



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 7 – 20, 2013



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Benin

- **14 January 2013** - Thomas Yayi Boni, the President of Benin, has arrived in Luanda, Angola where he is expected to discuss with local authorities on matters pertaining to the reinforcement of cooperation between the two countries.
- **8 January 2013** - During an official visit by Benin's President Thomas Boni Yayi to Ottawa, Canada, the current Chairman of the African Union (AU) and Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced the signing of a Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (FIPA).

Burkina Faso

- Travel Summary
- MS RISK guidance to organizations in Burkina Faso
- **13 January 2013** - Officials in Burkina Faso have announced that they will send 500 troops who will join the regional forces that are currently fighting Islamist militants in Mali while another 500 will be sent in order to help seal the border.

Cameroon

- **18 January 2013** - From January 15 - 17, partner navies joined Cameroon in finalizing the plans for Exercise Obangame Express 2013 (OE13).

Cote d'Ivoire

- **19 January 2013** - West African leaders are set to meet in Côte d'Ivoire in order to discuss how best to coordinate the military action in Mali.
- **18 January 2013** - Officials have indicated that Charles Ble Goude, a former youth minister in the Côte d'Ivoire and ally of former President Laurent Gbagbo, has been extradited from Ghana after an official request was made by the Côte d'Ivoire.

Equatorial Guinea

- **16 January 2013** - Equatorial Guinea has announced that it plans to reduce exports of Ceiba crude in March.

Ghana

- **15 January 2013** - Ghana's Armed Forces (GAF) have confirmed that the country is ready to send its contribution of troops which will take part in the ECOWAS Monitoring Groups (ECOMOG) planned operations in Mali.
- **8 January 2013** - Ghana has inaugurated John Mahama as President despite an ongoing dispute led by the opposition party pertaining to the election results.
- **7 January 2013** - Following last month's disputed election results, Ghana's main opposition party has boycotted President John Mahama's swearing-in ceremony.

Guinea

- **14 January 2013** - Through an official statement, the government of Guinea has announced that it has decided to send a military contingent to Mali which will join the international forces who are aiding the country in recovering its northern territory.
- **10 January 2013** - The European Union (EU) has announced a new initiative to combat piracy in the Gulf of Guinea.

Liberia

- **17 January 2013** - Liberia's President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton have signed the U.S. - Liberia Partnership Dialogue Agreement in Washington D.C.
- **16 January 2013** - Liberia's jailed ex-President and war criminal, Charles Taylor, has written to MP's demanding an annual state pension of US \$25,000 (£15,600).

Mali

- Travel Summary
- MS RISK guidance to organizations in Mali
- Breakdown of the Mali Intervention
- Mali: Who is Doing What
- Analysis: France's Role in Mali

Domestic News

- **9 January 2013** - The African Union's (AU) chairman, Thomas Boni Yayi, has called for NATO to send troops to Mali in order to help fight militant Islamists. operation however they have not offered to send ground troops or to launch air strikes.
- **7 January 2013** - Military sources have indicated that Malian soldiers have fired on Islamists fighters in the centre of the country.

Mauritania

- Travel Summary
- **16 January 2013** - News from Ottawa, Canada has indicated that helicopters and personnel from the Canadian Forces Base in Petawawa will be heading to Mauritania over the next several weeks in order to provide support training for African troops.
- **9 January 2013** - Officials in China have announced that the country has given Mauritania financial support in the amount of US \$260 million in order to support a variety of developmental projects.
- **7 January 2013** - Mali's Interim Prime Minister Diango Cissoko arrived in Nouakchott over the weekend to begin a working visit. While arriving in Mauritania, he was met by his Mauritanian counterpart Moulay Ould Mohmaed Laghdaf along with other government officials.

Niger

- Travel Summary
- **17 January 2013** - According the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Niger welcomed nearly 50,000 new refugees from Mali over the past weekend.
- **15 January 2013** - Reports have indicated that the Algerian army on Monday killed three terrorists and wounded two others in the region of Meskeline, which is located 300km south-east of Djanet.

- **14 January 2013** - Officials in Niger have indicated that President Mahamadou Issoufou has held a national security council meeting pertaining to the conflict in neighbouring Mali, where French forces launched an offensive against armed Islamists. **12 January 2013** - The Canadian government in Ottawa has announced that it is contributing to the fighting that is taking place in Mali by training Niger's forces.
 - Meanwhile Niger's Foreign Minister Mohamed Bazoum has confirmed that it will send 500 soldiers who will join an international military campaign in Mali which will be led by the West African regional bloc ECOWAS.

International Developments

- **19 January 2013** - Niger's government has announced that its ambassador to Belgium and his wife have been found dead at their residence.

Nigeria

- Travel Summary
- MS RISK guidance to organizations in Nigeria

At Sea

- **15 January 2013** - Three robbers armed with knives, who were disguised as fishermen, approached and boarded an anchored Malta-flagged container ship, the Grand, at 0030 LT while in position 04:43.9S - 011:46.7E, Pointe Noire Anchorage.
 - Also in the Gulf of Guinea, a fishing vessel, the Star Shrimper, reported being attacked at 1230 LT while in position 04:29N - 007:57E, approximately four nautical miles from QIT.
- **12 January 2013** - Liberia-flagged anchor handling vessel, the Armada Tuah 107, reported being attacked by "water-borne robbers" while in position 03:51.8N - 006:45.8E, approximately 15 nautical miles west of Okwori field, Gulf of Guinea.
- **9 January 2013** - Italy's Foreign Ministry has confirmed that Nigerian pirates have released three Italians who were kidnapped off the coast of Nigeria last month.
 - Meanwhile a naval spokesman has confirmed that fifteen Russian sailors, who were detained by Nigeria's navy in October of last year on suspicion of arms smuggling, have been transferred to police cells for prosecution.

On Land

- **19 January 2013** - Gunmen in Nigeria have attacked the convoy of a prominent religious leader, the Emir of Kano.
- **18 January 2013** - Authorities in Nigeria have confirmed that they have arrested two people who are suspected to be the masterminds behind a double suicide bombing that occurred at a military church in the northern city of Kaduna late last year.
- **14 January 2013** - Nigeria's military has confirmed that it has arrested a leader of Boko Haram. In a statement that was released by the military, Mohammed Zingina was detained on Sunday afternoon in the Government Reserved Area (GRA) of the north-eastern city of Maiduguri on Sunday.
- **9 January 2013** - Authorities in Lagos port have indicated that there has been a loud explosion at an oil depot located within the port.

