



The West Africa Report

*Security and Piracy - At Sea - On
Land - Domestic News
and Developments for the
International Resources Sector*

The West Africa Report ~ SUMMARY

January 21 – February 2, 2013



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Benin

- **23 January 2013** - Benin's President Boni Yayi, who is also the Chairman of the African Union (AU) has commenced a four-day visit to the Federal Republic of Germany.
 - During his visit to Germany, Benin president and Chairman of the African Union (AU) Thomas Boni Yayi, called on the German government to be more proactive with the Mali crisis.
- **21 January 2013** - Benin has increased its troop allotment for Mali.

Burkina Faso

- **23 January 2013** - Burkina Faso has reported that it has received an additional 1,829 refugees from Mali.

Cameroon

- **21 January 2013** - A man suspected of being a former member of Boko Haram, and who sought refuge in northern Cameroon after renouncing the group's activities, has been killed in what appears to be an execution-style hit.

Côte d'Ivoire

- **25 January 2013** - The President of Côte d'Ivoire, Alassane Ouattara, is scheduled to leave for Addis-Ababa on Friday in order to take part in the 20th African Union (AU) Summit of the heads of state and government.

Equatorial Guinea

- **28 January 2013** - Equatorial Guinea has announced that the country will donate US \$500,000 in order to support the African forces in Mali.
- **23 January 2013** - The country's Prime Minister has announced that local and legislative elections will occur on 26 May of this year.

Gambia

- **22 January 2013** - Gambia's special crime court has sentenced the country's former police chief to ten years in prison after he was found guilty of drug trafficking, corruption and theft.
- **21 January 2013** - Gambia's President Yahya Jammeh has announced that public officials will now have a shortened work week in which they will only work four days a week.

Ghana

- **23 January 2013** - Despite the fact that on Thursday, Ghana's Parliament is scheduled to begin the vetting of Cabinet nominees of President John Dramani Mahama, lawmakers representing the main opposition, the New Patriotic Party (NPP), have confirmed that they will be boycotting the process due to the party's ongoing challenge of the legality of President Mahama's election victory on 7 December 2012.

Guinea-Bissau

- **21 January 2013** - Guinea-Bissau's Interim President Manuel Serifo Nhamadjohas stated that a general election which was initially planned to occur in May of this year following a 12-month post-coup transition period, would be "impossible."

Liberia

- **1 February 2013** - British Prime Minister David Cameron is currently in Liberia in order to co-chair a high level United Nations meeting that will focus on tackling global poverty.
- **30 January 2013** - Liberia's Finance Minister Amara Konneh has indicated that the government does not have the required funds in order to contribute troops to the military intervention in Mali.
- **24 January 2013** - Liberia is joining eleven other countries which will share US \$100 million which has been provided by the United Nations humanitarian fund.
- **22 January 2013** - Liberia's jailed ex-President Charles Taylor has commenced his appeal at a United Nations-backed special court in The Hague.
- **21 January 2013** - Liberia's President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has disclosed that the Government of Liberia will contribute troops to the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA).

Mali

- Travel Summary
- MS RISK guidance to organizations in Mali
- Breakdown of the Mali Intervention
- Breakdown of the Numbers

Domestic News

- **3 February 2013** - Official sources in Paris have indicated that the French military carried out major air strikes on Sunday near the town of Kidal.
- **1 February 2013** - Three weeks after French air strikes began to target Islamist militants in Mali, French President François Hollande has announced that he will be visiting the country.
- **31 January 2013** - A senior diplomat has indicated that the United Nations Security Council will consider plans to deploy a new UN Peacekeeping force to Mali which would help with security and stabilizing the country after France's military intervention concludes.
- **29 January 2013** - The UK's Defence Secretary, Phillip Hammond has confirmed that Britain will be sending troops to Mali.

Mauritania

- Travel Summary
- **29 January 2013** - Reports have indicated that over the past 24 hours, three suspected Islamic terrorists have been arrested by regional security services in Brakna, which is located 250km south-east of the capital of Nouakchott.
- **23 January 2013** - Reports have indicated that at least 150,000 Malians have fled into the neighbouring countries of Mauritania and Niger since France launched its military intervention in Mali two weeks ago.
- **21 January 2013** - Three parties in Mauritania's ruling coalition have called on the government to send troops to neighbouring Mali in order to help recapture the north from armed Islamist groups.

[Niger](#)

- Travel Summary
- **30 January 2013** - Officials in Niger have indicated that the country is ready to host a base for drones from the United States which will monitor the movements of al-Qaeda-linked groups that are currently based in Northern Mali.
- **25 January 2013** - France has confirmed that amidst a heightened security threat following the French military intervention in Mali, it will send special forces to protect nuclear giant Areva's uranium mines located in Niger.

[Nigeria](#)

- Travel Summary
- MS RISK guidance to organizations in Nigeria

At Sea

- Special Report: Piracy Incidents - December 2012
 - **Summary** - The Gulf of Guinea reported eight attacks during the month of December however it must be noted that under-reporting in the region continues to prevail.

On Land

- **1 February 2013** - Nigeria's military indicated on Friday that it had killed seventeen insurgents in raids that had targeted two "terrorist camps" in the northeastern state of Borno, which is known to be a base for Boko Haram.
- **31 January 2013** - Authorities in Nigeria have said that over the past few days, at least five police officers have been killed in separate attacks that occurred in the northern region of the country. Late on Wednesday, gunmen raided Birnin-Gwari in Kaduna state.
- **25 January 2013** - The Nigerian government has indicated that some members of Boko Haram were trained in northern Mali and that they are believed to have links with those Islamist insurgents who are controlling the region.
- **22 January 2013** - Suspected Boko Haram Islamists have been blamed for the deaths of at least twenty-three people in an attack that took place in Borno State, in north-eastern Nigeria.

Domestic News

- **25 January 2013** - A Nigerian court has sentenced a man who has been convicted with the twin bombings in Abuja, near the independence day commemorations in 2010 which resulted in the death of twelve people.

International Developments

- **21 January 2013** - A court in South Africa has convicted Nigerian militant Henry Okah guilty of masterminding a car bombing in 2010 which killed twelve people.

[Senegal](#)

- **27 January 2013** - Senegalese President Macky Sall indicated on Saturday that his country is unable to send more troops to Mali at the moment due to the fact that a number of Senegal servicemen are away on peacekeeping missions in various regions of the continent.

[Sierra Leone](#)

- **23 January 2013** - Prosecutors on Wednesday indicated that Sierra Leone's rebels had depended on logistics that were provided by Liberian ex-president Charles Taylor to kill, rape and mutilate thousands during the nation's civil war.

[Togo](#)

- **23 January 2013** - An army spokesman has confirmed that Togo has boosted its troop allotment for Mali to at least 733 from the 500 that were initially pledged as apart of an African force focusing on helping French forces retake the Islamist-controlled northern regions.

[About MS Risk](#)



No restrictions
in this travel
advice

There are currently no restrictions on travel to Benin. Although there is a low threat of terrorism in the country, Benin's President has been an advocate of the intervention in Mali. As such, there is a possibility that terrorist attacks may occur in the country without warning. Highway bandits are known to operate throughout the country. Vehicle-jackings are common in the capital. Visitors to the country should take personal security precautions and maintain a high level of vigilance in public places especially in Dantokpa market in Cotonou as well as around tourist areas.

Domestic News:

- 23 January 2013** - Benin's President Boni Yayi, who is also the Chairman of the African Union (AU) has commenced a four-day visit to the Federal Republic of Germany. According to a communiqué that was provided by Benin's Foreign Affairs Ministry, the visit is aimed at consolidating political dialogue between the two countries, as well as strengthening cooperation and presenting new investment opportunities in Benin to German economic groups. President Yayi is set to hold talks with several German officials, including his counterpart, Mrs Angela Merkel, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany. President Yayi will also meet with members of Parliament and other business managers, in which talks will focus on issues pertaining to regional and international concerns that relate especially to the settlement of conflicts, stability and security in Africa.
 - During his visit to Germany, Benin president and Chairman of the African Union (AU) Thomas Boni Yayi, called on the German government to be more proactive with the Mali crisis. Despite this, Berlin has maintained that it will not be sending its troops into combat. Over the past few months, President Yayi has been tirelessly trying to persuade Africans, Europeans and the United Nations (UN) to commit troops to the liberation of the northern region of Mali. Although France launched a military intervention in January, Benin's president now wants NATO to consider a military operation in Mali which would be similar to its intervention in Afghanistan. Over the past year, President Yayi's task as Chairman of the AU has been to represent the African Union abroad. The 54-member states rotate this position annually and this weekend (January 26 - 27), the President will hand over his position to the Prime Minister of Ethiopia. Ever since the Islamist takeover of the northern region of Mali, Boni Yayi, a 61-year-old trained economist, has been worried about the growing situation and instability in the country as well as in his own. Although Benin does not share a border with Mali, the distance from it is just 500km (310 miles) while the distance between Mali and Benin's commercial hub Cotonou, is only 1,000km (621 miles) away.



