Component of social cohesion/public security risk area including ethnic power status, ethnic diversity, and transnational ethnic bonds	Zurich EPR – Ethnic Compilation
	Youth	Component of geography and environment risk area including population size and youth bulge	UN Department of Social and Economic Affairs – Age Groups
	Rights of others	Policies and institutions for environmental sustainability. The extent to which environmental policies and institutions foster the protection and sustainable use of natural resources and the management of pollution	Institute for Economics And Peace – Positive Peace Index
	Environmental policies	Policies and institutions for environmental sustainability. The extent to which environmental policies and institutions foster the protection and sustainable use of natural resources and the management of pollution	World Bank – CPIA
	Natural hazards	Natural hazard aggregates five components: earthquake, tsunami, flood, tropical cyclone, and drought	European Commission – INFORM Risk

Impact

The table below shows the variables which fall under the impact category. It reflects the types and sub-types under which each variable falls, and also provides descriptions of the variables along with the sources of the data.

Type	Variable name	Description of the variable	Source	Source
Territorial security	Direct territorial threats	**Actions against allies**	The actions against allies indicator uses data from the Integrated Crisis Early Warning System (ICEWS) to count the activities against key allies including the UK, US, France and Germany.	ICEWS – Event data
	Position of the Netherlands	**Actions against NL**	The actions against the Netherlands indicator uses data from the ICEWS to count actions against the kingdom of the Netherlands and constituent countries including Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten.	ICEWS – Event data
		Cyberattacks allies	The cyberattacks towards allies indicator counts the number of offensive cyber operations against the kingdom of the Netherlands and constituent countries including Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten.	Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) – Cyber Operations Tracker
		Defence spend – EU	Military defence expenditure in dollars (% GDP) in comparison to the average defence expenditure of the EU countries.	Level of repression – Political Terror Scale Project
		Defence spend – allies	Military defence expenditure in dollars (% GDP) in comparison to the of average defence expenditure of allies including Germany, France, and the UK.	SIPRI – Military Expenditure Database
		Cyberattacks NL	The cyberattacks towards the Netherlands indicator counts the number of offensive cyber operations against key Netherlands allies including the UK, US, France and Germany.	CFR – Cyber Operations Tracker
		Intention to undermine NL	Direct territorial threats which projected through explicit strategy or indication to undermine Dutch security	Country experts and practitioners inputs
		Standing of NL	The standing of the Netherlands indicator measures positive statements in a country about the Netherlands and constituent countries including Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten.	ICEWS – Event data

Type	Variable name	Description of the variable	Source	Source
Territorial security	Position of allies	**Demonstrations against NL**	The demonstrations against the Netherlands indicator counts the number of demonstrations and riot events against the Netherlands.	ACLED
		Representation by NL	Reflects the diplomatic bilateral relations between the NLD and other states based on the existence of diplomatic missions.	Lowy Institute – Global Diplomacy Index
		Demonstrations against allies	The demonstrations against allies indicator counts the number of demonstrations and riot events against allies.	ACLED
		Standing of allies	The standing of allies indicator measures positive statements about allies including the UK, US, France and Germany in a country.	ICEWS – Event data
	Terrorist attacks	**Caliphate risk**	Risk of creation of a territorialised caliphate	Country experts and practitioners inputs

Type	Subtype	Variable name	Description of the variable	Source
Socio-political security	Undermining democratic process	**Disinformation**	The disinformation indicator accounts for the presence, size and scope of disinformation campaigns that undermine the democratic processes.	Country experts and practitioners inputs
	Criminal links	**Criminal actors**	The criminal actors indicator reflects the average of four criminal actor types including: mafia-style groups; criminal networks; state-embedded actors; and foreign actors. These are based on assessments of the structure, control and influence of groups engaged in organised criminal activities.	Global Initiative – Global organised crime index
		Criminal markets	The criminal markets indicator reflects the average of ten criminal market types including: human trafficking; human smuggling; arms trafficking; flora crimes; fauna crimes; non-renewable resource crimes; heroin trade; cocaine trade; cannabis trade; and synthetic drug trade. These can be thought of as the political, social and economic systems surrounding all stages of the illicit trade and/or exploitation of commodities or people.	Global Initiative – Global organised crime index
	Migration	**Migration to NL**	The migration to the Netherlands indicator includes the total immigration number to the Netherlands.	CBS
		Migration to EU	The migration to the EU indicator includes the sum of immigrants to the EU from different countries.	EU – Eurostat
		Transit country to EU	Migration transit countries to the EU	IOM – CTDC
		Transit country to NL	Migration transit countries to the Netherlands	EU – Frontex data
	Social connections	**Flight connectivity**	The travel interactions between other countries and the Netherlands	European Commission – Joint Research Centre
		Size of diaspora in NL	Size of non-Western diaspora in the Netherlands	CBS