Domestic News

- **15 January 2013** - Nigeria has indicated that it will deploy troops to Mali within twenty-four hours, with more to follow in the coming weeks. The news of this deployment comes as French troops continue to battle Islamist militants in the northern regions of Mali, waiting for support from West African countries. Nigeria's President Goodluck Jonathan stated late on Monday that a company of 190 soldiers would be deployed on Wednesday, followed by an additional 700 that will be deployed in the following weeks.

Senegal

- **8 January 2013** - A man in Senegal has died after he set himself on fire on Monday outside the official residence of President Macky Sall in the capital city of Dakar.

Togo

- **17 January 2013** - A contingent of 100 Togolese troops arrived in Mali on Thursday, marking the start of a deployment of thousands of West African soldiers who are due to fight alongside the Malian and French armies.
- **14 January 2013** - At least four journalists have been injured by police while covering an anti-government protest that was taking place in Togo's capital city Lome.
- **11 January 2013** - For a second straight day, Togolese security forces prevented a protest by the opposition from in the capital city of Lome by occupying the area where the planned march was set to occur and by firing tear gas.

About MS Risk



No restrictions
in this travel
advice

There are currently no restrictions on travel to Benin. There is also a low threat of terrorism in the country. 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:

- **14 January 2013** - Thomas Yayi Boni, the President of Benin, has arrived in Luanda, Angola where he is expected to discuss with local authorities on matters pertaining to the reinforcement of cooperation between the two countries. According to the visit agenda, President Boni is set to meet with his local counterpart, Jose Eduardo dos Santos. President Boni last visited Angola in January 2011, during which the two countries expressed their wishes to strengthen the relations in the parliamentary, health, transport, fisheries, culture and art domains.
- **8 January 2013** - During an official visit by Benin's President Thomas Boni Yayi to Ottawa, Canada, the current Chairman of the African Union (AU) and Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced the signing of a Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (FIPA). Although FIPA will not alter any existing laws or regulations in either country, it will establish legally binding provisions, such as non-discrimination and the free movement of capital, which is designed to create a rules-based investment relationship between the two parties. The treaty will also aim to ensure greater protection against discriminatory and arbitrary practices and at enhancing market policy predictability. According to the Canadian government, there is a significant potential for increased Canadian investment in Benin. The Harper government argues that once implemented, the agreement will facilitate the flow of investment and will help create jobs and economic growth. FIPA also includes an article on corporate social responsibility, which Canada has indicated it will now aim to include in all of its future FIPA's. Also during the press conference, which was held on Parliament Hill, President Yayi inserted new urgency into finding a solution to the Malian crisis. However Prime Minister Stephen Harper noted that although Canada, a Nato member, is "very concerned about the situation," it will instead concentrate its efforts in the region by providing humanitarian aid coupled with the use of diplomatic channels in order to offer assistance to the country. Although during the press conference Mr. Yayi indicated

that he had welcomed the Prime Minister's diplomatic and humanitarian efforts, the Canadian press highlighted the fact that the two leaders disagreed on the type of resolution that should be implemented in Mali. This was further emphasized by Mr. Yayi who went on to call for international help in order to curb the terror activity occurring in Africa, including asking for assistance from Nato troops. Mr. Harper's announcement of Canada's intentions in Mali however fall directly in line with remarks made by Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird who indicated on Monday that Canada is "not contemplating a military mission" in Mali. Rumors of an involvement were sparked after Defence Minister Peter MacKay indicated just last week that Canada would be willing to send military trainers to Mali. So far, he has not made any comments with respect to Mr. Harper's official announcement. Although the two leaders disagreed on several aspects pertaining to the Malian crisis, Mr. Harper and Mr. Yayi also discussed trade and investment between the two countries as well as how to promote economic growth throughout Africa. For more information on the current situation in Mali, [click here](#).

Avoid ALL
travel to part(s)
of country



Burkina Faso

Travel Summary:

Following the French military intervention in Mali last week, 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 Boulssa, 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.

Demonstrations involving young Burkinabes and junior soldiers have taken place in towns and cities throughout the country and at times they have turned violent. As such, citizens should avoid large crowds and demonstrations.

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 has occurred in Algeria over the past few days 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:

- **13 January 2013** - Officials in Burkina Faso have announced that they will send 500 troops who will join the regional forces that are currently fighting Islamist militants in Mali while another 500 will be sent in order to help seal the border. This announcement stems from France’s decision to dispatch its air force to back Malian troops seeking to wrest control from the al-Qaeda-affiliated groups in the northern regions of the country. Furthermore, the decision to start the immediate deployment of a military contingent in Mali, which will number over 3,300 troops, was taken by the President of Côte d’Ivoire, Alassane Ouattara, who is currently the chairman of the Economic Community of West African countries (ECOWAS). For more information on the current situation in Mali, [click here](#).



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 Ndiain 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 Maroua 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 Land:

- **18 January 2013** - From January 15 - 17, partner navies joined Cameroon in finalizing the plans for Exercise Obangame Express 2013 (OE13). The exercise, which is set to occur this spring, will include the navies from fifteen nations and it will focus on increasing the counter-piracy capabilities of the nations that are located in the Gulf of Guinea. The exercise will focus on training the countries in the region in deterring threats to maritime security. It will include at-sea ship boarding and queries, air operations, communication drills and regional information sharing. OE13, which is in its third year, is one of four African regional Express-series exercises that focuses specifically on counter-piracy and maritime security operations. The countries participating including Belgium, Benin, Brazil, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, France, Gabon, Netherlands, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, São Tomé and Príncipe, Spain, Togo and the United States.

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



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.

On Land:

- 19 January 2013** - West African leaders are set to meet in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire in order to discuss how best to coordinate the military action in Mali and to agree on additional measures for resolving the crisis. The one-day summit of the Authority of Heads of State and Government, to which representatives of 20 non-ECOWAS Member states and organizations have also been invited, will discuss the evolving political situation in Mali and how the region can work together and with the international community to resolve the crisis within the context of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2085 of December 2012. French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius will also be taking part in the talks. The leaders will first be briefed by the President of the ECOWAS Commission, His Excellency Kadre Desire Ouedraogo, on the political and security situation. They will also be briefed by the regional mediators on the Mali crisis, presidents Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso and Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria. In turn, they will be updated on the status of preparations for the deployment of AFISMA, the African-led Mission in Mali. Before the summit concludes, the leaders will also discuss the situation in Guinea-Bissau, where the ECOWAS Mission (ECOMIB) was deployed last year, as well as the ongoing defence and security sector reform programme in the country which has been set up ECOWAS and the international community. On Thursday, the first 100 troops of the African force landed in Bamako. The soldiers, which come from Nigeria and Togo, are part of a long-planned West African force that will join the French and Malian armies. Although the original United Nations-backed strategy to reclaim northern Mali had France, amongst other Western powers - providing logistical support to an African-led force, it is becoming clear that French troops will likely remain at the frontline of the operations. For more information on the current situation in Mali, [click here](#).