Cotonou Harbour is also of strategic importance for the Islamist groups as it is enroute to Europe and has, in the past, been used as a point to smuggle weapons and drugs. Although the geographical proximity to Mali is one of the factors which has prompted Benin's President to search for a solution to the crisis, there is also a growing fear within his own country that radicalization may one day develop within its borders. Statistics have indicated that one out of four people in Benin is Muslim and although they practice a moderate Islam, there nevertheless are lingering concerns that ideologies from Mali may one day begin to spread across the African continent. In Benin, Muslims typically reside in the northern region of the country, where there is a high rate of unemployment, and where energy prices are rapidly increasing and inflation is rampant. These are similar factors which inevitably contributed to the violence in Nigeria which has been blamed on Boko Haram.

- **21 January 2013** - Benin has increased its troop allotment for Mali. Although the President had initially indicated that 300 troops would be sent in as part of an African force aimed at helping the country retake its northern region, a military officer has now confirmed that that number will be increased to 650. Rear Admiral Denis Houssou confirmed that "President Thomas Boni Yayi has decided that we will add 350 soldiers to the 300 earlier that were planned earlier." About 50 Benin soldiers have already left for Mali while others are expected to leave shortly however no timeline has been announced. Eight West African nations - Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo - as well as Chad, have contributed troops to the mission, which is set to have upwards of 5,800 soldiers, and which will be taking over from France in the coming weeks.

Avoid ALL
travel to part(s)
of country



Burkina Faso

Travel Summary:

Following the French military intervention in Mali, there is a heightened threat of retaliatory attacks that could target Western, especially French, interests in the region. This type of attack has already been witnessed in Algeria, in which a number of hostages were taken. There remains to be a general threat from terrorism in the Sahel region. Intelligence reports also indicate that terrorists from Mali may be planning kidnapping operations in Burkina Faso. As such there is a heightened risk that kidnap activity may cross the northern borders from Mali and Niger into Burkina Faso. Consequently MS RISK advises against all travel to the northern region of Burkina Faso, specifically north of the town of Boulou, which is located 25km north of the capital city of Ouagadougou. This includes the border provinces of Lebara, Kenedougou, Banwa, Kossi, Sourou, Yatenga, Loroum, Soum, Oudalan, Seno, Yagha, Komondjari and Tapoa. Since 2008, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) has captured over 25 hostages of a variety of nationalities, primarily European, in which a number of these hostages are still being held.

There is also a high risk of crime involving armed groups stopping vehicles (including public buses) in order to rob them. Such incidents have occurred in various parts of the country, particularly at night. As such all travel between towns by road at night is to be avoided, especially from Ouagadougou to Po where there is a heightened risk posed by bandits. This is especially severe on market days when highwaymen often operate in the hopes of catching merchants with stock or cash en route to and from the urban areas.



MS RISK Guidance to Organisations in Burkina Faso:

Although the biggest concern at this time remains to be in the northern areas of the country, specifically along the porous Mali border and at the junction of the Niger border, the attack and kidnapping that occurred in Algeria has demonstrated that such attacks can occur at any place and at any time. In turn, the attack on BP in Algeria came just days after Islamists announced that they would retaliate against French interests in the region. Consequently, it is highly likely that more attacks will take place over the coming months.

There is an increased Burkinabe military presence in the north of the country and companies should review their respective security situations and consider the following:

- Location and safety of personnel
- Security controls, communications and contingency plans at static locations
- Work tempo implications
- Journey management systems in place and working
- Liaison with the military - use of military escorts, coordination between multiple assets, confirmation that military escorts are coordinated and competent for the task.
- Reviewing all crisis management contingencies including but not limited to the following:
 - Kidnap (for ransom or ideological purposes)
 - Medical emergency and evacuation cycle for northern area
 - Interdiction of road moves for personnel and any convoys
 - Loss of communications with remote locations - enhanced comms options, access to stores if replenishment is restricted or cut off.
 - Media and public affairs contingency
- Liaising with insurers to ensure appropriate cover is in place to meet speciality risks where needed.

Companies that rely on police escorts in the northern region of the country should ensure that travel patterns do not become predictable. Varying routes are difficult due to the limited road networks, as such, it is even more important to vary the types of vehicles that are used as well as to time the journeys and to avoid travel patterns becoming widely known. This is especially critical given the current tensions that are occurring along the Mali border and the impending ECOWAS operations. All companies that are linked to the World Bank/International Finance Cooperation should familiarise themselves with the IFC Voluntary Principles on the Use of Security Forces. This applies to military, police or private security services.

Finally, unconfirmed reports have suggested that there is an elevated banditry threat that exists on the main routes south and east of the town of Fada N'Gourma en route to Pama and Diapala respectively. Road moves to these areas should be risk assessed and liaison with police should occur until the nature of the threats have been clarified. Companies with operations in the region are invited to report incidents to MS Risk in order to aid in assessing the local atmospherics.

Domestic News:

- **23 January 2013** - Burkina Faso has reported that it has received an additional 1,829 refugees from Mali. Those in Burkina Faso are mainly ethnic Tuaregs and Songhai from the regions of Gao, Gossi, Bambara Maoude and Timbuktu. The new arrivals have been telling the United Nations Refugee agency that they have left their homes because of the French air strikes and fighting as well as rising fears over the application of Sharia law in Mali. They have also indicated that the increasing shortages of food and fuel, as traditional markets have been unable to operate, was another factor that motivated them to flee Mali. According to the UNHCR, some refugees are travelling by private car or by truck while others have arrived from Mali either on foot or by donkey. The UNHCR, along with its international partners, is continuing to assist those refugees who are in camps located in Burkina Faso, Niger and Mauritania. It is providing clean water, sanitation, and hygiene structures along with food, adequate shelter, health care and education. Burkina Faso has also set up vehicles which travel to and from the country's border with Mali in order to collect those refugees who are unable to walk. In total, Burkina Faso is currently hosting 38,776 Malian refugees. Internally, there are more than 229,000 people who have been displaced. They are mainly from Kidal, Timbuktu and Gao areas.



Avoid ALL
travel to part(s)
of country

MS RISK advises you to exercise a high degree of caution while in the country, this is due to political uncertainties. We also advise against all travel to the Bakassi Peninsula as well as within 20km of the border with Nigeria in the Ndian Division of the South West Province. We also advise against all travel to within 40km of the border with Chad in the North and Far North Provinces. This is due to a heightened risk of banditry and armed poachers in Bouba Ndjidda National Park in the North Province. There is currently a travel advisory north of Maroula in the Far North Province which is as a result of the heightened threat of armed banditry and other threats that are associated with the borders of Chad and Nigeria. We also advise against all but essential travel to within 40 km of the border with the Central African Republic. Incidents of armed banditry have been reported in this area. The Government of Cameroon is expected to cut fuel subsidies in the near future which may cause strikes and civil unrest to occur throughout the country. Finally there have been attacks on commercial shipping vessels in the Gulf of Guinea, including the coastline of Cameroon around the port of Douala. Vessels travelling throughout this area have been advised to exercise extreme caution.

On the Ground Events:

- 21 January 2013** - A man suspected of being a former member of Boko Haram, who sought refuge in northern Cameroon after renouncing the group's activities, has been killed in what appears to be an execution-style hit. According to reports, a hooded man on a motorcycle was seen riding through a neighbourhood in the town of Kousseri, where Alhaji Abangana was shot six times at close range during the afternoon hours on Saturday. An initial police investigation by authorities from Cameroon and Nigeria has indicated that the murder of Mr. Abangana may have been linked to his former ties with Boko Haram. According to one of the deceased's wives, Mr. Abangana had fled Gambarougara, in northern Nigeria, because he had been repeatedly threatened by members of Boko Haram. Although he lived in Kousseri, where he had set up shop and obtained Cameroonian nationality, Mr. Abangana had continued to be visited by Boko Haram's emissaries. In a letter that was addressed to the Cameroonian police, which was found at the deceased man's home, Mr. Abangana had indicated that Boko Haram members had continued to threaten his life. Police believe that he may have been unable to send the letter due to fear of the continued threats. So far, sources have indicated that the murdered man may have been threatened because he had obtained a vast amount of information pertaining to Boko Haram's operations and that the possibility of this information being forwarded to Nigerian security authorities may have resulted in his death. The town of Kousseri straddles the border with Nigeria and Chad, a border that is porous, with rising fears that in the last two years, it may have been infiltrated by members of Boko Haram. Locals in the area have reported that leaflets propagating the group's ideologies have been circulating in Kousseri. Furthermore, Christians living in the area have also confirmed that they have sometimes been threatened with death.

Avoid all but essential travel to part(s) of the country



Following the French military intervention in Mali, there is a possibility of retaliatory attacks targeting Western interests in the region. MS RISK advises against all but essential travel to the western regions of Dix-Huit Montagnes, Haut-Sassandra, Moyen-Cavally and Bas-Sassandra. All air, land and sea borders with Ghana have now re-opened following their closure on 22 September 2012. There have been a number of widely-reported shootings which occurred around Abidjan in August 2012. Although these attacks occurred mainly at night and targeted police and military installations, further incidents cannot be ruled out. Consequently the security situation in Abidjan could deteriorate at short notice.

Domestic News:

- 25 January 2013** - The President of Côte d'Ivoire, Alassane Ouattara, is scheduled to leave for Addis-Ababa on Friday in order to take part in the 20th African Union (AU) Summit of the heads of state and government. This year's summit, which is set to officially open over the weekend in the Ethiopian capital, will likely focus its attention on the current Malian crisis. Officials have indicated that the Côte d'Ivoire President, who is also the chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), will use the summit in order to appeal for a faster mobilization of the West African force, which is under the auspices of the International Support Mission for Mali (MISMA,) in order to support French and Malian forces in their war against the Islamist militants.