Type	Subtype	Variable name	Description of the variable	Source
Economic security	Dutch trading partners	**Exports from the Netherlands**	The exports from the Netherlands indicator measures the volume of exports from the Netherlands to other countries.	CBS – Import/Export
		Imports to the Netherlands	The imports to the Netherlands indicator measures the volume of imports to the Netherlands from other countries.	CBS – Import/Export
		FDI of NL	Reflects the Important Dutch trading partner by showing the size of FDI flows from the Netherlands to the country	OECD – OECD Stat
	Role in world economy	**Ease of doing business**	The index is calculated from the average ease of doing business (DB) score over the past five years. The DB score helps assess the absolute level of regulatory performance over time. It captures the gap of each economy from the best regulatory performance observed on each of the indicators across all economies in the doing business sample.	Ease of Doing Business Index – World Bank
		Size of fossil fuels and REE	Reflects the size of fossil fuel reserves and the occurrence of Rare Earth Elements (REE)	US Geological Survey
		Shipping connectivity	Reflects countries' trading position by capturing the level of integration into the existing liner shipping network	UNCTAD – Port liner shipping connectivity index
	Piracy	**Piracy**	Reflects how much piracy is a problem for a country	International Maritime Organization – Piracy and Armed Robbery Database

Type	Subtype	Variable name	Description of the variable	Source
International order and stability	Rules-based international system	**Human rights record**	Human rights record about the condition of political rights and civil liberties around the world, from the Freedom in the World Index	Freedom House – Freedom in the World Index
	Instability	**Interstate military skirmishes**	The interstate military skirmishes variable accounts for trans-state and interstate conflicts and the intensity level for the conflicts per country.	HIIK
		WTO complaints	Number of complaints filed against the state at the World Trade Organization	WTO
		Political violence	The political violence indicator accounts for the number of incidents of political violence in a country.	ACLED
		Interstate conflict propensity	Reflects the number of conflicts and the intensity of these conflicts	HIIK
		Ongoing intra-state conflicts	Number of ongoing intra-state conflicts in the country	UCDP
	Geopolitical risk	**Geopolitical**	The geopolitical influence variable considers whether the country recently experienced a very significant increase of influence among geopolitical adversaries including: China, Russia or middle powers such as Turkey and the UAE.	Country experts and practitioners inputs

Type	Subtype	Variable name	Description of the variable	Source
Physical security	Citizens of allies	**Political violence involving allies**	Counting incidents of political violence involving allies. Examples of such incidents include: protests for or against embassies, companies or individuals.	ACLED
	Citizens of kingdom	**Political violence involving NL**	Counting incidents of political violence involving the kingdom of the Netherlands. Examples of such incidents include: protests for or against embassies, companies or individuals.	ACLED
		Dutch citizens in peace operations	Number of kingdom citizens present in current peace support operations in the country.	CBS

Type	Subtype	Variable name	Description of the variable	Source
Ecological security	**Climate change** (country of study)	**Renewable energy consumption**	Measures the renewable energy consumption which includes renewable power and biofuels	BP
		Emission levels	Measures the fossil CO2 emissions by country	European Commission – EDGAR (Emissions Database for Global Atmospheric Research)
	Biodiversity (country of study)	**Biodiversity**	Reflects levels of different biodiversity components like habitat, ecosystems services, fisheries and water resources	Yale – Environmental Performance Index

Appendix 3 Country scores

Categorisation according to conflict vulnerability and intensity of political violence