- 18 January 2013** - Officials have indicated that Charles Ble Goude, a former youth minister in the Côte d'Ivoire and ally of former President Laurent Gbagbo, has been extradited from Ghana after an official request was made by the Côte d'Ivoire. Although he has been arrested, Mr. Ble Goude has denied the allegations that he led pro-Gbagbo militias who attacked foreigners and northerners during the unrest that followed the 2010 disputed elections. Mr. Ble Goude has been in hiding since April 2011 when former President Laurent Gbagbo was arrested. Mr. Gbagbo is currently awaiting trial at The Hague where he has been charged with crimes against humanity. The charges stem from a four-month crisis that occurred after Mr. Gbagbo refused to accept that he had been defeated in the 2010 elections. The crisis resulted in some 3,000 deaths. Since Mr. Ble Goude's arrest on Thursday, several of Mr. Gbagbo's allies have gone into exile in Ghana amidst fears that they will also be prosecuted.



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:

- 16 January 2013** - Equatorial Guinea has announced that it plans to reduce exports of Ceiba crude in March. Officials have indicated that the exports will be reduced to two cargoes, one less than February. The country is set to ship the first consignment from March 15 - 16 while the second will be shipped between March 28 - 29. Each lot will carry 1 million barrels.

No restrictions
in this travel
advice



Ghana

Although there are currently no restrictions on travel to Guinea, 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.

On Land:

- 15 January 2013** - Ghana's Armed Forces (GAF) have confirmed that the country is ready to send its contribution of troops, which will take part in the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) planned operations in Mali. Director of Public Relations for GAF, Colonel M'Bawine Attintande, has confirmed that the troops, which comprise of 120 soldiers, are fully trained and equipped and ready to be deployed at any time. According to Colonel Attintande, the equipment was allocated for the Specialist Engineers Squadron which will be sent to work under the ECOWAS and African Union intervention in Mali. For more information on the current situation in Mali, [click here](#).
- 8 January 2013** - Ghana has inaugurated John Mahama as President despite an ongoing dispute led by the opposition party pertaining to the election results. President Mahama took the oath of office in front of regional heads of state, dignitaries and tens of thousands of citizens. Speaking immediately after being inaugurated, President Mahama promised to work towards making the country "less polarized" despite the fact that the New Patriotic Party (NPP) has commenced a court challenge claiming that Nana Akufo-Addo won the 7 December 2012 elections. The opposition party has indicated that widespread technical glitches, that occurred with the biometric machines that were used in order to identify voters through their fingerprints, effectively created an opportunity for the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) to rig the vote. Due to the technical glitches, officials were forced to extend voting into a second day. President Mahama, who was the former vice president who took charge of the country in July following the unexpected death of President John Atta Mills, was elected after gaining a majority of the votes. According to the nation's electoral commission, Mr. Mahama won 50.7% of the poll while Akufo-Addo, his main challenger, won 47.7% of the vote. Although Ghana, a nation of 25 million, is one of the few established and stable democracies in the region, it is nevertheless not entirely immune to suspicions of electoral fraud and distrust of the country's relatively new democratic

institutions. The country also has one of the fastest growing economies on the continent, which is driven in part by new revenue from vast oil reserves that were discovered off Ghana's shores in 2007. In 2010, oil production was started which today tops more than 80,000 barrels per day. The New Patriotic Party has put forth its case to the nation's courts however reports have indicated that it will likely take several weeks before a court decision is made.

- **7 January 2013** - Following last month's disputed election results, Ghana's main opposition party has boycotted President John Mahama's swearing-in ceremony. Although official results gave Mr. Mahama 50.7% of the vote, enough to avoid a run-off against the New Patriotic Party's (NPP) Nana Akufo-Addo, who won 47.7%, the NPP has since argued that Mr. Mahama won the election fraudulently. Ahead of his inauguration, Mr. Mahama called for unity in Ghana which is seen to be one the most stable democracies in Africa.



No restrictions
in this travel
advice

Although there are currently no restrictions on travel to Guinea, 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. There is a continued risk of spontaneous riots and violent demonstrations occurring which are largely due to political tensions but which on occasion can be due to other reasons ranging from power shortages to commercial disputes. Such incidents have occurred in Conakry as well as in the regional towns like Kissidougou, Zogota, Labe, Dubreka, Fria and Siguiri. MS Risk also strongly advises against travel to the border regions with Liberia, Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast. This is due to the continuing unstable security situations as well as military and rebel activity that occurs in these regions. Past or ongoing conflicts in these countries have left the border areas tense, with displaced persons and refugees from neighbouring countries counting to travel through Guinea.

On Land:

- **14 January 2013** - Through an official statement, the government of Guinea has announced that it has decided to send a military contingent to Mali, which will join the international forces who are aiding the country in recovering its northern territory. The statement indicates that "given the evolution of the military situation in Mali and in accordance with its international commitments, in particular that of the ECOWAS, Guinea

has decided to send a company (about 150 men) to the Republic of Mali to participate in the ongoing operations.” Guinea’s decision comes just days after France launched a military operation in Mali which was sparked by rebel groups advancing towards the government-controlled southern region. Other countries, including Ghana, Senegal, Burkina Faso, and Niger have also confirmed that they will send troops to Mali. For more information on the current situation in Mali, [click here](#).

- **10 January 2013** - The European Union (EU) has announced a new initiative to combat piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. The project will focus on boosting security and the safety of the maritime routes across the seven African countries in the Gulf of Guinea. The Critical Maritime Routes in the Gulf of Guinea Programme (CRIMGO) will aid governments across West and Central Africa to improve the safety of the main shipping routes by providing training for coastguards and establishing a network to share information between the countries and agencies that are located in the affected region. Development Commissioner Andris Piebalgs, who announced the project, indicated that “without security, development can never properly reach the people it needs. That why our new project, which will help to boost transport security in Western Africa, is so crucial. By making the waters safe, we are helping to boost trade and growth and providing more opportunities to make a living, which these countries so desperately need.” The project is set to commence this month in seven African coastal states: Benin, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Nigeria, São Tomé and Príncipe and Togo. The Gulf of Guinea currently accounts for 13% of oil and 6% of gas imports to the EU. However armed robbery and piracy continue to pose a real threat to the security of the region. Between 2008 and 2012, some 98 cases of piracy, armed robbery at sea and marine pollution were recorded in Nigeria alone.