No restrictions
in this travel
advice

There currently are no travel restriction for Equatorial Guinea. However MS Risk advises to be alert and to take sensible personal security precautions. Roadblocks and unannounced identification checks are likely to occur. As such, you are advised to carry the appropriate form of identification (such as a passport or residence card) with you at all times.

Domestic News:

- 28 January 2013** - Equatorial Guinea has announced that the country will donate US \$500,000 (£318,000) in order to support the African forces in Mali. President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo announced that his country would be making the donation during the conclusions of the African Union Summit, which took place in Addis Ababa from January 26 to 28. In an interview with the media, President Obiang stated that “Equatorial Guinea has pledged support to the African forces in Mali with a financial contribution of US \$500,000. When an allied country suffers, we must support them and make a contribution.” He further stated that although his country would not be contributing any troops to the efforts that are focused on stabilizing Mali, he hopes that the international community will “recognize the contribution that we are offering to our allied African countries.” This is not the first time that the country has made such a large donation. Back in 2012, Equatorial Guinea donated US \$30 million to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in order to assist African countries that are plagued with food shortages and to also improve food security across the African continent. That same year, the country also sent a humanitarian aid shipment to the Republic of Congo. In 2011, the it donated 2 million Euros to Somali famine victims and contributed US \$500,000 to Japan following the Fukushima nuclear disaster. It also previously contributed to the earthquake-relief efforts in Haiti in 2010 and in Sichuan, China in 2008.
- 23 January 2013** - The country’s Prime Minister has announced that local and legislative elections will occur on 26 May of this year. These elections are set to be the first to take place since ninety-seven percent of voters approved a series of constitutional reforms during a November 2011 referendum. The reforms included placing a cap on the presidential terms and creating the job of vice-president. Voters will also be able to pick senators for the first time. However while the reforms have been seen as a positive step by many, the opposition has criticized the referendum, citing that it was a fraud and that it would only serve to enable long-serving President Teodoro Obiang Nguema to handpick his successor. The oil-rich African country, which has been lead by President Obiang since 1979, has been attempting for the past several years to distance itself from its international image of being a dictatorship.

No restrictions
in this travel
advice



Gambia

Although there are no restrictions on travel to Gambia, due to the French military intervention in Mali, there is a possibility of retaliatory attacks targeting Western interests in the region. MS Risk advises those who are in the country to remain vigilant at all times. There has been an increase in political tensions which may lead to announced demonstrations occurring in Banjul and in other regions of the country.

Domestic News:

- 22 January 2013** - Gambia's special crime court has sentenced the country's former police chief to ten years in prison after he was found guilty of drug trafficking, corruption and theft. Ensa Badjie is already in prison as he is serving a life term sentence for robbery alongside two former senior army officers for crimes they had committed in 2010. In his recent court case, Judge Emmanuel Nkea found him guilty of "abusing the authority of his office for the purpose of gain by collecting the sum of 3,150 euros from Edrissa Masade under the guise that the President of the Republic had given him and other prohibited drugs (cocaine) to sell for him." Over the years, Gambia has seen the arrest and jailing of senior military and police officers for crimes relating to treason, drug trafficking and corruption. In July 2010, eight of the country's top brass, including former army and intelligence chiefs, were sentenced to death for treason for an alleged bid to overthrow the government of current President Yahya Jammeh.
- 21 January 2013** - Gambia's President Yahya Jammeh has announced that public officials will now have a shortened work week in which they will only work four days a week. The new decree effectively makes Friday a day of rest that will allow residents in the small West African state to have more time for prayer and agriculture. In a statement that was released by his government, President Jammeh indicated that the decision was made in light of demands coming from the general public and that the shorter working week will take effect beginning on February 1. The President statement continued to state that "this new arrangement will allow Gambians to devote more time to prayers, social activities and agriculture, going back to the land to grow what we eat and eat what we grow for a healthy and wealthy nation.



No restrictions
in this travel
advice

Although there are currently no restrictions on travel to Ghana, the French military intervention in Mali has increased the possibility of retaliatory attacks occurring, such as the attack and kidnappings that have occurred in Algeria over the past few days. As such MS Risk advises to remain vigilant as such attacks will most likely target Western interests in the region. Preparations are currently underway for the Damba festival which occurs in northern Ghana. The festival is set to take place in late January/early February. More than 200 police personnel and soldiers have already been dispatched to the area in anticipation of any potential security issues. MS Risk advises those in the region to monitor the local media and to exercise caution when around large gatherings of people.

Domestic News:

- 23 January 2013** - Despite the fact that on Thursday, Ghana's Parliament is scheduled to begin the vetting of Cabinet nominees of President John Dramani Mahama, lawmakers representing the main opposition, the New Patriotic Party (NPP), have confirmed that they will be boycotting the process due to the party's ongoing challenge of the legality of President Mahama's election victory on 7 December 2012. Deputy Minority Leader Dominic Nitiwul has indicated that his colleagues in Parliament are supporting the NPP's petition to the Supreme Court which challenges Mahama's victory. Mr. Nitiwul indicated that "members of parliament will not participate in any deliberation or decision on matters, which would evaporate upon the cessation of President Mahama's administration." The NPP has accused Mahama's party of voting fraud and has called on the country's Supreme Court to overturn the results of the December elections. The opposition party indicated that it took action after gathering voter data from more than 26,000 polling stations across the country.

No restrictions
in this travel
advice



Guinea-Bissau

There are currently no travel restrictions in place for Guinea-Bissau. In April 2012, the country's armed forces staged a coup in the capital city of Bissau. Although the current security situation remains calm, the political situation can change unexpectedly. There remains to be an underlying threat from terrorism.

Domestic News:

- **21 January 2013** - Guinea-Bissau's Interim President Manuel Serifo Nhamadjo has stated that a general election, which was initially planned to occur in May of this year following a 12-month post-coup transition period, will be "impossible." President Nhamadjo's remarked that "it was planned at the end of the transition, there would be general elections in May 2013. That is impossible. Technically there are still a lot of things to do." He further indicated that the country's current situation had already been explained to regional leaders who had met during the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) meeting in Abidjan on Saturday. Since May 2012, Guinea-Bissau has been led by a transitional government, which took over after a coup that had occurred a month earlier which had interrupted presidential elections between the first and second rounds of voting. In December, the National Electoral Commission had estimated a revision of the electoral code and biometric registration and that 30 million euros (US \$39 million) were needed in order to hold credible elections. After the latest coup, many of Guinea-Bissau's partners have suspended aid to the chronically unstable nation. Since gaining its independence from Portugal in 1974, conflict between the army and the state has resulted in the fact that no president has ever completed a full term in office. Coups, counter-coups and assassinations have also made the state unstable and an attractive destination for South American druglords who are seeking to find a hub to move cocaine into Europe.



Avoid all but essential travel to part(s) of the country

There currently is a tense and unpredictably security environment in Liberia, and there is a risk of serious crime. Liberia is still in the process of recovering from a devastating civil war that ended in August 2003 and which left the country with little or no infrastructure. Although there is a large deployment of UN peacekeepers and police advisers in the country, the security situation remains unpredictable. There is a potential for unrest and violence is high due to the ongoing political and social tensions. There are large numbers of displaced people and armed groups in the areas bordering Cote d'Ivoire. This border area has been unstable in recent months as cross border attacks that occurred during the second half of 2012 have increased the risk to travellers. Consequently MS RISK advises against all but essential travel to the Grand Gedeh and River Gee counties in Liberia as well as any other counties where there have been reports of armed groups living in areas that border the Ivory Coast. We also advise against all night travel outside Monrovia, with the exception of the Roberts International Airport. There is currently a low level of threat from terrorism.

Domestic News:

- 1 February 2013** - British Prime Minister David Cameron is currently in Liberia in order to co-chair a high level United Nations meeting that will focus on tackling global poverty. The meeting will also be presided by Liberia's President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Mr. Cameron, who arrived in Monrovia late on Thursday, toured the capital city of the country, which is one of the world's most impoverished countries as it is slowly beginning to rebuild itself from a devastating civil war that ended a decade ago. During his tour, Mr. Cameron visited some schools before heading into the meeting with President Sirleaf and the third co-chair, Indonesian President Susil Bambang Yudhoyono. The high level panel was put together in July 2012 by UN Secretary General Bank Ki-moon. It was set up when he appointed 27 members to advise him on a development agenda beyond 2015, which is the deadline for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The eight anti-poverty goals that were outlined in 2000 aimed to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environment degradation and discrimination against women. Although certain countries have already achieved the goals that were set forth back in 2000, many, particularly in the most needy areas such as in sub-Saharan Africa, have made little progress over the course of the past decade. Liberia is one of those countries that has struggled. Although it has made gains in promoting gender equality, and combating AIDS, according to its 2010 MDG report, the country was unlikely to reach its goals pertaining to hunger, poverty, universal primary education and reductions in child mortality rates. The three leaders are due to hold a press conference on Friday afternoon in order to highlight their findings.
- 30 January 2013** - Liberia's Finance Minister Amara Konneh has indicated that the government does not have the required funds in order to contribute troops to the military intervention in Mali.

