



# 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

August 19 – September 1, 2013



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### Security Summaries for West African States

#### Burkina Faso

#### Cameroon

*On The Ground*

- **21 August 2013** - The killing of a Cameroonian police official has prompted the country to close its border with Central African Republic (CAR). The announcement was read out on Cameroon's state television on Wednesday morning.

#### Central African Republic

*On the Ground Reporting*

- **29 August 2013** - The United Nations reported on Thursday that in recent days, thousands of people have fled violence in the Central African Republic (CAR), with as many as 6,000 people temporarily taking refuge at the Bangui airport.
- **27 August 2013** - Residents have reported that sustained gunfire and looting broke out overnight in the capital of the CAR, causing many people to flee their homes.

- Meanwhile, road haulage drivers who ply the highway between Bangui and the port of Douala in neighbouring Cameroon indicated on Tuesday that they have been on strike for the past week in protest against extortion by men of the Seleka rebel alliance that placed Djotodia in power.

## *International Developments*

- **27 August 2013** - On Tuesday, French President Francois Hollande called on the United Nations and the African Union to “take charge of the situation” in the violence-afflicted Central African Republic.

## **Ghana**

- **29 August 2013** - On Thursday, Ghana’s highest court is set to issue a long-awaited ruling on whether to overturn President John Dramani Mahama’s election win last year on fraud allegations, a verdict that may test one of Africa’s most stable democracies.

## **Guinea**

- **19 August 2013** - A radio station in the eastern region of Guinea was raided by pro-government demonstrators after the station had reported on protests against President Alpha Conde.

## **Liberia**

- **27 August 2013** - The international court, which is handling the appeal of Liberian ex-president Charles Taylor, 65, against his conviction for war crimes in Sierra Leone, announced on Tuesday that it would deliver its judgment in September.
- **20 August 2013** - The former leader of one of Liberia’s main rebel groups, which fought a bloody civil war that claimed thousands of lives, indicated on Tuesday that he had been backed by neighbouring Guinea.

## **Mali**

### *On the Ground Reporting*

- **29 August 2013** - A government official indicated on Thursday that at least twenty-four people have been killed in flash floods caused by torrential rain in the Malian capital Bamako.

### *Domestic News*

- **27 August 2013** - On Monday, Mali’s President-elect Ibrahim Boubacar Keita flew to Chad in order to thank the central African country for its role in supporting Bamako’s fight against armed al-Qaeda-linked groups.
- **21 August 2013** - Just one day after Mali’s constitutional court confirmed that Ibrahim Boubacar Keita had won the August 11 election run off, the new president-elect pledged on Wednesday that he would choose a cabinet that was based on competence rather than party affiliation or family ties.
- **20 August 2013** - Mali’s constitutional court announced Ibrahim Boubacar Keita as the country’s new leader, confirming that he had won the presidential election run-off with an overwhelming 77.6 percent of the vote.

### *Regional Reporting*

- **23 August 2013** - An al-Qaeda-linked militia that was founded by Islamist commander Mokhtar Belmokhtar announced on Thursday that it would be joining forces with another armed group in order to take revenge against France for its military offensive in Mali.
- **20 August 2013** - On Tuesday, Algerian media reported that deadly clashes between Arabs and Tuaregs continued for a second week in an Algerian border town, with another eight people killed.

### *International Developments*

- **22 August 2013** - One day after US President Barack Obama congratulated Mali’s new President on his victory in the August 11 elections, UN special envoy Romano Prodi stated that Mali’s presidential elections were a “milestone” in restoring peace but that a longer term effort is required to consolidate democracy in the African state.
- **21 August 2013** - US President Barack Obama congratulated Mali’s new President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita on his election victory, vowing that he would work with him as his country emerges from months of internal conflict.

- The United States State Department has added an operative from the al-Qaeda-linked Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) to its list of global terrorists.

## Mauritania

- **22 August 2013** - Officials in Mauritania have announced that they have postponed the October 12 elections by six weeks after a coalition of opposition parties indicated that it would boycott the polls in a bid to cause the vote to fail.