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



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.

On Land:

- 17 January 2013** - Liberia's President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton have signed the U.S. - Liberia Partnership Dialogue Agreement in Washington D.C. In a press conference held shortly after the signing, Secretary Clinton indicated that the agreement will establish working groups in three key areas: agriculture, food security and human development which will place an emphasis on creating more economic opportunity within Liberia. Mrs. Clinton also indicated that the agreement would focus on the development of Liberia's energy and power infrastructure. Secretary Clinton also thanked President Johnson-Sirleaf for the progress that Liberia has made under her leadership.
- 16 January 2013** - Liberia's jailed ex-President and war criminal, Charles Taylor, has written to MP's demanding an annual state pension of US \$25,000 (£15,600). The letter further calls on the government to give accommodation and diplomatic passports to Taylor's wife and two daughters. In the letter, Mr. Taylor argues that "the fact is...that I have not received my entitlement as set out under the law as a former President of Liberia since I resigned the office on August 11, 2003." Liberia's Senate Secretary, Nanborlog Singbeh, has indicated that the letter which states that the withholding of his presidential pension is a "mammoth injustice," will be discussed amongst the MP's in the following week. Although Liberian law dictates that a former President who has "honourably retired to private life and who is not in any way gainfully employed by the government" would receive a pension equal to half the salary of the incumbent President, it is highly likely that the MP's will rule that, in this case, this law does not imply.



Furthermore concerns have arisen about whether or not Mr. Taylor personally wrote the letter. Several sources have indicated that although the signature on the letter very much looks like that of Taylor, the letter contains some simple spelling errors.



In May 2012, a United Nations-backed court convicted Mr. Taylor of eleven counts of war crimes. The court ruled that as Liberia's President, he aided and abetted Sierra Leone's rebels during the 1991 - 2002 civil war. He was subsequently sentenced to fifty years in prison, effectively becoming the first former head of state to be convicted of such charges by an international court since the Nuremberg trials of the Nazis after World War II. Mr. Taylor is currently jailed at The Hague and is appealing

against the judgement which was made by the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone. Mr. Taylor was forced into exile in Nigeria in 2003 after the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (Lurd) rebel movement laid siege to Monrovia. His private villa on the outskirts of the city is in a poor state and his once prestigious mansion in his hometown of Arthington, which is located some 40km (25 miles) west of Monrovia, is in ruins and covered by overgrown vegetation. Taylor was arrested in 2006, while attempting to flee Nigeria. He apparently feared that the Nigerian government would bow to pressure from the US to hand him over to the UN-backed court to stand trial. The court was set up in 2002 in order to try those who bore the greatest responsibility for the war in Sierra Leone, in which some 50,000 people were killed.



Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

Travel Summary:

Currently, MS Risk advises against all travel to Mali. 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 country, 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 impending 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:

- **10 January** - Ansar Dine Islamist forces drive the Malian army out of the strategic town of Konna, which is located 600km (375 miles) northeast of the capital city of Bamako. After the fiercest fighting since militant groups seized control of the northern region nine months ago, the Islamist forces manage to capture the town. Konna is strategically important in the country as it was the last buffer zone between the rebels and the town of Mopti, located

about 50 km (30 miles) south. It was later reported that Islamist fighters advanced to within 20km of Mopti, which is seen as the gateway to the country's north. The nearby town of Sevare, which is the site of a large military barracks and airport, is put on alert. Following the week's rapid developments, an emergency meeting is held by the United Nations Security Council, which called for a "rapid deployment" of an Africa-led international force. The Malian government appeals for urgent military aid from France.



- **11 January** - President François Hollande announces that France has launched Opération Serval. The operation included the use of Gazelle helicopters from the Special forces, which halted the Islamist advance on Mopti. Residents in the town of Mopti confirm that French troops are helping Malian forces prepare for a counter-offensive against the Islamists who are stationed in Konna. One French pilot, Lieutenant Damine Boiteux, was killed after his helicopter was downed by ground fire during the operation. Mali declares a state of emergency. The West African regional bloc ECOWAS authorizes its members to immediately send troops to Mali.

- **12 January** - France steps up its military intervention with continued airstrikes. It also sends hundreds of troops into the capital city of Bamako. A spokesman for Ansar Dine indicates that there will be consequences for French citizens throughout the Muslim world. As such, President François Hollande orders an increase in domestic security. France's anti-terrorism alert system, known as "Vigipirate," is raised to red, which is the second-highest level, in which emergency counter-attack measures are put in place at public buildings and transport networks, particularly rail and air. Public gatherings will also be affected. British Government announces that it will be deploying two Royal Air Force C-17 transport planes in a non-combat role.



- **13 January** - France continues to expand its attacks by targeting the town of Gao, which is located in the eastern region of the country. French Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian indicates that four Rafale fighter jets, flying from their base in France, had attacked and destroyed rebel training camps and logistics depots, which acted as back-up bases for the terrorist groups. Reliable sources on the ground indicate that it is evident that French air power is now preparing the ground for a much larger offensive against the Islamist groups. Since Friday, France has sent 550 troops into the central town of Mopti and into the capital

city. Algeria gives authorization to for French warplanes to use its airspace. The first of two RAF C-17's arrives at an airbase in Paris.

- **14 January** - Islamists attack and seize the city of Diabaly, located 400km (250 miles) north of Bamako, in the government-controlled region of the country. Reports have indicated that they came from the Mauritanian border after having fled to avoid the airstrikes. The loss of Diabaly is confirmed by French Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian who indicated that "they took Diabaly after fierce fighting and resistance from the Malian army that was not able to hold them off at that moment." Nigeria indicates that it will send 600 troops; Burkina Faso, Senegal and Togo are expected to send 500 soldiers; while Benin will send 300.