The Minister has indicated that although Liberia had pledged to send the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) to the peace keeping mission Mali, there was no allotment made in the budget for such an operation. However he has indicated that when the decision is made to send troops, the Liberian government will make the necessary deductions from other areas in order for the budget to be approved. Minister Konneh further indicated that currently, the government does not have “any number to share with you. We need to look at the budget when the decision is made because there is a cost to the deployment of our troop to Mali.” The news comes just one week after the Liberian Senate officially received a communication from President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, requesting that they concur with her decision in contributing troops from the AFL to the ECOWAS deployment in Mali (See *Below*). For his part, Defence Minister Brownie Samukai indicated that the AFL is capable, ready and willing to combat the military situation in that region of West Africa.

- **24 January 2013** - Liberia is joining eleven other countries which will share US \$100 million which has been provided by the United Nations humanitarian fund. The UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos, announced the allocation of the funds, which come from an emergency fund. She indicated that the funds are intended to boost operations in twelve poorly-funded crises, ranging from Afghanistan to Yemen. Amongst the twelve countries are Afghanistan, Algeria, Burundi, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Haiti, Liberia, Sudan, Uganda and Yemen. These countries have been selected by the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) in order to benefit on the basis of severity of humanitarian need and analysis of funding levels. Since 2006, US \$900 million worth of assistance has been supplied by CERF which in turn has been allocated to eighty-seven countries and territories that have faced natural disasters and other crises. Furthermore, a third of all the UN CERF funds annually target underfunded emergencies which help to improve the balance of global humanitarian aid distribution. The UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) enables the fast delivery of life-saving assistance to people that have been affected by natural disasters and other crises worldwide. It is funded by voluntary contributions from Member States, non-governmental organizations, regional governments, the private sector and individual donors.
- **22 January 2013** - Liberia's jailed ex-President Charles Taylor has commenced his appeal at a United Nations-backed special court in The Hague. The appeals stem from a verdict he received last May in which the Court had sentenced him to fifty years in prison for aiding and abetting rebels in neighbouring Sierra Leone during the 1991 - 2002 civil war. Although defence lawyers have called the verdict a “miscarriage of justice” and want the conviction to be withdrawn, the prosecution has indicated that it wants the sentence to be extended to eighty years, citing that Mr. Taylor was also giving order to the rebels. In the court's original judgement, Mr. Taylor was acquitted of these charges, with the judge finding that the prosecution had ultimately failed to prove its claims. Mr. Taylor's appeal starts a week after he reportedly addressed a letter to MP's in Liberia, demanding a presidential pension of US \$25,000 (£15,600). In the letter, he described that the withholding of his state presidential pension as a “mammoth injustice.”
- **21 January 2013** - Liberia's President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has disclosed that the Government of Liberia will contribute troops to the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA). The Liberian President indicated that the government's decision to send peacekeeping troops to Mali was due to what she called a showing of solidarity to the people of that West African country and to also show appreciation to Mali and all other countries and people who helped Liberia during its conflict years. The President further indicated that Liberia's offer to contribute troops to the Mali peace mission was warmly received by the ECOWAS and by the Malian population. Final details of the Liberian peacekeeping troops' departure are set to be finalized by the Liberian ministries of defence and foreign affairs along with other lined ministries and agencies. The last time that Liberia contributed troops towards any peacekeeping initiative was in the Congo during the 1960's.

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country



Mali

Travel Summary:

Currently, MS Risk advises against all travel to Mali. If however you remain in the country, we advise you to closely monitor the daily developments which are available in English through the BBC World Service (88.9 FM in Bamako). The Government of Mali declared a State of Emergency across the whole country which became effective from midnight on 12 January 2013. This effectively enables the government to take extraordinary

measures to deal with the crisis in the North and elsewhere. Although currently no curfew has been established, changes could be announced at any time. The Malian government has also placed severe restrictions on travel north of Segou towards the town of Mopti. Consequently, we advise everyone to monitor the local media for reports of any new measures. In view of the deteriorating security situation in Mali, MS Risk recommends that unless you have pressing reasons to remain, you should now leave the country by commercial means. Bamako International Airport remains open.



Currently there is a high threat from terrorism in Mali. Attacks could be indiscriminate, including in places that are frequented by expatriates and foreign travellers. There is also a high threat of kidnapping in Mali by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and by the splinter group, the

Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA). Although AQIM uses the northern region of Mali as an operating base, it has proven its capability of travelling long distances in order to carry out attacks, some of which have occurred in neighbouring countries. As such the kidnap threat cannot be isolated within the northern regional stronghold. In turn, criminal gangs have previously been engaged to carry out kidnappings for terrorist groups in return for financial rewards. Subsequently attacks can take place throughout Mali. In the past, a number of Westerners have been kidnapped by terrorists in Mali and in the Sahel region. Since 2008, over 25 Westerners have been kidnapped in the Sahel. Victims have included tourists, NGO workers and

diplomats of a variety of nationalities, primarily European. These attacks have on occasion resulted in the murder of the hostages. The recent kidnapping of a French citizen in the western region of the country has come as a shock as the area where he was taken has been perceived as being stable and under governmental control. In the past, kidnap threats have typically emanated from the Azawad region in the north and east part of the county, as such this incident in the west has caused great concern. MS Risk forecasts that there will be an increased and sustained kidnap threat across Mali and in certain border-regions for some time to come. Incidents of kidnap are likely to occur for three primary reasons:

- For Ransom - insurgents will raise finances for future operations. With the ECOWAS operation, this is accelerating as a concern.
- Human Shields - Insurgents will kidnap persons in order to deter/reduce the risk of direct action by governmental forces against them.
- Ideological - Kidnappings will occur for political purposes.

Since the coup in March 2012, and due to the ongoing political unrest, MS RISK judges that there is a continued heightened threat of kidnap for ransom in Mali and as such further attacks and kidnappings are highly likely to occur. Furthermore, although it is difficult to forecast how severe this threat will emerge, all affected organisations are recommended to review their current operations and contingencies which is in line with the previous advice which has been given. MS RISK currently advises against all travel to Mali.

MS RISK Guidance to Organisations in Mali:

With western diplomatic missions all warning against unnecessary travel to Mali, those companies with fixed interests in the country need to take measured precautions if they have not done so already. This is especially an issue for organisations with any interest in the so-called Azawad region - that portion of the country which is under insurgent control. Preparations should include the following:

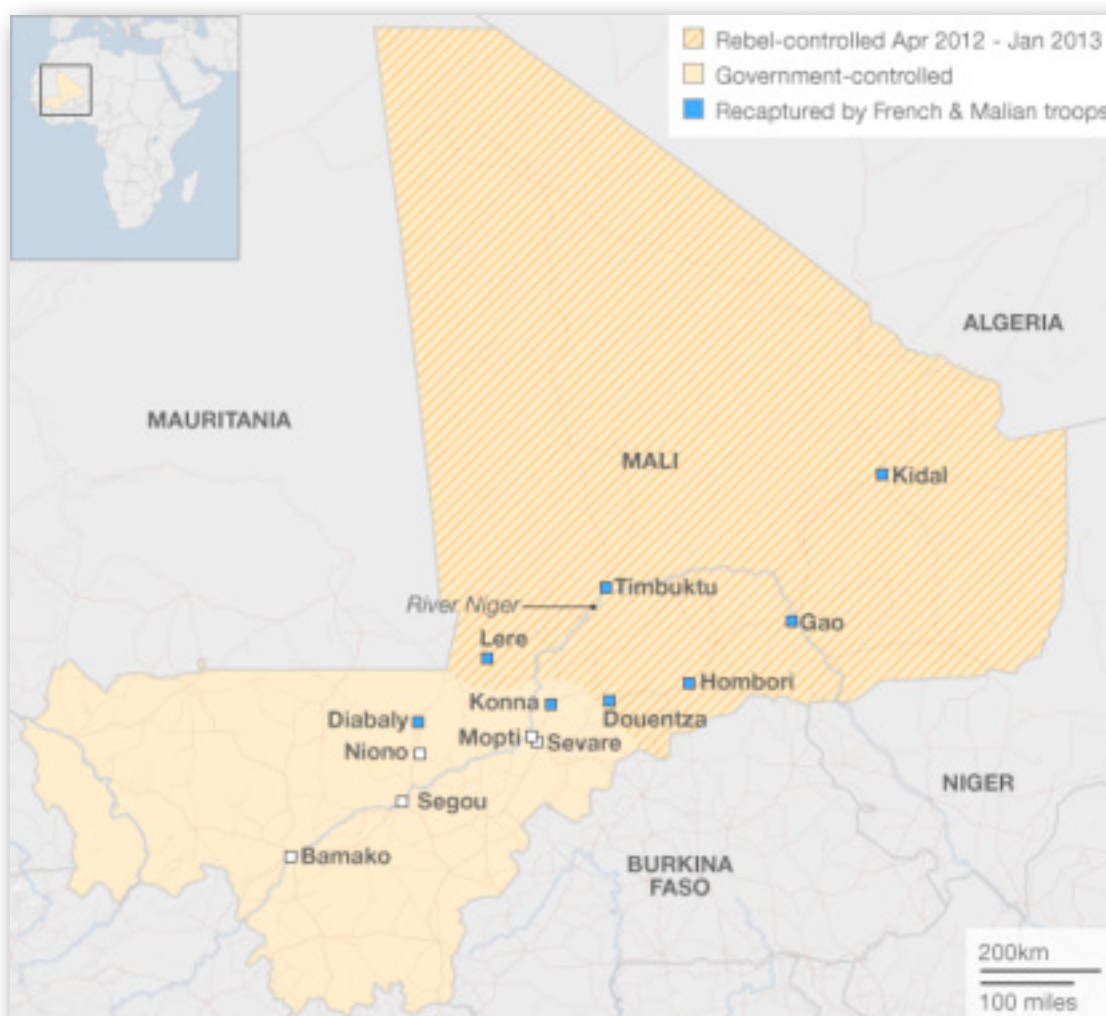
- Thinning out non-essential staff and dependents
- Restricting expat and local national internal travel
- Seeking advice from the security forces
- Ensuring journey management systems are in place and work
- Reviewing crisis management contingencies and carrying out exercises of these plans
- Registration of expatriates with relevant diplomatic missions and seeking advice on what support will be forthcoming (if any) if conditions deteriorate
- Liaison with insurers to know any exclusions or limits to existing cover

The most extreme risks will be in the Azawad region. There is expected to be military clashes there between the various insurgent groupings against the ECOWAS-bolstered Mali army force in line with the UN Security Council authorization to use force. Despite the obvious threats in the Azawad, organisations in Mali should be braced for nuisance attacks and isolated terrorist attacks in the capital of Bamako. When al-Shabaab was weakened in Somalia, these types of attacks were experienced in Uganda and Kenya. Although the two conflicts are not connected, it is logical to predict that similar tactics may evolve and be witnessed in Mali and inside contributing nations.