## Nigeria

### *On the Ground Reporting*

- **1 September 2013** - Security officials have indicated that suspected Boko Haram fighters have killed at least twenty-four members of a vigilante group in northeastern Nigeria. According to the sources, another thirty-four people are missing.
- **24 August 2013** - In what appears to be an apparent ransom bid, gunmen in southern Nigeria kidnapped a prominent Lagos-based lawyer.
- **23 August 2013** - Officials have confirmed that Islamist insurgents dressed as soldiers opened fire on worshippers leaving a mosque in Nigeria's far northeast, killing at least thirty-five people in what is the second such attack to occur this month.
- **27 August 2013** - In what is believed to be the latest violence in revenge against vigilantes, two attacks have been carried out by suspected Boko haram militants, resulting in the killing of at least twenty-four people in Nigeria's northeastern region.

### *Domestic News*

- **28 August 2013** - A Nigerian court on Wednesday ordered the extradition to the United States of a man accused of being a member of al-Qaeda's Yemeni affiliate, and who was assigned to find English-speaking recruits.
  - Meanwhile officials in Nigeria have charged two of its citizens with assisting an Iranian militant cell in planning possible attacks that would have targeted Israeli interests.
- **21 August 2013** - Doubts have emerged this week over the Nigerian military's claims that the leader of Islamist extremist group Boko Haram may have been killed.

## Togo

- **28 August 2013** - Togo's Prime Minister Kwesi Seleagodji Ahoomey-Zuno and his government have resigned from their posts one month after parliamentary polls saw the ruling party win two-thirds of the majority.

## Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea

### *Piracy News*

- **28 August 2013** - On Wednesday, the European Union announced that it was preparing to increase security efforts in the Gulf of Guinea as the West African maritime region has developed into the new global piracy hotspot.
  - Meanwhile Nigeria's Navy has killed six pirates and injured one other in the latest attack to stop the outlaws from expanding their territory in the Gulf of Guinea.
- **19 August 2013** - On Monday, the Nigerian Navy confirmed that its soldiers killed twelve pirates in a gun battle as they attempted to flee from a fuel tanker they had hijacked off the coast of the Gulf of Guinea last week.

## About MS Risk

## Security Summaries for West African States

**Benin** - Although there is currently no travel advisory for Benin, MS Risk advises all travellers to the country to remain vigilant. There is currently a low threat from terrorism. There have been incidents of mugging, personal assault and car-jacking in Cotonou. Armed robberies have also been reported in other areas, most notably in those regions that border Nigeria.

**Burkina Faso** - [Click Here](#)

**Cameroon** - [Click here](#)

**Central African Republic** - [Click Here](#)

**Equatorial Guinea** - There are currently no travel advisories for Equatorial Guinea. Compared with other countries in the region, the level of violent crime is low; however there are regular reports of petty theft which has affected both visitors and expatriates. MS Risk advises all travellers to avoid walking around Malabo and Bata at night and to avoid travelling by road after dark. Although the political situation has been calm in recent years, you should be aware that political events can lead to an increased presence of police, military or security forces on the streets. Consequently you should avoid any political rallies, demonstrations or large public gatherings. There is a low threat from terrorism; however you should be aware that attacks can occur at any time and place, including those frequented by expatriates and foreign travellers.

**Gabon** - There is a low threat from terrorism. Crime is increasing in Gabon, particularly in Libreville and Port-Gentil. There have been robberies, armed attacks and rape. Consequently MS Risk advises you to take sensible personal security precautions and maintain a high level of vigilance in public places. Avoid isolated or poorer areas of towns and walking alone at night. There have been a number of car-jackings in Libreville. There have been armed robberies of commercial shipping in the Gulf of Guinea.

**Gambia** - There is no travel advisory for Gambia, however MS Risk advises all travellers to avoid travel by road from The Gambia to the Casamance, in the southern region of Senegal. The Casamance region of south western Senegal remains affected by incidents involving presumed separatist groups and by incidents of banditry. There is an underlying threat from terrorism. Due to the French military intervention in Mali, coupled with The Gambia's stated commitment to participate in the intervention, there is a possibility that retaliatory attacks that target Western interests in the region, may be carried out. Travellers to the country are warned to remain vigilant as attacks can take place at anytime and anywhere. Following a political disagreement between the government of The Gambia and the Europa Union, pertaining to the deterioration of human rights in The Gambia, there has been an increase of political tensions which may lead to unannounced demonstrations in Banjul as well as in other parts of the country. MS Risk advises all travellers to avoid all demonstrations.