- **15 January** - French Defence Minister confirms that the Malian military had not recaptured Konna from the rebel forces despite earlier claims stating that they did. Meanwhile the Royal Canadian Airforce dispatches a C-17 transport plane to Mali which will have a similar role to those that were sent by the UK.
- **16 January** - The Malian army, backed by French special forces, begin to engage in street combat with rebels and jihadists in the town of Diabaly. This is the first major ground operation to have occurred since the French intervened. On the ground sources report that

a convoy of 50 armored vehicles left Bamako overnight while residents in the town of Niono, which is located 70km south of Diabaly, indicate that French troops arrived overnight. France at this time has 800 troops on the ground and confirms that the numbers are expected to increase to 2,500. The government of Spain approves the dispatch of one transport aircraft to Mali for the purposes of logistical and training support. Meanwhile, the world sees the first ramifications of the intervention in Mali after reports surface that an attack has occurred on Western-run gas installation in eastern Algeria.

- **17 January** - The town of Banamba was put on alert after Islamists were reportedly spotted in regions near it. French and Malian forces continue their offensive operations against the militants. A company of 190 Nigerians and 40 Togolese soldiers arrive in Bamako - this is the first West African contingent to join France's operation. Although it was initially reported that 3,300 regional troops will be deployed, reports now indicate that this number will likely reach over 5,000. Nigeria indicates that it will send 900 troops, as well as fighter jets, while Chad confirms that it will send 2,000 soldiers. France now has 1,400 troops positioned on the ground.
- **18 January** - Malian army releases statement confirming that they now control Konna. This statement was later confirmed by residents in Konna. Officials also confirm that the town of Diabaly has been recaptured by the army. Furthermore, sources indicate that a strong French contingent is stationed in Segou, which is located north-east of Bamako, in order to guard a major bridge that crosses the Niger river. The bridge is a strategic point as the rebels would have to cross it in order to threaten the capital. Regional powers pledge some 5,800 troops for the African military force. Spain announces that it will provide military training and personnel and a transport plane for the African troops however it will not take part in the combat operations. Over the past twenty-four hours, France increases its troops to 1,800 while Nigeria indicates that it has increased its forces to 1,200. UNHCR announces that over the coming months, the fighting could force some 700,000 people from their homes.
- For current updates on the situations in Mali and in Algeria, please follow us on Twitter @MSRisk_Security, and check out our blog at <http://www.msrisk.com>

Mali: Who is Doing What?

France

France has sent at least 1,400 troops to Mali and officials in Paris have indicated that this number will be increased to 2,500. The first on the ground troops have been the Foreign Legionnaires and marines. An armored column has also arrived in Bamako from the Côte d'Ivoire and is due to move north.

France is also using four Mirage 2000D and Four Rafale fighter jets as well as two C135 refueling tankers plus reconnaissance jets and a squadron of helicopter gunships armed with anti-tank missiles and cannon.

West Africa (ECOWAS)

Nigeria will be sending 900 troops as part of a 3,300-strong west African Force.

Belgium

Expected to contribute two C-130 transport planes and a medivac helicopter.

Canada

Will provide a C-17 which is due to arrive in France while en route to Mali.

Denmark

Copenhagen has dispatched a C-130 transport plane to Bamako in order to help ferry troops and equipment.

Germany

Logistics, medical and humanitarian support have been offered however no dates as to when this support will arrive in Mali have been provided.

United Kingdom

Two C-17 transport aircraft are being provided. The Ministry of Defence has indicated that the UK contribution of the C-17's will last one week. Furthermore, no troops for on the ground combat will be sent however British troops could be involved in the training of the Malian army.

United States

The Pentagon is contributing transport planes, air refueling tankers, spy planes and drones. However officials at the Pentagon have indicated that legal obstacles will have to be overcome first before US planes could be deployed. This is due to the fact that Washington broke off its relations with Mali after last year's coup.

Analysis: France's Role in Mali

For the past several months, France has been a key supporter of a military offensive in Mali which would effectively rid the northern region of the country of its Islamist control. With Islamist militants capturing the town of Konna, it is quickly becoming evident that officials in Paris were not exaggerating when they had stated that without this intervention, the jihadist forces would have reached the capital city of Bamako within days. This inevitably would have

resulted in a strategic disaster not only for Mali, but also for West Africa as a whole as this would have severely threatened the stability and democratic structures of the entire region.

The word in Paris suggests that from France's point of view, the situation in Mali took a dramatic turn for the worse over the past few days and that any time spent on waiting for a military offensive would have only made the situation worse. France has long argued, a point that was reiterated by Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius on Friday, that if any advances by the militants were not stopped, this would result in not only the whole of Mali falling under its sway but could inevitably develop into a direct threat to the whole of Africa and to Europe. For the French government, there was a real fear that if these militants succeeded in taking over Mali, then it would have eventually transformed into a rogue state, in many ways similar to the old Afghanistan. In essence, Mali would have become an Afghanistan-style haven for extremists who are within an easy reach of Western Europe. In turn, Mali, a former French colony until 1960, remains to be of great importance to France as there are an estimated 6,000 French citizens that are currently living there. Furthermore, given the fact that France has close family and trade ties with Mali, it would ultimately have been the French state that would have paid the maximum costs if that rogue state had begun to export its own ideology. Subsequently it is no surprise that President François Hollande confirmed on Friday afternoon that French troops have taken part in operations against Islamist militants, indicating that French troops "have brought support this afternoon to Malian units to fight against terrorist elements."

While making the case for intervention to his domestic audience, Mr. Hollande stressed the threat that Mali posed to Europe's security, a more worrisome factor would have developed had France not intervened and instead the international community would have witnessed the collapse of a once stable West African state and its transformation into a country whose sole agenda is to export revolutionary jihad. However while France's intervention has been a success, in terms of halting the military advance, many tough questions still remain. Once the military intervention concludes, the focus will then turn on restoring Mali's unity and stability, a process that will no doubtedly be a complex, slow and costly one that will most likely be beset with political and military complications.

Although the dramatic events of the past few days have resulted in a re-planning of the intervention strategy that had been developed over the past few months, many of the key elements remain. These include: the deployment of West African troops, the retraining of the Malian army as well as a credible political and developmental strategy for the north. The first aspect, the deployment of West African troops, will be arriving in the country in the coming days as governments in the region have already begun to respond to the emergency. Senegal, Niger, Burkina Faso and Togo have all indicated that they will dispatch their troops to help with the intervention. The fact that these armies will have worked together in previous regional or UN operations, such as in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire, will be an added benefit to them. In turn, many have also been involved in training exercises with the French and the Americans. Meanwhile, the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) has also offered to join the offensive against the jihadists. They indicated that they

will be able to contribute valuable familiarity with operations in the Sahara which is their home environment. Another critical priority will be to ensure that military progress for the government forces and their allies is rapidly followed by humanitarian assistance and developmental support. This will be essential in assisting the long-suffering civilian population in the north. It will also start to rebuild local faith in the capacity of a state whose patchy delivery of basic services and administration had contributed to the weakening of security in the region over recent years.