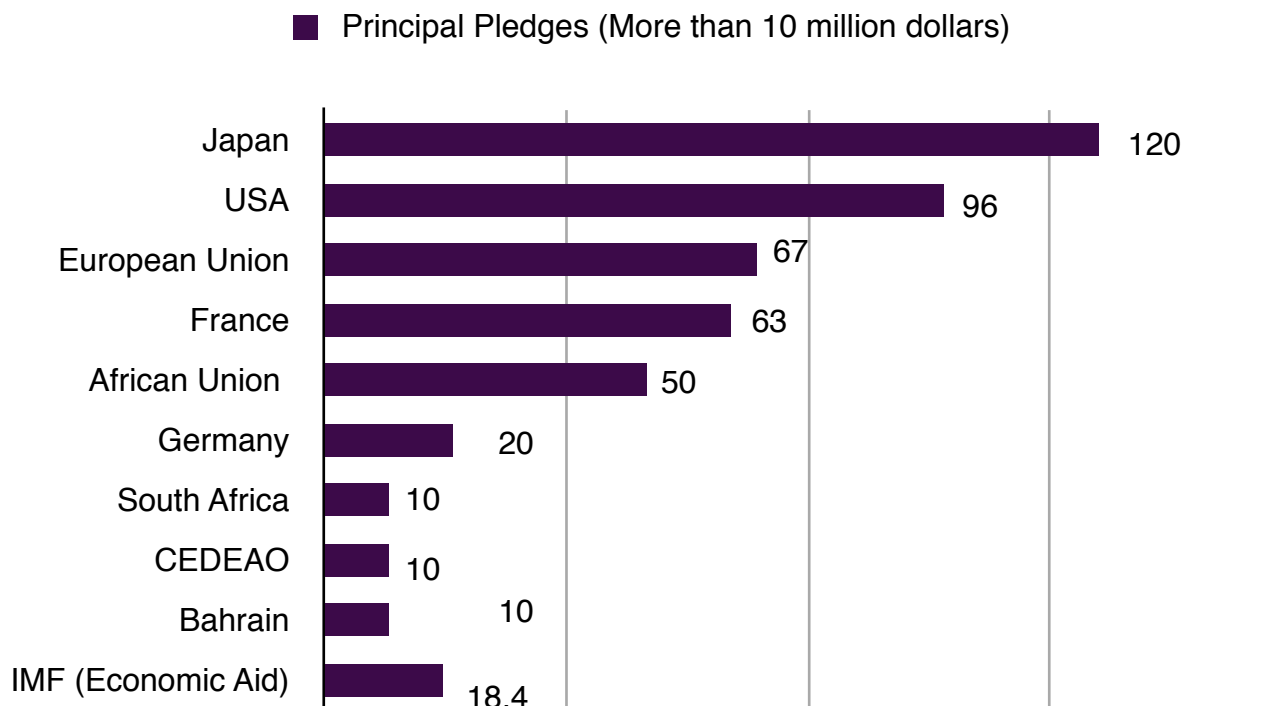
Breakdown of the Mali Intervention:

- **22 January** - Chadian troops stationed in Niger move towards the Malian border. The forces are advancing north from the capital Niamey on the road to Ouallam, some 100 km (60 miles) from the border, where a number of Niger's troops are already stationed. Niger's armed forces, along with troops from Chad, are expected to advance towards the rebel-held north Malian city of Gao.

- **25 January** - French-backed government forces advance into northern Mali, towards the Islamist rebel stronghold of Gao. Forces recaptured the town of Hombori. Meanwhile, during an annual summit held in Addis Ababa, African Union leaders called on the United Nations to provide emergency logistics that would allow the nearly 6,000-strong African ground forces to deploy fully in Mali.
- **26 January** - French-led troops in Mali have taken control of the northern city of Gao. Islamist extremists based in the Malian town of Ansongo destroyed a bridge located near the Niger border. This marks the first time that explosives were used by the insurgents since the French-led military intervention began two weeks ago.
- **28 January** - French and Malian forces take control of the airport in the ancient city of Timbuktu.
- **30 January** - French military confirms that it has seized the airport in Kidal which enabled French troops to gain control of a major access point into the town.
- **31 January** - French troops are securing the town of Kidal, which is the last major town to be recaptured from Islamists militants. French military spokesman Col. Thierry Burkhard indicates that 1,400 troops from Chad are heading towards Kidal from border of Niger. Malian government announces that elections will be held by July of this year.
- **1 February 2013** - French President François Hollande announces that he will be in Mali on an official visit where he will travel to Bamako and Timbuktu. He is also set to hold talks with interim president Dioncounda Traore



Breakdown of the Numbers:



On The Ground Events:

- **3 February 2013** - Official sources in Paris have indicated that the French military carried out major air strikes on Sunday near the town of Kidal. An army spokesman indicated that thirty warplanes has bombed training and logistics centres that were run by Islamist extremists. They were bombed overnight in the area of Tessalit, which is just north of Kidal. The area is also located near the Algerian border. Residents in Kidal have stated that French and Chadian troops were seen patrolling the northeastern town on Saturday. French and Malian troops are continuing to secure the town.

- **2 February 2013** - France's President has begun his official visit in Mali, just three weeks after his country launched an offensive to recapture the northern region from the Islamist rebels. Mr. Hollande flew into the central town of Ségou on Saturday morning. He is accompanied by his



ministers of defence, foreign affairs, and developments. He was met by Mali's interim President Dioncounda Traoré. The delegation then flew to Timbuktu, which was recaptured six days ago. The French President is also expected to thank his country's troops as well as stress the need for an African force to replace them swiftly. Meanwhile, the United Nations has warned that reprisal attacks against the Tuareg and Arab communities located in northern Mali may occur. Adama Dieng, the UN special adviser on the prevention of genocide, has

stated that there have been serious allegations of human rights violations that have been committed by the Malian army. They include allegations of summary executions and disappearances.

- During his first official visit to Mali, Mr. Hollande announced that his government will help rebuild Mali. During a speech in the capital city of Bamako, the French President pledged that more French aid would be sent to the former colony. Mr. Hollande also vowed to restore the cultural sites which were damaged by the rebels when they were fleeing some of the towns.
- **1 February 2013** - Three weeks after French air strikes began to target Islamist militants in Mali, French President François Hollande has announced that he will be visiting the country. The President's office in Paris has confirmed that Mr. Hollande will be flying into Bamako where he will meet interim President Dioncounda Traore. The President will be arriving in the country on Saturday and will be accompanied by Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian along with Development Minister Pascal Canin. The official visit comes at a time when French troops are continuing to secure the town of Kidal, which was the last remaining rebel stronghold that was captured this week. The President will also be visiting Timbuktu, which was recently seized from the Islamist rebels by French and Malian troops. The French President's next objective will be to prepare the hand over of the towns that have been captured by the French-led troops. They will be handed over to the African force which has already begun to deploy to Mali. This in turn, will create enough stability in order to facilitate new elections which are set to occur by July of this year. So far, there are 2,000 African soldiers, mainly coming from Chad and Niger, on the ground in Mali.
- **31 January 2013** - A senior diplomat has indicated that the United Nations Security Council will consider plans to deploy a new UN Peacekeeping force to Mali which would help with security and stabilizing the country after France's military intervention concludes. The Security Council is currently set to discuss a regular UN peacekeeping force in Mali. Although the plans are in the early stages of discussion, it is believed that a force of 3,000 - 5,000 peacekeepers would be sent to Mali. Although no further information has been provided, French Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian stated that such a UN peacekeeping force would be a positive development.
- **29 January 2013** - The UK's Defence Secretary, Phillip Hammond has confirmed that Britain will be sending troops to Mali. Although a statement released by Downing Street indicated that there currently were no plans for British troops to take on a combat role in the military intervention, up to 40 British personnel could be deployed inside Mali itself, with an additional 200 poised to train troops from other African countries. Currently, the UK has some 70 personnel already in the region, operating a Sentinel spyplane, while 20 RAF crew members are staffing a transport plane that is carrying equipment from France to Mali. The statement also offered a roll-on, roll-off ferry that would ship French equipment to Mali by sea.



Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

Avoid all but essential travel to part(s) of the

Travel Summary:

MS Risk advises against all travel to the eastern and northern provinces of the country - specifically to Tiris Zemmour, Adrar, Tagant and Hodh el Chargui. This is due to the continuing high threat from terrorism. We also advise against all travel to the western provinces of Dakhlet-Nouadhibou and Inchiri. This includes the road from the port of Nouadhibou to Nouakchott. We advise against all but essential travel to the rest of the country.



Following the French military intervention which began in Mali last week, There is a heightened possibility of retaliatory attacks that will target Western interests in the region. Consequently we advise vigilance.

Given its geographic positioning, as the country that shares a 2,300km border with Mali, Mauritania has been one of the country that has suffered greatly due to the impact of the counter-offensive that has been conducted in Mali over the past several weeks. Over the last several centuries, those communities who have been living on the borders of the two countries have cultivated economic, religious and cultural relations, which in part have facilitated the ease of movement of armed Islamists from one side of the border to the other over the last several years.

In turn, the presence of militant groups, such as al-

Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) or Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), has also considerably affected the country over the past several years. Mauritania has bared witness to a number of terrorist attacks. In turn, the Mauritanian army has been targeted in terrorist attacks which have left several soldiers dead in the northern regions of Lemgheitty, Ghalouiya and Tourine. Similarly, these terrorist groups have also carried out a number of abductions of Western nationals within Mauritania's territories. Since then, these attacks and abductions have had a disastrous impact on the country. Faced with this growing situation, in 2010 authorities in Mauritania implemented a new strategy in order to ward-off these terrorist threats. The strategy was based on preventive strikes that would mostly take place on Malian territory and which would work in order to keep danger out of Mauritania. These preventive strikes were carried out by special anti-terrorism units which were trained by Mauritania's partner states including France, the United States, Spain and Britain. These measures

have greatly helped in stopping the activities of terrorist groups within Mauritania. However for its neighbour, the terrorists groups continued to operating within the northern regions of Mali. The crisis in Libya only worsened the situation as it effectively enabled the terrorist groups to acquire heavy weapons which would then be used to aid the capture of towns in northern Mali. Today however the situation has greatly evolved, in part due to operation Serval which has brought together the Malian and French forces in their bid to stop the advancement of rebels towards the southern region of Mali. Following the French offensive, authorities in Mauritania ruled out the possibility of the country participating in the war however they did promise that they would ensure the protection of its borders, a position which appears to be similar to that of Algeria.

- **29 January 2013** - Reports have indicated that over the past 24 hours, three suspected Islamic terrorists have been arrested by regional security services in Brakna, which is located 250km south-east of the capital of Nouakchott. Sources are citing that the three are suspected to be members of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and that they most likely fled the ongoing fighting that is currently taking place in Mali. They have been taken to Nouakchott for further questioning however no other information has been released so far. Mali's neighbouring countries, including Mauritania and Senegal have all been put on an alert to guard the borders and to prevent those terrorists who have been ousted from northern Mali by the ongoing French military intervention. Authorities in Mauritania have taken all the security arrangements necessary in order to deal with the situation and they have called on the citizens of the country to remain extremely vigilant.
- **23 January 2013** - Reports have indicated that at least 150,000 Malians have fled into the neighbouring countries of Mauritania and Niger since France launched its military intervention in Mali two weeks ago. In Mauritania, 4,208 Malian refugees have arrived since the latest fighting began on January 11. After having been registered at the Fassala transit centre, they will be transported further inland to Mbera Refugee Camp which already houses some 55,000 people who had arrived earlier. Meanwhile in Niger, an estimated 1,300 new refugees, mainly from the areas of Menaka and Anderamboukane, have been registered. Burkina Faso has also reported that it has received 1,829 refugees. Those in Burkina Faso are mainly ethnic Tuaregs and Songhai from the regions of Gao, Gossi, Bambara Maoude and Timbuktu. The new arrivals in these countries have been telling the United Nations Refugee agency that they have left their homes because of the French air strikes and fighting as well as rising fears over the application of Sharia law in Mali. They have also indicated that the increasing shortages of food and fuel, as traditional markets have been unable to operate, was another factor that motivated them to flee Mali. According to the UNHCR, some refugees are travelling by private car or by truck while others have arrived from Mali either on foot or by donkey. Furthermore, many newly arrived refugees are expecting additional members of their families who will join them in the next few days. The UNHCR, along with its international partners, is continuing to assist those refugees who are in camps located in Burkina Faso, Niger and Mauritania. It is providing clean water, sanitation, and hygiene structures along with food, adequate shelter, health care and education. Burkina Faso has also set up vehicles which travel to and from the country's border with Mali in order to collect those refugees who are unable to walk. In total, Burkina Faso is currently hosting 38,776 Malian refugees. Internally, there are more than 229,000 people who have been displaced. They are mainly from Kidal, Timbuktu and Gao areas.
- **21 January 2013** - Three parties in Mauritania's ruling coalition have called on the government to send troops to neighbouring Mali in order to help recapture the north from armed Islamist groups. Although Mauritania's President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz indicated back in November that his country would "never enter this war," three key partners - two parties known as the Movement for Renewal and Democratic Renewal, along with former Prime Minister Yahya Ould Ahmed El Waghef's Abdel Party - have called on the country to join the UN-approved military intervention force in Mali. The three parties further indicated that they have welcomed what they termed the "courageous intervention" by both the regional countries and international community in helping save Mali's "territorial integrity and chase out terrorists and drug traffickers from the region." In a statement that was issued by the three parties, it was noted that Mauritania must support "its

brother neighbour Mali and the other countries of the region” by giving its full support to efforts to “eradicate terrorism.” However President Abdel Aziz, whose country has also been a target for attacks by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AAQIM), continues to be hesitant with regards to getting directly involved. However he did specify that if Mauritania was attacked, it would protect its borders and respond by entering Mali. In 2010 and 2011, Mauritania launched preventative raids on Malian territory which focused on bases of known AQIM fighters. Last week, Mauritania deployed troops to seal its border with Mali. It has also increased its surveillance flights to limit movement in the zone.

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

Avoid all but essential travel to part(s) of the country



Travel Summary:

MS Risk advises against all travel to the following parts of Niger: all areas of the country north of the city of Abalak, including the Air Massif region; the province of Agadez (including the road linking Assamakato Agadez and the city of Agadez); areas of Tahoua province, north of the city of Tahoua, including the city itself; the area of

Tillabéri province north of Niamey, including the road from Niamey to Gao and the road from Niamey to Menaka. We advise against all but essential travel to the rest of Niger, including the capital city of Niamey.



Due to the French military intervention in Mali, there is a possibility of retaliatory attacks that may target Western interests in the region. We advise vigilance. There is a high threat of terrorism occurring throughout the country. Attacks could be indiscriminate and can occur in places that are frequented by expatriates and foreign travellers. Terrorists have also been involved in kidnaps in the region and MS Risk believes that further kidnap attacks, such as the ones that occurred in Algeria over the past few days, are likely.

All companies that are currently operating in the north and north-west regions of the country should be aware of the increased security threats. Companies attempting road moves should coordinate them with local authorities. MS Risk does not recommend unescorted road moves east of Tahoua. There have been several military escorts operating from Tahoua to the north and north-eastern regions of the country which companies should liaise with for increased protection.

Domestic News:

- **30 January 2013** - Officials in Niger have indicated that the country is ready to host a base for drones from the United States which will monitor the movements of al-Qaeda-linked groups that are currently based in Northern Mali. Defence Minister Karidjo Mahamadou indicated that “if Niger has an opportunity to receive support in the shape of aircraft or drones to monitor suspicious movements from Mali, we will not turn our nose up at it.” However the Minister did stipulate that currently, he was not aware of any formal deal that would allow the deployment of US drones on Niger’s soil. Niger’s announcement comes just days after a US official on Monday indicated that the Pentagon was planning to station drones in the region, most likely in Niger, which would help bolster the surveillance of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and its allies. This announcement stems from Washington’s fears that AQIM, which is one of the groups that seized control of northern Mali 10 months ago, is expanding its ambit in the region and that it would eventually turn into a global security threat. Increasing security threats and movement of Islamist militants further southward sparked France to launch a military operation in its former colony in January. French and Malian troops have already recaptured the north’s main cities and France is currently hoping to hand over the military intervention to a multinational African force which has yet to be fully deployed. Throughout the intervention, the US has provided transport planes to help carry French weapons and troops to Mali. They have also offered to share intelligence with Paris which has been provided from surveillance aircraft, including reportedly unmanned Global Hawk spy planes. On Monday, The United States and Niger sighted a status of forces agreement which effective will provide the US with the legal safeguards to place any American forces in the country. The Pentagon secured such an agreement for base arrangements or troops deployments. AQIM fighters have been crossing northern Mali’s desert borders with Mauritania, Algeria and Niger with ease in order to run what is believed to be a lucrative drug and migrant smuggling operation to Europe. AQIM’s fighters are well-trained, have abundant weaponry and hold several Western hostages, however they are heavily reliant on fuel for their movements in the vast Sahelian expanse.
- **25 January 2013** - France has confirmed that amidst a heightened security threat following the French military intervention in Mali, it will send special forces to protect nuclear giant Areva’s uranium mines located in Niger. Authorities have indicated that France is to deploy special forces that will protect the uranium mines which belong to French nuclear energy Areva. French Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian has given the go-ahead for an elite team from France’s armed forces to reinforce local security at the company’s two sites in Niger, Imouraren and Arlit. The move comes amidst increasing security threats following France’s offensive in Mali and the deadly hostage crises that occurred at the Ain Amenas gas facility in Algeria, where militants indicated that they had taken revenge for the French military intervention. Furthermore, a 2010 kidnapping incident, in which seven workers, including five French nationals, were abducted in Arlit by militants who were linked to al-Qaeda’s North African Branch, is likely to have been a contributing factor to the recent deployment of special forces to the two sites. Although three of the hostages were later released in February 2011 after negotiations, four French citizens are still being held. Areva, which relies on mines in Niger in order to supply France’s nuclear power stations with uranium, confirmed on Thursday that it was increasing its security however no comments pertaining to the involvement of French special forces were provided. In turn, while officials in Niger have confirmed that the security threat in the country has been elevated, they indicated that at the moment no agreement had been reached for special forces to be deployed to the site. Although this is the first time that government troops will be sent overseas in order to protect a facility that is owned by a private French company, French marines have already been deployed on cargo ships that travel through the pirate-infested waters of the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Guinea. At home, France has also enhanced its security by increasing the police and army presence at government buildings, prominent tourist sites, and metro and railway stations. Armed French soldiers in uniform are patrolling inside the metro, riding