**Ghana** - [Click Here](#)

**Guinea** - [Click Here](#)

**Guinea-Bissau** - There are currently no restrictions on travel to Guinea-Bissau. Although the security situation is currently calm, the current political situation remains uncertain throughout the country and the possibility of civil or military unrest in Guinea-Bissau remains high. MS Risk advises against all travel to the northwestern regions of the country, specifically those which border the Casamance region of Senegal, including the Sao Domingos/Mpack road.

**Ivory Coast** - MS Risk advises against all but essential travel to the western regions of Dix-Huit Montagnes, Haut-Sassandra, Moyen-Cavally and Bas-Sassandra as the situation in these regions remains unstable due to the intercommunity tensions as well as the presence of armed groups. 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. There was a recent banditry attack in the Boufla CI concession by a group of about ten armed men. According to on the ground sources, the attack lasted for fifteen minutes during which the victim's personal belongings were stolen from him. However no injuries were reported. The attack occurred during daylight hours. Consequently any individuals in this particular region are reminded to be extremely vigilant.

**Liberia** - [Click Here](#)

**Mali** - [Click Here](#)

**Mauritania** - [Click Here](#)

**Niger** - 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 Tillaberi province north of Niamey, including the road from Niamey to Gao and the road from Niamey to Menaka; areas within 40 km of the border with Nigeria in Diffa, Zinder and Maradi provinces. MS Risk advises against all but essential travel to the rest of Niger, including the capital city of Niamey. There remains a high threat from terrorism, including kidnapping, in Niger. On 1 June 2013, three guards were killed and twenty-two inmates escaped from the main prison in Niamey during an attack that was launched by suspected Islamist militants. Travellers in Niamey should continue to monitor developments and be alert to announcements and remain vigilant at all times. On 23 May 2013, a military barracks in the town of Agadez and a uranium processing facility near the town of Arlit, approximately 150 miles north of Agadez, were attacked. A number of people were killed and injured. The terrorist group which claimed responsibility for the two attacks has publicly threatened to carry out further attacks in Niger. On 14 May 2013, the Government of Nigeria declared a state of emergency in its northern states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. Both Borno and Yobe border southern Niger. Consequently there is a risk that instability may spill over the border from Nigeria to Niger. There is a high threat of kidnapping from terrorist groups including AQIM and MOJWA. These groups have kidnapped Westerners in Niger and in the wider Sahel region, including in Niamey and the north and west of Niger. Further kidnappings are likely to occur. There is a threat of retaliatory attacks in Niger, due to the country's participation in the French-led intervention in Mali. Levels of crime are high, especially in the capital city of Niamey. Thefts, robberies and residential break-ins can occur at any time. Banditry, smuggling and other criminal activity is common in border areas, especially after dark. Bandits are thought to be operating in the border area with Nigeria, south of Zinder. MS Risk advises to avoid crossing the border with Nigeria during the hours of darkness.

**Nigeria** - [Click Here](#)

**Senegal** - Although there are currently no travel restrictions for Senegal, MS Risk advises to avoid road travel in the Casamance region, to the west of Kolda. The Casamance region of south-western Senegal (between the southern border of Gambia and the northern border of Guinea-Bissau) remains affected by incidents involving armed separatist groups and banditry, particularly in the regions of Bignona and Sindian. There has been an increase in clashes between the Senegalese army and suspected elements of the armed separatist group Movement of the Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC). MS Risk advises against all road travel in the Casamance region to the west of Kolda, other than on the main road from Ziguinchor to Cap Skiring (which is often used by groups of tourists during daylight hours) and on the road north of the Guinea-Bissau/Senegal border, from Sao Domingos to Ziguinchor (N4 bis) If you travel on either of these roads, you should do so only during daylight hours and monitor the local security situation before travelling. There have been a number of deaths and injuries. There is currently an underlying threat from terrorism. Attacks could be indiscriminate, including in places frequented by expatriates and foreign travellers. With the ongoing French military intervention in Mali, authorities in Senegal have increased security in the capital city as well as along the border with Mali. MS Risk advises that al-Qaeda militants may cross the border into Senegal and they may target Western interests as well as foreigners

**Sierra Leone** - There is currently no travel advisory for Sierra Leone. Violent incidents have taken place under cover of crowds in the streets of Freetown. There are also occasional small riots between rival groups of youths in the central and eastern areas of Freetown. If you encounter such an incident, you should leave the area immediately. There is a low threat from terrorism. There is a possibility that retaliatory attacks may be carried out in Sierra Leone. This is due to the country's participation in the intervention in Mali. During the rainy season, May to October, roads can become extremely difficult, even for off-road vehicles. On 9 August a bridge in the capital city of Freetown collapsed due to a landslide that was caused by heavy rain. At least six people were killed in the incident. MS Risk therefore advises all travellers in the country to exercise due caution when travelling by road throughout the season.