Domestic News:

- **9 January 2013** - The African Union's (AU) chairman, Thomas Boni Yayi, has called for NATO to send troops to Mali in order to help fight militant Islamists. In a statement released by Mr. Yayi, he indicated that the Malian conflict was an "international question" and that NATO should intervene just as it has done in Afghanistan. However Mr. Yayi noted that the campaign against the militants should be led by an African force. The release of this statement comes shortly after Mr. Yayi held talks with Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper in Ottawa. Mr. Harper stated that Canada, which is a NATO member, is not currently considering direct military involvement in Mali. However several other NATO members, including the United States and France, have indicated that they will help in training an African force for the Mali operation however they have not offered to send ground troops or to launch air strikes.
- **7 January 2013** - Military sources have indicated that Malian soldiers have fired on Islamist fighters in the centre of the country. This marks the first significant fighting to be reported amongst the two sides since Islamist and Tuareg rebels seized control of the northern region of the country last March. Fighting began after Islamist fighters reportedly attempted to make an advance into the southern portion of Mali which is still government-controlled. The Malian army used artillery against the militants in the village of Gnimignama, which is located 30km (19 miles) from army positions. At present, the number of casualties remains to be unclear. According to Malian Defence Minister Col Yamoussa Camara, "jihadist elements are now deployed on several points along the frontier between the two sides, from the Mauritanian border in the west to the Douentz region in the east." This fighting comes ahead of scheduled talks between representatives of the Malian government and Islamist and Tuareg rebels which are set to occur on 10 January in neighboring Burkina Faso.

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 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.

International Developments:

- **16 January 2013** - News from Ottawa, Canada has indicated that helicopters and personnel from the Canadian Forces Base in Petawawa will be heading to Mauritania over the next several weeks in order to provide support training for African troops. They will be joining Canadian Special Forces soldiers who will also be heading to Mauritania. Once the Canadian government assesses the exercises that will take place throughout February and March, the Canadian military will also consider future training missions in Africa. The military personnel, which includes maintenance staff and pilots, are from the 427 Special Operations Aviation Squadron and they will be taking part in the Flintlock 13 exercise which

is a US-sponsored training exercise that will be held in Mauritania. Sources have indicated that a small detachment of Griffon helicopters will also be sent to the country. For more information on the current situation in Mali, [click here](#).

- **9 January 2013** - Officials in China have announced that the country has given Mauritania financial support in the amount of US \$260 million in order to support a variety of developmental projects. The financial support comes from an agreement which was signed on Tuesday in Nouakchott between Mauritania's Economic Affairs Minister Sidi Ould Tah and the Chinese ambassador to Mauritania, Chen Gonglai. According to the terms of the agreement, the financial support will comprise of a non-refundable grant of about US \$129 million and an interest-free loan of US \$131 million. During the signing of the agreement, the Mauritanian Minister highlighted the fact that "China had contributed to the development of various sectors in the country including agriculture, fisheries, and basic infrastructure." The Minister added that the relations between China and Mauritania were characterized by a mutual respect and by reciprocal interests. He also expressed his gratitude to the Chinese people and government "for the continuous support that they have never ceased to accord to Mauritania." On his part, the Chinese ambassador indicated that "the financial support was a demonstration once more, of the firm desire by the Chinese government to support Mauritania and contribute to the country's sustainable development." He further noted that China paid special attention to the cooperation with Mauritania, particularly for the sectors that will enable poor citizens to have access to basic services. According to the ambassador, "since 1967, China has funded over 40 different projects in the country, with the most prominent ones being the Friendship port, the Youth and Culture center, the water supply project in Nouakchott, the International Conference Center, the Olympic Stadium and the Friendship hospital."
- **7 January 2013** - Mali's Interim Prime Minister Diango Cissoko arrived in Nouakchott over the weekend to begin a working visit. While arriving in Mauritania, he was met by his Mauritanian counterpart Moulay Ould Mohmaed Laghdaf along with other government officials. Prime Minister Cissoko is set to hold talks with President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz as well as with other Mauritanian officials. The discussions are expected to largely focus on reclaiming the northern regions of Mali from terrorists and Islamist militants. Prime Minister Cissoko's visit to Mauritania is part of his regional tour, which began on 27 December 2012, and which focuses on seeking an African military intervention in Mali.



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 Aïr 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 to remain vigilant. 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:

- **17 January 2013** - According the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Niger welcomed nearly 50,000 new refugees from Mali over the past weekend. In a statement that was released on Wednesday, the UNHCR indicated that the total number of Malian refugees located in neighbouring countries, who have fled since France began its intervention last week, is estimated at more than 144,500 people. According to the report, the refugees in Niger currently consist of mainly women and children who were received at camps built in the cities of Banibangou Ayarou, Tillaberi and Tillia in the western region of the country. Niger is already home to tens of thousands of Malians who took refuge in the country during the early stages of the crisis back in March 2012.
- **15 January 2013** - Reports have indicated that the Algerian army on Monday killed three terrorists and wounded two others in the region of Meskeline, which is located 300km south-east of Djanet. According to a defence ministry statement, the terrorist group had attempted to infiltrate the country through the common border area with Niger and Libya. The ministry also added that the army will “guarantee border security against all attacks on national territorial integrity.”
- **14 January 2013** - Officials in Niger have indicated that President Mahamadou Issoufou has held a national security council meeting pertaining to the conflict in neighbouring Mali, where French forces launched an offensive against armed Islamists. President Issoufou's cabinet director Hassoumi Massaoudou, stated that “the president of the republic has convened the national security council to examine the latest developments in the situation in Mali.” Mr. Massaoudou further indicated that the meeting, which gathered army chiefs and those of the defence forces and national security, was aimed at “the preparation of decisions” that the authorities would take on Mali. Over the past weekend, Niger announced that it would send a battalion of 500 soldiers to Mali to join a West African peacekeeping force. The President also confirmed reports that Niger had deployed troops along its border with Mali in order to prevent the conflict from spilling over into its border. Niger, like Mali, is a vast and poor West African nation which is located on the southern edge of the Sahara. In the past, the country has been vulnerable to armed operations launched by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) as well as to past insurgency by Tuareg rebels. However President Issoufou has indicated that the country has taken the maximum preparations in order to ensure that no attacks occur in Niger. For more information on the current situation in Mali, [click here](#).
- **12 January 2013** - The Canadian government in Ottawa has announced that it is contributing to the fighting that is taking place in Mali by training Niger's forces. Currently, the Canadian government is in the early stages of providing military training to Niger, which is a country that has in the past struggled to cope with the spreading of Islamic extremism which has afflicted neighbouring Mali and the region itself. Although earlier in the week, Prime Minister Stephen Harper had publicly rejected a direct military mission in mali, even though he was requested by visiting Benin President Thomas Boni Yayi, the training of Niger's forces will enable Canada to contribute to the campaign in some degree. Furthermore, while the debate over whether Ottawa should contribute a military mission to Mali continued throughout the week, the Canadian government was surprisingly silent on its