trains and watching main streets such as the Champs-Élysées. Security has also been tightened around President François Hollande.



Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

Avoid all but essential travel to part(s) of the country

Travel Summary:

MS Risk advises against all travel to: Borno State; Yobe State; Riverine areas of Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa Ibom and Cross River States; Warri City; and Kano City. We advise against all but essential travel to: Bauchi State; Jos City, Riyom and Barkin Ladi Local Government Areas in Plateau State; Gombe State; Mubi Town in Adamawa State and the area north of Mubi Town that borders Borno State; non-riverine areas of Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers and Akwa Ibom States; Abia State; Kaduna City; and Zaria City.

Following the French military intervention in Mali, there is a heightened possibility of retaliatory attacks targeting Western interests in the region, especially with the fact that Nigeria will be leading the African forces. It is therefore likely that militants from Mali may cross into Nigeria in order to carry out attacks and suicide bombings. Similarly, militants of Boko Haram may increase their attacks on Christian places of worship, as well as other sites, in protest of the intervention in Mali. France has advised its citizen to leave the northern regions of the country as well as the areas surrounding the capital of Abuja. This is due to threats relating to the military intervention in Mali. French diplomatic sources have indicated that the threat of kidnappings, coupled with Nigeria's support for France's actions in Mali, has raised the risks for French nationals.



There is a high threat of terrorism occurring in Nigeria. Attacks could be indiscriminate, including government, security and educational institutions, international organisations as well as public venues and areas such as restaurants, bars, markets, hotels, shopping centers, places of worship and other areas that are frequented by expatriates, foreign tourists and business travelers. Terrorist attacks have been known to occur on religious and public holidays. There have been regular attacks on churches in northern Nigeria at times of worship. The US government has published an Emergency Message for US citizens, detailing information that Boko Haram may be planning attacks in Abuja. This information has been assessed as being credible and attacks could occur at any time, including against international hotels that are frequently visited by Westerners. There is also an increased level of kidnap threat in Nigeria in which foreign nationals have typically been the targets of such kidnaps. MS RISK advises against all travel to Borno State; Yobe State; the Riverine areas of Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa Ibom, and Cross River States; Warri city and Kano city. We advise against all but essential travel to Bauchi State; Jos city; Riyom and Barkin Ladi Local Government areas in plateau State; Gombe State; Mubi Town in Adamawa State and the area north of Mubi Town which borders Borno State; non-riverine areas of Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers and Akwa Ibom States; Abia State; Kaduna City; and Zaria City.

At Sea:

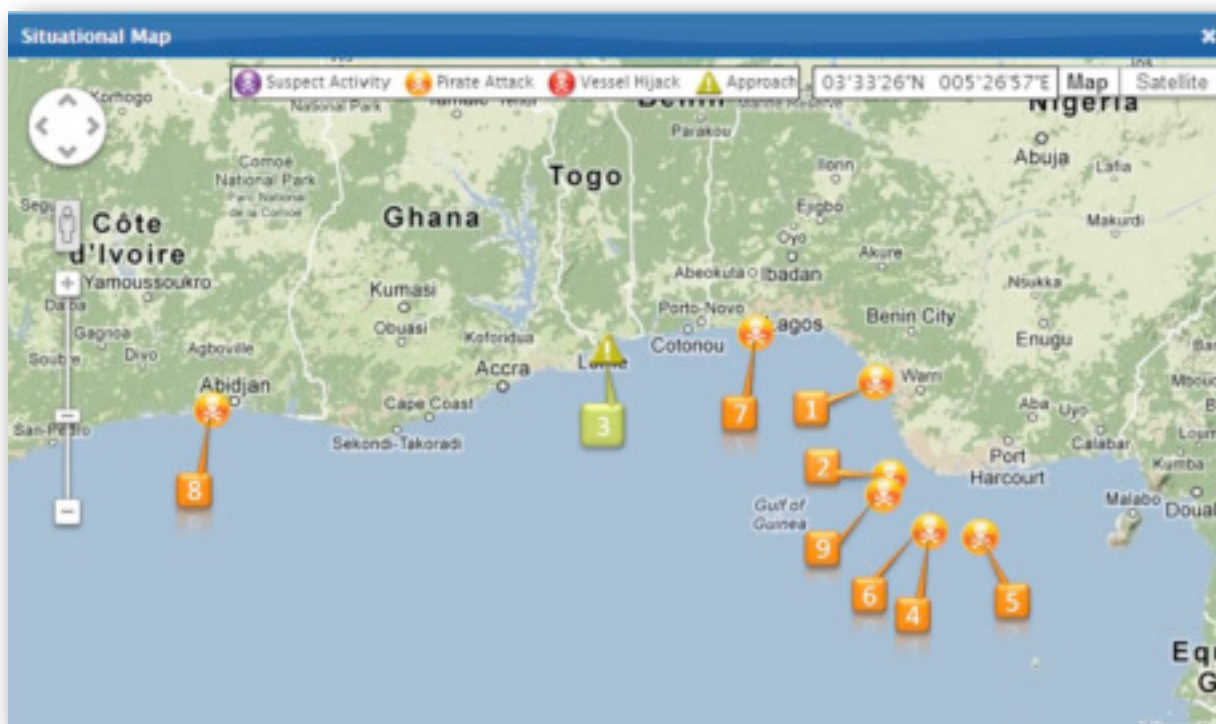
Special Report: Piracy Incidents – December 2012

Summary - The Gulf of Guinea reported eight attacks during the month of December however it must be noted that under-reporting in the region continues to prevail. There is also a rising concern relating to the number of kidnapping incidents that have occurred during three attacks. Reports have indicated that at least twelve people have been taken hostage, not including the six people from Hyundai Heavy who were released following a ransom payment.

West Africa

Serial	Date	Vessel Name	Flag/Type	Location/Type of Incident
1	9 December	Gertrude	Rig Spt Vessel	SW of Ajapa Oil Field, Nigeria
2	10 December	PM Salem	Honduras/OSV	SW offshore Bayelsa, Nigeria/Attack
3	11 December	Faouet	Luxembourg/Product Tanker	Approach - Lome anchorage, Togo/2 approaches
4	17 December	WAO Brass	Nigeria/Crew Boat	SSW of Cape Formoso, Nigeria/Attack - 3 kidnapped
5	17 December	SP Brussels	Marshall Island/Chemical Tanker	Off Pennington terminal, Nigeria/Attack - 5 kidnapped
6	17 December	Janice 1	Supply ship	SSW of Cape Formoso, Nigeria/Attack
7	21 December	Manon	Malta/Tanker	Lagos anchorage, Nigeria/Attempt

Serial	Date	Vessel Name	Flag/Type	Location/Type of Incident
8	23 December	Madonna 1	Panama/ Chemical	Abidjan anchorage, Ivory Coast/Boarded, Attempted hijacking, crew assaulted
9	23 December	Asso Ventuno	Italy/OS Tug	Off Bayelsa, Nigeria/Attack - 4 kidnapped



On the Ground Events:

- 1 February 2013** - Nigeria's military indicated on Friday that it had killed seventeen insurgents in raids that had targeted two "terrorist camps" in the northeastern state of Borno, which is known to be a base for Boko Haram. According to a statement from spokesman Lt. Col. Sagir Musa, the military "conducted two special operations supported by Nigerian Airforce helicopter gunship to dislodge Boko Haram terrorist camps." The statement went on to indicated that "efforts by the JTL (Joint Task Force) to destroy the camps led to a fierce exchange of fire that resulted in the death of 17 Boko Haram terrorists and one JTF personnel was killed." Although the Nigerian military has frequently commented on insurgent safe houses located in urban settings throughout the country, the statement that was issued on Friday is the first recent confirmation of a Boko Haram training camp or base. In the statement, Musa also claimed that the insurgents had been using territory in the Sambisa Game Reserve and in an area known as the Ruwa Forest and that the "camp was ...fortified and had training facilities." Since 2009, Boko Haram has been blamed for the killing



of hundreds. The group has also stated that they are fighting to create an Islamic state in the northern region of Nigeria, which is mainly Muslim.