Category	Country	Vulnerability	Intensity	Region
Resolution	Mali	0.86	0.87	West Africa & Sahel
	Burkina Faso	0.85	0.85	West Africa & Sahel
	Somalia	0.85	0.83	Horn of Africa & North Africa
	Chad	0.85	0.70	Horn of Africa & North Africa
	Sudan	0.83	0.85	Horn of Africa & North Africa
	CAR	0.82	0.82	Central & Southern Africa
	DRC	0.80	0.93	Central & Southern Africa
	Mozambique	0.80	0.75	Central & Southern Africa
	Ethiopia	0.79	0.91	Horn of Africa & North Africa
	Nigeria	0.70	0.80	West Africa & Sahel
Conflict prevention	Guinea	0.80	0.30	West Africa & Sahel
	Niger	0.75	0.65	West Africa & Sahel
	Egypt	0.75	0.35	Horn of Africa & North Africa
	Burundi	0.73	0.07	Central & Southern Africa
	Tunisia	0.70	0.35	Horn of Africa & North Africa
	Zimbabwe	0.65	0.25	Central & Southern Africa
	Cameroon	0.60	0.60	West Africa & Sahel
	Uganda	0.60	0.10	Central & Southern Africa
	Libya	0.55	0.65	Horn of Africa & North Africa
	Côte d'Ivoire	0.50	0.25	West Africa & Sahel
	Rwanda	0.50	0.05	Central & Southern Africa
	Benin	0.45	0.30	West Africa & Sahel
	Angola	0.42	0.20	Central & Southern Africa
	Ghana	0.40	0.25	West Africa & Sahel
	Togo	0.35	0.20	West Africa & Sahel
Low vulnerability	Algeria	0.30	0.15	Horn of Africa & North Africa
	Morocco	0.25	0.10	Horn of Africa & North Africa

Category	Country	Vulnerability	Intensity	Region
Non-validated	South Sudan	0.71	0.04	Horn of Africa & North Africa
	Eritrea	0.65	0.04	Horn of Africa & North Africa
	Congo	0.60	0.02	West Africa & Sahel
	Djibouti	0.58	0.00	Horn of Africa & North Africa
	Mauritania	0.58	0.01	West Africa & Sahel
	Madagascar	0.57	0.05	Central & Southern Africa
	Liberia	0.56	0.02	West Africa & Sahel
	Guinea-Bissau	0.56	0.00	West Africa & Sahel
	Tanzania	0.56	0.01	Central & Southern Africa
	Sierra Leone	0.56	0.02	West Africa & Sahel
	Malawi	0.56	0.03	Central & Southern Africa
	Zambia	0.55	0.01	Central & Southern Africa
	Kenya	0.55	0.04	Horn of Africa & North Africa
	Senegal	0.53	0.01	West Africa & Sahel
	Comoros	0.52	0.00	Central & Southern Africa
	South Africa	0.51	0.14	Central & Southern Africa
	Lesotho	0.50	0.01	Central & Southern Africa
	Namibia	0.50	0.01	Central & Southern Africa
	Gambia	0.50	0.00	West Africa & Sahel
	São Tomé and Príncipe	0.49	0.00	Central & Southern Africa
	Equatorial Guinea	0.48	0.00	Central & Southern Africa
	Eswatini	0.43	0.01	Central & Southern Africa
	Botswana	0.43	0.00	Central & Southern Africa
	Cabo Verde	0.43	0.01	West Africa & Sahel
	Gabon	0.42	0.01	West Africa & Sahel
	Mauritius	0.40	0.03	Central & Southern Africa
	Seychelles	0.38	NA	Central & Southern Africa