upcoming plans for the West African training programme. Currently, Canada's military involvement in Niger has already commenced as a heavy-lift C-17 transport plane is currently in Africa where it is delivering Special Operations personnel to Niger for preliminary training and preparation for Exercise Flintlock, which is an annual West African training programme that is sponsored by the U.S. Military. Niger is currently expected to be one of the three largest troop-contributing nations, along with Burkina Faso and Nigeria, to the UN-sponsored West African military intervention in Mali. As such, Niger's forces will greatly benefit from Canada's training. The Canadian government has indicated that the exercise is aimed at helping West African nations at fighting terrorism. It is set to take place in Mauritania during February and March. The Canadian contingent of defence personnel that will be participating in the exercise will number fewer than twenty-four. Their role will be to train the Niger Armed Forces in reconnaissance, land navigation, marksmanship and other basic military skills. Although the training will initially begin in Niger, the Canadian contingent along with Niger's troops will then move to Mauritania to complete Exercise Flintlock. Major Doublas MacNair, a spokesman for Canadian Special Operations Forces Command, has indicated that "Flintlock involves the capacity building of several countries within the Sahel region. As Niger shares a border with Mali, strengthening the capacity of Nigerian Armed Forces contributes to regional security." The Flintlock Exercise takes place annually in a different west African nation each year however the exercise was cancelled in 2012 as it had been scheduled to take place in Mali. Canada's last participation was in 2011.

- Meanwhile Niger's Foreign Minister Mohamed Bazoum has confirmed that it will send 500 soldiers who will join an international military campaign in Mali which will be led by the West African regional bloc ECOWAS.

International Developments:

- **19 January 2013** - Niger's government has announced that its ambassador to Belgium and his wife have been found dead at their residence. Sources have indicated that the victims had apparently died of carbon monoxide poisoning. The bodies of Issaka Djibo (60) and his wife, Fatouma (50) were found in their bedroom by their daughter who had been alerted by an embassy employee who had not heard from the ambassador. Initial findings have suggested that the couple had died from carbon monoxide poisoning due to a faulty heater. No further information has been provided. The ambassador took up his post in January of last year.

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.

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:

- **15 January 2013** - Three robbers armed with knives, who were disguised as fishermen, approached and boarded an anchored Malta-flagged container ship, the Grand, at 0030 LT while in position 04:43.9S - 011:46.7E, Pointe Noire Anchorage. The robbers, who were in a small boat, were spotted by a Duty crew who raised the alarm. Upon hearing the alarm, the robbers jumped overboard and escaped in their boat. Port control was contacted however no response was received.
 - Also in the Gulf of Guinea, a fishing vessel, the Star Shrimper, reported being attacked at 1230 LT while in position 04:29N - 007:57E, approximately four nautical miles from QIT. Reports have indicated that the Captain and the Chief Engineer were reportedly kidnapped however no further information has been provided.
- **12 January 2013** - Liberia-flagged anchor handling vessel, the Armada Tuah 107, reported being attacked by “water-borne robbers” while in position 03:51.8N - 006:45.8E, approximately 15 nautical miles west of Okwori field, Gulf of Guinea. The vessel was locked down and the crew members, along with 4 expats, were secured in a safe area. The vessel was reported to have been ransacked and the crew's belongings were stolen.
- **9 January 2013** - Italy's Foreign Ministry has confirmed that Nigerian pirates have released three Italians who were kidnapped off the coast of Nigeria last month. However the ministry has provided no further details pertaining to a fourth sailor, believed to be Ukrainian, who was kidnapped alongside the Italians nor have they provided any comments as to whether or not a ransom payment was made for their release. The kidnapping occurred on 23 December 2012 when gunmen stormed the MV Asso Ventuno which was located some 40 nautical miles (74 km) off the coast of Bayelsa state in Nigeria's oil-producing Niger Delta region. After the kidnapping, the remaining crew-members of the Asso Ventuno, which is operated by Augusta Offshore SpA (a Naples-based shipping company) had sailed the vessel to safety. Since their release, one of the captives, Emiliano Astarita indicated to reporters that the kidnap victims had been treated well in captivity.
 - Meanwhile a naval spokesman has confirmed that fifteen Russian sailors, who were detained by Nigeria's navy in October of last year on suspicion of arms smuggling, have been transferred to police cells for prosecution. On October 23, Nigerian authorities had intercepted a ship and arrested its Russian crew after they found several guns and around 8,500 rounds of ammunition on board. Lieutenant Commander Jerry Omodara, a spokesman for the Western Naval Command, indicated that “on Monday, we handed

over the crew to the police as we have completed preliminary investigations.” Furthermore, he noted that “the ship and the weapons are still in our custody.” In light of these developments, the Russian Foreign Ministry has stated that the sailors were facing a court case initiated “under false pretexts” and that Nigeria broke a promise given to Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov that the men would return to Russia before the New Year. Similarly, the Moran Security Group, which is the Russian company that owns the confiscated vessel, has called the accusations “groundless” and has urged Nigeria to release the sailors. However Lieutenant Commander Omodara has maintained that the vessel was stopped initially because it was in Nigerian waters without permission. Arms smuggling to and through Nigeria is rife as the demand for weapons is great due to the Islamists militants who are launching attacks, as well as due to the armed robbery and kidnapping by gangs in the southern region of the country and the oil theft and piracy that occurs in the southeast. Furthermore, Nigeria is also sometimes used as a conduit for the shipment of arms to other conflict-ridden parts of West Africa. In 2010, a consignment of rocket launchers, grenades and other explosives from Iran was seized in Lagos which resulted in a diplomatic row between the two countries. It also strained ties between Iran and Senegal, which had accused Iranian security forces of attempting to supply weapons to its Casamance rebels.