**Togo** - [Click Here](#)

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country



Security Summary

Any citizens traveling to, and residing in, Burkina Faso are urged to exercise and maintain a high level of security awareness at all times.

Threats and Concerns

There is a general threat from terrorism throughout the Sahel region. Given the on-going French military intervention in Mali, the threat of retribution against Western private sector interests, especially French, has increased.

Although there are currently no known Islamist operatives in Burkina Faso, the country's shared border with Mali may enable such elements to gain access. Furthermore, such militants may have disguised themselves as refugees in an attempt to blend in and to cross the border without detection. The regional Islamist elements that could threaten Burkina Faso include: al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), Ansar al Dine, Ansar al Sharia and Boko Haram.



Kidnapping Threats

There is a heightened risk that terrorist groups, including al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA), may cross the northern borders from Mali and Niger into Burkina Faso in order to carry out kidnaps. MS Risk therefore advises against all travel to the areas of Burkina Faso north of the town of Bouloua, which is 25 km north of the capital of Ouagadougou. We particularly advise against all travel to the regions that border Mali and Niger. Since 2008, over 25 Westerners have been kidnapped in the Sahel region, and a number of these hostages continue to be held. AQIM operates directly or through criminal gangs who carry out kidnappings on their behalf or pass on their kidnap victims in return for payment.

There is also a high risk of armed groups stopping vehicles (including public buses to rob them. Such incidents have occurred in various parts of the country, particularly at night. Therefore, all travel between towns by road at night is to be avoided, especially from Ouagadougou to Po where there is a heightened risk. This is especially severe on market days when bandits often target 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 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 in Algeria has demonstrated that such attacks can occur at any place and at any time. In addition, 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

Companies relying on police escorts in the northern region of the country should ensure that travel patterns do not become predictable. Varying routes is difficult due to the limited road networks; therefore, it is even more important to vary the types of vehicles used as well as the times of the journeys and to avoid travel patterns becoming widely known. This is especially critical given the current tensions along the Mali border and the impending ECOWAS operations. All companies 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 suggest there is an elevated banditry threat 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 has been clarified. Companies with operations in the region are invited to report incidents to MS Risk to aid in assessing local conditions. Liaising with insurers to ensure appropriate cover is in place to meet special risks where needed is also strongly advised.



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

### Security Summary

The killing of a Cameroonian police officer on 19 August has prompted officials in Cameroon to close its border with the Central African Republic (CAR). The death of the officer occurred after a number of Seleka fighters crossed over the border into Cameroon, where they were stopped by officers patrolling the border region. Despite being escorted over the border, the fighters returned and attacked the police. It is currently not known how long the border will be closed. Consequently MS Risk advises against all travel to the border regions with the CAR as it is highly likely that militant groups and pro-Seleka fighters may be patrolling the areas and may at times attempt to cross into Cameroon.

On 14 May 2013, the Government of Nigeria declared a state of emergency in the states of Adamwa, Borno and Yobe. Both Adamawa and Borno border Cameroon's far North, North and Adamaoua provinces. It is possible that military operations there might have an impact across the border in Cameroon.

MS RISK advises 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 resulting from the heightened threat of armed banditry and other threats associated with the borders of Chad and Nigeria. The Government of Cameroon is expected to cut fuel subsidies in the near future which may cause strikes and civil unrest 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 Reporting