- **31 January 2013** - Authorities in Nigeria have said that over the past few days, at least five police officers have been killed in separate attacks that occurred in the northern region of the country. Late on Wednesday, gunmen raided Birnin-Gwari in Kaduna state. They attacked a police station and used explosives to enter two banks in the area. Kaduna state police spokesman Aminu Lawan confirmed on Thursday that three police officers had been killed during the attack. Meanwhile in Gombe state, which is located in Nigeria's northeast, police have indicated that gunmen suspected of being members of Boko Haram killed two officers at a checkpoint during the early morning hours on Thursday.
- **25 January 2013** - The Nigerian government has indicated that some members of Boko Haram were trained in northern Mali and that they are believed to have links with those Islamist insurgents who are controlling the region. Foreign Minister Olugbeng Ashiru stated in an interview that Nigeria had sent troops to help expel Islamist militants in northern Mali as part of the country's own fight against Boko Haram, "because we know that there was a linkage between them and the groups in Mali." The Foreign Minister went on to state that "some of the characters were trained in northern Mali...so if we can destroy their capability in northern Mali, it will help us at home. Nigeria, which is Africa's most populous nation, is currently battling an ongoing insurgency by Boko Haram which has killed hundreds of people since 2009. The group's goal is to establish an Islamic state in Nigeria and it has carried out bomb and gun attacks in the mainly Muslim north as well as in the capital city of Abuja. Since the French intervention in Mali, Nigeria has sent 1,200 troops to join French, Malian and other west African soldiers.



- **22 January 2013** - Suspected Boko Haram Islamists have been blamed for the deaths of at least twenty-three people in an attack that took place in Borno State, in north-eastern Nigeria. This attack comes just one day after witnesses reported that gunmen apparently targeted hunters who were selling bush meat in Damboa on Monday. According to local government official Abba Ahmed, militants specifically targeted those hunters who were selling meat from animals such as pigs and monkeys. The reasoning behind the attack is

due to the fact that strict Muslims are forbidden to eat this type of bush meat. That attack resulted in the deaths of thirteen local hunters while another five died of their injuries in hospital. The town of Damboa, which is located near the capital of Borno State, Maiduguri, is a stronghold of Boko Haram, where the militant group was founded in 2002. In a separate attack in Kano, the main city in northern Nigeria, which is located 500km (310 miles) west of Damboa, five people were killed when a group of men riding motorbikes opened fire on a group of men playing draughts. Gambling is also strictly forbidden under Islamic Law. Since 2010, Boko Haram has been blamed for the deaths of some 1,400 people in both central and northern Nigeria. In 2012 alone, the group was linked to over 600 deaths.

Domestic News:

- **25 January 2013** - A Nigerian court has sentenced a man who has been convicted with the twin bombings in Abuja, near the independence day commemorations in 2010 which resulted in the death of twelve people. Edmund Ebiware was accused of having the knowledge of the planned attack beforehand and failing to report it. He has been sentenced to life in prison just days after the alleged mastermind, Henry Okah, was convicted



on terrorism charges in South Africa. Ebiware will be eligible for parole after thirty-two years in prison. The 2010 bombings occurred just a short distance away from where foreign heads of state and dignitaries had gathered for celebrations which marked the fifty years of Nigerian independence. Henry Okah was accused of being a key figure in MEND, which is the most prominent militant group in the oil-producing Niger Delta region. Okah faces a minimum term of life in prison when the court sentences him by 1 February. Three other suspects were also charged in Nigeria over the bombing, including Henry Okah's brother Charles Okah, who along with a third suspect, are awaiting trial. A fourth suspected died in prison.

International Developments:

- **21 January 2013** - A court in South Africa has convicted Nigerian militant Henry Okah of masterminding a car bombing in 2010 which killed twelve people. The Johannesburg High Court Judge Neels Claassen convicted Mr. Okah of thirteen counts relating to the acts of terrorism, which ranged from conspiracy to committing terrorism to detonating explosives. Mr. Okah had been arrested in Johannesburg just one day after the two car bombs had exploded during the 50th anniversary of Nigeria's independence. However he has since denied the charges despite the fact that militant group Mend has indicated that he had carried out the attack. Mr. Okah has also denied being the leader of Mend. Although he had been previously arrested on gun-running charges in Angola back in 2007, and subsequently transferred to Nigeria, he was never convicted. Instead, he was released after two years under an amnesty for oil militants. He later returned to South Africa where he has been living since 2003.



No restrictions
in this travel
advice



Senegal

Although there are currently no travel restrictions for Senegal, the French military intervention in Mali has increased the possibility of retaliatory attacks that may target Western interests in the region. Consequently, MS Risk advises to remain vigilant. The Casamance region in south-western Senegal remains to be affected by incidents involving presumed separatist groups and by incidents of banditry. As such, we advise against road travel in the Casamance region to the west of Kolda, other than on the main road from Ziguinchor to Cap Skirring, which is often used by groups of tourists and on the main road north of the Guinea-Bissau/Senegal border, from Sao Domingos to Ziguinchor. There also remains to be an underlying threat from terrorism. Attacks could be indiscriminate, including in places that are frequented by expatriates and foreign travellers.

Domestic News:

- 27 January 2013** - Senegalese President Macky Sall indicated on Saturday that his country is unable to send more troops to Mali at the moment due to the fact that a number of Senegal servicemen are away on peacekeeping missions in various regions of the continent. The president indicated to the media that "more than 800 of our men are in Côte d'Ivoire. We are in Guinea-Bissau. We are in the Democratic Republic of Congo. We are in Sudan, We will be in Mali. And we cannot do more since we also have internal security requirements and our military cannot be everywhere." President Sall, who arrived in Addis-Ababa for the 20th Summit of the African Union (AU), had earlier pledged 500 troops for the international mission in Mali. The first 60 Senegalese soldiers arrived in Mali on 20 January. In speaking at the summit in regards to the situation in Mali, President Sall indicated that "the Mali issue highlights the problem of security and defence in Africa. This is certainly a topic that heads of state will discuss so that Africa could give herself the means of self-defence against the disasters such as what we have seen in Mali." Proposals, such as the one in 2010 which proposed the establishment of an African Standby Forces (ASF) which would effectively put African countries on a better footing in case a security threat does arise, were put forth by several African leaders however no movements towards its establishment have been made.



No restrictions
in this travel
advice

Currently there are no travel restrictions for Sierra Leone. There is a low threat from terrorism.

Domestic News:

- 23 January 2013** - Prosecutors on Wednesday indicated that Sierra Leone's rebels had depended on logistics that were provided by Liberian ex-president Charles Taylor to kill, rape and mutilate thousands during the nation's civil war. Nicholas Koumjian indicated to Sierra Leone's UN-backed special court, where the former (RUF) warlord is appealing a 50-year prison sentence, that the Revolutionary United Front had "relied on Taylor's logistical assistance." Furthermore, during the second day of the appeals hearing, which is being held at the court's headquarters at The Hague, Mr. Koumjian stipulated that "without his support, thousands would not have been killed, would not have been amputated..." However lawyers for Mr. Taylor argued on Tuesday that he could not have been linked to the weapons that had been used by rebels to commit any crimes in Sierra Leone. They indicated that the the court had made legal mistakes in convicting the former President. They also requested that the judges reverse the conviction and withdraw the sentence. Prosecutors however are arguing that Taylor's sentence was too light and that it should be raised to 80 years. In April of last year, the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) convicted Taylor, 64, for aiding and abetting the RUF and its allies which waged a terror campaign during a civil war that claimed 120,000 lives between 1991 and 2001. His sentence for "some of the most heinous crimes in human history," was widely welcomed around the world. It was also the first sentence to be handed down by an international court against a former head of state since the 1946 Nazi Nuremberg trials. During the court case, judges found that s neighbouring Liberia's president from 1997 to 2003, Taylor gave the rebels guns and ammunition in order to fight against Freetown during the conflict. In return, trial judges found that Taylor had been paid in "blood diamonds" which were mined by slave labour in areas that were kept under the control of ruthless Sierra Leonean rebels. If Taylor's appeals fail, he will serve his sentence out in a British jail.

No restrictions
in this travel
advice



Togo

Although there currently are no travel restrictions for Togo, MS Risk advises to remain vigilant as there is a low threat from terrorism. Consequently, indiscriminate acts could take place in public areas, including those that are frequented by expatriates and foreign travellers.

Domestic News:

- **23 January 2013** - An army spokesman has confirmed that Togo has boosted its troop allotment for Mali to at least 733 from the 500 that were initially pledged as apart of an African force focusing on helping French forces retake the Islamist-controlled northern regions. The army spokesman also indicated that 96 soldiers had already left Lome for Mali and that the second contingent would be sent within a week.



About MS Risk

MS Risk is a privately owned company domiciled in the Isle of Man. It is underwritten by syndicate 2525 of Lloyd's of London for special risks case management in all jurisdictions. It also acts as retained advisors to syndicates in the Lloyd's of London specialty risk insurance markets: kidnap for ransom, extortion, hijack, illegal detention, illegal war tax, malicious product tamper, terrorism, political and war risk.

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 - Training
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 - Business continuity management
 - Hostile operations support to commercial interests
- Virtual Security Director service for clients lacking a full time security executive.

References are always available.

More information is found at www.msrisk.com

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