On Land:

- 19 January 2013** - Gunmen in Nigeria have attacked the convoy of a prominent religious leader, the Emir of Kano. Although the emir survived the attack, his driver and two guards have been killed. The attack occurred when men on motorbikes and in a car opened fire on the emir’s convoy who at the time was returning from a graduation ceremony at a mosque in Kano city. Currently no one has taken responsibility for the attack however suspicion has fallen on Boko Haram who, in the past, have killed Muslim clerics who have spoken out against the group’s campaign of violence. Officials have indicated that Emir al-Haji Ado Bayero - who is in his 80s - has been on the throne for almost fifty years. The emir is highly revered by Muslims and he has been careful not to openly denounce the activities of Boko Haram. As such, this attack has caused shock in northern Nigeria.
- 18 January 2013** - Authorities in Nigeria have confirmed that they have arrested two people who are suspected to be the masterminds behind a double suicide bombing that occurred at a military church in the northern city of Kaduna late last year. The attack, which occurred on 25 November, happened when two suicide car bombers struck the church at a military barracks. The blast left fifteen people dead and at least thirty people wounded. It



was also an embarrassment for the military and it eventually led to the sacking of a high ranking officer. A spokesman for Nigeria's secret service, Marilan Ogar, indicated in a statement that "following the incident, a thorough investigation was initiated by this service and the military which led to the arrest of some suspected masterminds of the attack." In the statement, she named Ibrahim Mohammed (18) and Mohammed Ibrahim Idris (50) as the two suspects, noting that other were also being questioned. Meanwhile Mohammed Zingina, a senior Boko Haram commander who has been accused of organizing several suicide bombings, was captured on Sunday in the northeastern city of Maiduguri, where Boko Haram has its headquarters (*See Below*). He had been on a most wanted list, with a bounty of 25 million naira (US \$160,00) for information leading to his arrest.

- **14 January 2013** - Nigeria's military has confirmed that it has arrested a leader of Boko Haram. In a statement that was released by the military, Mohammed Zingina was detained on Sunday afternoon in the Government Reserved Area (GRA) of the north-eastern city of



Maiduguri on Sunday. The statement further noted that Mr. Zingina, who is also known Mallam Abdullahi and Alhaji Musa, was planning "deadly attacks" against civilians and security personnel located in Maiduguri. According to military officials in Nigeria, Mr. Zingina was the leader of Boko Haram in the north central part of Nigeria. He was also the co-ordinator of most of the suicide attacks and bombings that have occurred in Abuja,

Kaduna, Kano, Jos and Potiskum.

- **9 January 2013** - Authorities in Lagos port have indicated that there has been a loud explosion at an oil depot located within the port. National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) has confirmed that the blast, which shook buildings in the Apapa area, occurred during a transfer of fuel. Sources have also indicated that the oil depot is owned by petroleum company MRS Oil. Firefighters are currently at the scene, working to douse the flames. So far, four people have been injured in the blast. Although Nigeria is one of the world's largest oil producers, it imports refined petrol. Consequently, many tankers dock at jetties located in the port in order to load and unload petroleum products.

Domestic News:

- **15 January 2013** - Nigeria has indicated that it will deploy troops to Mali within twenty-four hours, with more to follow in the coming weeks. The news of this deployment comes as French troops continue to battle Islamist militants in the northern regions of Mali, waiting for support from West African countries. Nigeria's President Goodluck Jonathan stated late on Monday that a company of 190 soldiers would be deployed on Wednesday, followed by an additional 700 that will be deployed in the following weeks.



No restrictions
in this travel
advice

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.

On Land:

- 8 January 2013** - A man in Senegal has died after he set himself on fire on Monday outside the official residence of President Macky Sall in the capital city of Dakar. Local media reports have indicated that Mr. Cheikh Mbaye, 32, had apparently stated that his life had been better under former President Abdoulaye Wade. Mr. Mbaye arrived at the presidential gates on Monday doused in flammable liquid. He then proceeded to burn himself. The man died in hospital where he was being treated for burn wounds. This appears to be the first case of self-immolation since Mr. Sall beat Mr. Wade in last year's presidential elections. Previously, under Mr. Wade's ruling, there had been at least two cases of self-immolation. In February 2011, former soldier Bocar Bocoum died after setting himself on fire outside the presidential residence. Reports indicated at the time that he had apparently carried out the act as part of demands for compensation for military injuries. In a separate case, another man had set himself on fire in front of the presidential residence in 2008. Similar acts of self-immolation have been witnessed in several other African countries, including in Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia and in Senegal's neighbor, Mauritania.

No restrictions
in this travel
advice



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.

On Land:

- **17 January 2013** - A contingent of 100 Togolese troops arrived in Mali on Thursday, marking the start of a deployment of thousands of West African soldiers who are due to fight alongside the Malian and French armies. Togo is expected to provide 500 servicemen in order to help Malian authorities to fight against the Islamists who are controlling the country's northern region.
- **14 January 2013** - At least four journalists have been injured by police while covering an anti-government protest that was taking place in Togo's capital city Lomé. Reports have indicated that several of the journalists, along with local press freedom group SOS Journalistes en Danger, have indicated that the police had targeted a group of reporters and that tear gas and rubber bullets were used in an effort to prevent the journalists from covering the demonstrations. Over the past few months, several opposition and civil society organizations have staged protests, demanding government reforms before parliamentary elections take place in March. In turn, the organizations are also seeking the departure of the ruling party, which has led the country for more than four decades.
- **11 January 2013** - For a second straight day, Togolese security forces prevented a protest by the opposition from in the capital city of Lomé by occupying the area where the planned march was set to occur and by firing tear gas. A member of the coalition which was responsible for the planning of the protest indicated that at least three people had been injured while five were detained. Pedro Amuzu of the Let's Save Togo coalition indicated that "the injuries occurred between 1:00pm and 2:00pm after tear gas was fired by security forces on youths" in the Be neighborhood of the capital city. Meanwhile on Thursday, the coalition had indicated that around twenty people had been injured and another eighteen were detained. A journalists' union also indicated that three journalists had been wounded in the incident. Let's Save Togo, a coalition which is comprised of opposition and civil society groups, had planned to stage three days of protests that were set to begin on Thursday.



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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 - Due diligence and investigations.
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 - Training
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- Crisis Response
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 - 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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