- **21 August 2013** - The killing of a Cameroonian police officer has prompted the country to close its border with Central African Republic (CAR). The announcement was read out on Cameroon's state television on Wednesday morning. Ivaha Dieudonne, governor of Cameroon's East Region, has indicated that the incident, late on Monday in the town of Toktoyo, occurred between Cameroonian border police and fighters loyal to the CAR's new president. According to eye witness reports, the killing was triggered by a dispute between the police officer, Felix Ndalle Ngando, and an army lieutenant from the CAR who claimed that his badge had been stolen and demanded its return before he crossed back into the CAR. In response, Ngando ordered the lieutenant to leave Cameroon, personally escorting him over the border. Minutes later, however, the lieutenant, along with several other fighters, crossed back into Cameroon, shooting at the police and killing Ngando. Ngue Lise, a border police officer, confirmed that "he was shot several times in the toilets where he had taken cover. There were over 30 bullets sprayed into his body by the Central African Republic soldiers, who spoke Arabic." He further indicated that "I was hiding in one of the rooms when they stormed the building and was lucky I was not found. They were armed with Kalashnikovs. We were no match with our pistols and we had to hide." Witnesses also reported that after the killing of Ngando, the Seleka fighters also stormed a gendarmerie station and released a fellow fighter who had been detained weeks earlier for lacking residency papers. The CAR army lieutenant is a member of the Seleka rebel coalition that deposed former CAR President Francois Bozize in March of this year. Seleka leader, Michel Djotodia, was officially sworn in as President on Sunday. Ever since the CAR coup in March, neighbouring Cameroon has spoken out about CAR fighters crossing the borders and targeting border posts and seizing weapons. However Dieudonne, the East Region governor, downplayed the significance of the border closure, stating that "there is no war between Cameroon and Central African republic," highlighting that "this is an isolated case of irresponsible behavior on the part of wayward Seleka soldiers who have betrayed their calling and rank." He did not specify how long the border would remain closed, but did indicate that officials from both countries were working to resolve the situation.

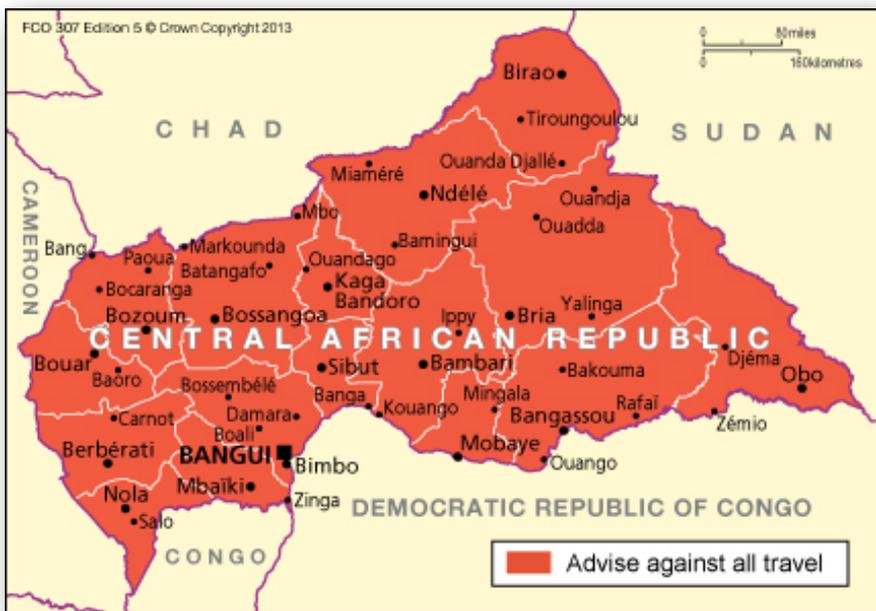
Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country



Security Summary

MS Risk advises against all travel to the Central African Republic (CAR). The armed rebel coalition Seleka has renewed its offensive against President Francois Bozize’s government and has taken control of the capital, Bangui. With Michel Djotodia officially sworn into office on August 18, security

throughout the country has continued to deteriorate. Reports of rebel activity, banditry and hostage-taking have occurred across the region. In the capital, Bangui, the security situation also remains fragile with reports of continued looting and gunfire. There is currently a curfew in place from midnight to 4AM. It is therefore advised that you should avoid being on the streets during this period. At other times, MS Risk advises that you should take extreme caution and travel in groups whenever possible. There are armed patrols at night in Bangui and roadblocks - both



official and unofficial - that are likely to be manned by armed personnel and particular care should be taken when approaching these.

Any individuals in the country are advised to leave now. Anyone who remains should take all necessary precautions and stay in a safe place with sufficient stocks of food and water. If the situation deteriorates further, leaving the country by commercial means will likely become increasingly difficult. Currently regional country flights have been suspended. We advise anyone remaining in the country to keep up to date with local political developments and to avoid all political rallies, demonstrations and large public gatherings.