Impact of conflict within countries on vital Dutch interests

Country		Vulnerability	Impact	Territorial	Physical	Economical	Ecological	Socio-Political	International Order
Mali	Conflict resolution	0.86	0.39	0.32	0.62	0.13	0.36	0.28	0.67
Nigeria	Conflict resolution	0.70	0.33	0.24	0.00	0.14	0.38	0.50	0.69
Chad	Conflict resolution	0.85	0.27	0.20	0.01	0.07	0.38	0.18	0.78
Sudan	Conflict resolution	0.83	0.27	0.13	0.00	0.09	0.47	0.44	0.47
Somalia	Conflict resolution	0.85	0.26	0.17	0.08	0.05	0.48	0.30	0.49
CAR	Conflict resolution	0.82	0.27	0.07	0.02	0.08	0.50	0.30	0.64
DRC	Conflict resolution	0.80	0.26	0.23	0.20	0.00	0.47	0.32	0.37
Egypt	Conflict prevention	0.75	0.21	0.24	0.00	0.14	0.18	0.28	0.41
Mozambique	Conflict resolution	0.80	0.24	0.27	0.00	0.13	0.47	0.23	0.36
Ethiopia	Conflict resolution	0.79	0.24	0.12	0.00	0.12	0.43	0.23	0.52
Guinea	Conflict prevention	0.80	0.22	0.05	0.00	0.14	0.36	0.37	0.39
Burkina Faso	Conflict resolution	0.85	0.21	0.21	0.03	0.13	0.38	0.17	0.32
Burundi	Conflict prevention	0.73	0.22	0.23	0.00	0.12	0.37	0.15	0.45
Niger	Conflict prevention	0.75	0.24	0.25	0.03	0.13	0.50	0.19	0.33
Tunisia	Conflict prevention	0.70	0.19	0.20	0.00	0.11	0.15	0.24	0.43
Zimbabwe	Conflict prevention	0.65	0.25	0.13	0.00	0.13	0.48	0.17	0.61
Cameroon	Conflict prevention	0.60	0.24	0.03	0.00	0.11	0.36	0.29	0.68
Uganda	Conflict prevention	0.60	0.26	0.19	0.01	0.15	0.46	0.29	0.47
Libya	Conflict prevention	0.55	0.17	0.14	0.01	0.08	0.09	0.25	0.47
Rwanda	Conflict prevention	0.50	0.23	0.18	0.00	0.18	0.35	0.27	0.39
Côte d'Ivoire	Conflict prevention	0.50	0.24	0.20	0.00	0.14	0.60	0.28	0.25
Morocco	Low vulnerability	0.25	0.30	0.25	0.00	0.18	0.09	0.62	0.63
Benin	Conflict prevention	0.45	0.20	0.24	0.00	0.15	0.30	0.29	0.21
Angola	Conflict prevention	0.42	0.20	0.16	0.00	0.12	0.27	0.26	0.40
Algeria	Low vulnerability	0.30	0.20	0.25	0.00	0.09	0.09	0.36	0.39
Ghana	Conflict prevention	0.40	0.17	0.24	0.00	0.21	0.26	0.20	0.10
Togo	Conflict prevention	0.35	0.18	0.16	0.00	0.17	0.39	0.17	0.19
Eritrea	Non-validated	0.65	0.20	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.34	0.45	0.36
Kenya	Non-validated	0.55	0.22	0.15	0.00	0.16	0.34	0.18	0.51
Eswatini	Non-validated	0.43	0.25	0.10	0.01	0.15	0.31	0.09	0.83
South Sudan	Non-validated	0.71	0.16	0.17	0.00	0.07	0.27	0.14	0.33
Djibouti	Non-validated	0.58	0.17	0.00	0.00	0.16	0.19	0.24	0.42
Zambia	Non-validated	0.55	0.22	0.04	0.00	0.16	0.49	0.15	0.49
Congo	Non-validated	0.60	0.20	0.10	0.00	0.09	0.41	0.16	0.42
Madagascar	Non-validated	0.57	0.18	0.03	0.00	0.09	0.36	0.17	0.45
South Africa	Non-validated	0.51	0.17	0.25	0.00	0.17	0.23	0.18	0.21
Equatorial Guinea	Non-validated	0.48	0.16	0.05	0.00	0.08	0.21	0.14	0.48
Malawi	Non-validated	0.56	0.18	0.03	0.00	0.14	0.42	0.13	0.34
Guinea-Bissau	Non-validated	0.56	0.19	0.05	0.00	0.09	0.50	0.28	0.19
Liberia	Non-validated	0.56	0.15	0.03	0.00	0.09	0.34	0.16	0.30
Senegal	Non-validated	0.53	0.15	0.15	0.00	0.14	0.29	0.16	0.16
Mauritania	Non-validated	0.58	0.12	0.07	0.00	0.10	0.17	0.15	0.22
Namibia	Non-validated	0.50	0.15	0.09	0.00	0.14	0.32	0.13	0.23
Gabon	Non-validated	0.42	0.21	0.06	0.00	0.10	0.53	0.15	0.40
Sierra Leone	Non-validated	0.56	0.15	0.02	0.00	0.10	0.38	0.27	0.12
Comoros	Non-validated	0.52	0.15	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.39	0.14	0.29
Lesotho	Non-validated	0.50	0.11	0.04	0.00	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.19
Botswana	Non-validated	0.43	0.15	0.10	0.00	0.17	0.34	0.13	0.14
São Tomé and Príncipe	Non-validated	0.49	0.16	0.00	0.00	0.11	0.53	0.21	0.08
Mauritius	Non-validated	0.40	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.17	0.17	0.13	0.14
Tanzania	Non-validated	0.56	0.16	0.00	0.00	0.14	0.69	0.16	0.00
Seychelles	Non-validated	0.38	0.13	0.07	0.00	0.14	0.33	0.13	0.11
Gambia	Non-validated	0.50	0.12	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.41	0.20	0.00
Cabo Verde	Non-validated	0.43	0.09	0.00	0.00	0.11	0.26	0.16	0.03