## On The Ground Reporting

- **29 August 2013** - The United Nations reported on Thursday that in recent days, thousands of people have fled violence in the Central African Republic (CAR), with as many as 6,000 people temporarily taking refuge at Bangui airport. A statement released by the UN's refugee agency (UNHCR) indicated that "over the past 10 days arbitrary arrests, detention, torture, extortion, armed robberies, physical violence, restriction of movement, lootings and attacks on civilians have displaced thousands of people." The UN agency also confirmed that some 5,000 to 6,000 people, many of them women and children, had taken refuge at Bangui International Airport, and were "blocking the runway for air traffic," causing all flights to be rerouted to Douala, Cameroon. Babar Baloch, a UN refugee agency spokesman further indicated that the abuses in parts of the capital have been carried out by "armed groups," adding that a lack of security on the ground in Bangui had prevented his colleagues there from determining those responsible for the abuses. This recent instability comes one week after an operation by fighters of the newly-installed regime in a bid to disarm supporters of ousted President Francois Bozize. That operation led to at least eleven deaths in Bangui's northern Boy-Rabe and Boeing districts. According to hospital sources, another thirty-five people were injured. Both neighborhoods are known to be supporters of the ousted President. By Wednesday, newly installed President Michel Djotodia, who was sworn into office on August 18, ordered warlords from his Seleka forces to return to their bases and to allow police and paramilitary gendarmes to take over in a bid to restore order. The move came shortly after French President Francois Hollande warned earlier this week that the country was on the road to becoming a failed state. According to the UNHCR, before these recent events, there were already more than 206,000 internally displaced people in the CAR.
- **27 August 2013** - Residents have reported that sustained gunfire and looting broke out overnight in Bangui the capital of the CAR, causing many people to flee their homes. Although there is currently no indication of who is behind the latest instability to hit the capital city, which erupted in the Boy-Rabe district, this incident prompted residents to seek refuge in various hospitals and churches throughout the city. Boy-Rabe is considered a stronghold of backers of Francois Bozize, who seized power in a 2003 coup and was overthrown last March by a rebel coalition led by Michel Djotodia. Since the removal of Bozize from power, insecurity has prevailed throughout the country, where former rebel fighters have been accused of assaulting and terrorizing civilians. A recent report by the UN indicated that Djotodia's Seleka fighters, many of whom have not been paid in months, were to blame for much of the chaos and that the group's hierarchy was doing little to stop them
  - Meanwhile, road haulage drivers who ply the highway between Bangui and the port of Douala in neighbouring Cameroon indicated on Tuesday that they have been on strike for the past week in protest against extortion by men of the Seleka rebel alliance that placed Djotodia in power. The road from Douala is the main commercial route to Bangui and it accounts for transport of almost all the produce that is imported into the landlocked nation. A source from the Group of Centrafrican Transporters (GTC) has indicated that truck drivers are regularly victims of "murders, bodily injuries, racketeering, extortion of funds and theft of fuel."

## International Developments

- **27 August 2013** - On Tuesday, French President Francois Hollande called on the United Nations and the African Union to "take charge of the situation" in the violence-afflicted Central African Republic. During a televised speech, Hollande called "on the African Union and the UN Security Council to take charge of this situation." Speaking at the launch of an annual gathering of ambassadors from around the world, the French President said that it was "more than time to act." The call for international aid comes as the former French colony has been beset by reports of widespread rape, recruitment of child soldiers, weapons proliferation, huge population displacement



and severe malnutrition after a coup in March ousted the President and his government. Despite an African peacekeeping force beginning its deployment in Bangui, no peacekeepers in the force, which will eventually number 2,500 soldiers and 1,000 police officers, are stationed outside the capital.



No travel restrictions for this country

*Although there is currently no travel advisory for Ghana, the country has seen an increase in violent robbery in 2013. In May, an expatriate's vehicle was stopped by an armed individual who forced his way into the car demanding money. On being paid, the individual left the vehicle. In a separate incident, an expatriate was robbed of her wallet while attempting to pay a taxi driver. There have also been reports of two westerners being shot while driving alone at night. In a separate incident, two westerners were robbed at gunpoint while at a restaurant. Both incidents occurred in the Accra Area however there have been reports of robberies in the Tema area in which one incident resulted in the death of a westerner. There have also been reports of foreign nationals being held at gun-point in their homes and while walking in the street. Most armed robberies occur at night however there have been some reported incidents of such incidents occurring during daytime. A common tactic has been to deliberately cause a minor road traffic accident in order to force the targeted vehicle to stop. As a result of ongoing local Chieftancy and land disputes, isolated inter-ethnic violence and civil unrest can occur at any time, including in the Northern, Upper East and Volta regions. A dusk to dawn curfew has been put in place on the Hohoe community in the Volta region. This is due to communal clashes over the exhumation of the Chief Imam of Hohoe. If you are considering to travel to the Northern Region, MS Risk advises you to remain alert to the potential of new outbreaks of fighting. Flooding is common in the Upper West, Upper East and Northern Regions during the rainy season, which spans from March to November. We advise that you monitor the local weather reports and expect difficulties when travelling to affected areas during this season.*

## Domestic News

- 30 August 2013** - A court in Ghana rejected a request by the Ivory Coast to extradite a top ally of former president Laurent Gbagbo, ruling that charges against Justin Kone Katinan had "political motivation." Ghanaian magistrates court Judge Aboagye Tanor indicated during the proceedings that Katinan "cannot be devoid of political motivation," further ruling that he "will proceed to dismiss the application for the extradition." Katinan fled to Ghana in 2011 as a violent post-electoral conflict shook the Ivory Coast. He had also served as Gbagbo's spokesman since the ousted strongman's arrest in April of that year. He was first arrested in August 2012 and although Friday's decision appears to end a year-long legal battle, prosecutor Matthew Amponsah has indicated that he may appeal after reviewing the full judgment. The current government in the Ivory Coast has accused Katinan of raiding banks when he served as Gbagbo's budget minister while the regime crumbled.
- 29 August 2013** - On Thursday, Ghana's highest court is set to issue a long-awaited ruling on whether to overturn President John Dramani Mahama's election win last year over fraud allegations, a verdict that may test one of Africa's most stable democracies. The lawsuit, which was brought by the New Patriotic Party (NPP), which is Ghana's largest opposition party, is over Mahama's December 2012 election victory and has been the subject of more than eight months of litigation in

Ghana's Supreme Court. The proceedings, which at times have been tense, have been broadcast live on radio and television and have been followed closely across the nation of 25 million people. The nine justices hearing the case have a wide latitude to rule, which includes rejecting the case, ordering new elections, or deciding that the electoral commission should overturn Mahama's win. Shortly after the conclusion of the polls, the electoral commission had announced that Mahama took 50.7 percent of the vote over NPP candidate Nana Akufo-Addo, who gained 47.7 percent in the polls. Although observers called the elections fair, the NPP claimed that the polls were marred by irregularities, alleging that the ballot boxes were stuffed, that voters were allowed to place ballots without proper identification, and that voting documents were left unsigned. While the case's outcome remains unpredictable, the possibility of a court-ordered changes of power presents a high-stakes challenge. Although the 2012 elections were generally unmarred by violence, many in Ghana are wary of the bloody unrest seen after recent elections in Nigeria and in the Ivory Coast. As a result, there have been widespread calls for restraint by politicians and religious leaders. The police and military have also taken to marching around the capital, Accra, in a display of readiness for the aftermath of the verdict. Both parties have also indicated that they will accept the court's ruling however Ghana's laws leaves the door open for further appeals. **Update** - Ghana's Supreme Court on Thursday upheld President John Dramani Mahama's win in elections last year and dismissed the opposition's case over alleged voter fraud. Reading the verdict, which was issued by the nine-justice panel, presiding Judge William Atuguba stated that "the first respondent (Mahama) was validly elected and the petition is therefore dismissed." A statement issued on the President's Twitter account stated that "the Supreme Court has spoken and validated our December 2012 victory... This is a victory for Ghana's democracy." Reports have indicated that while some of the judges had found merit in certain allegations by the NPP, as a group, they declared that Mahama's win was legitimate. Ahead of today's ruling a heavy police presence was deployed around the court while access to the chamber was tightly restricted. Although both parties had indicated beforehand that they would accept the Court's ruling, under Ghana's laws, all Supreme Court rulings are subject to review. Although Ghana's elections have typically been peaceful, today's Supreme Court ruling may result in protests in the capital which could turn violent.

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



There is currently a low threat from terrorism. Nearly 100 people were reported to have been killed in July in an outbreak of ethnic violence that occurred in the "Guinea Forestiere" region in the far south-east of Guinea. A large number of injuries were also reported and properties were destroyed. Areas of Guinea that border with Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, the Ivory coast, Liberia and Sierra Leone are often tense and have an increased military presence. As such, MS Risk advises against all travel to the regions bordering the countries listed above. There have been regular reports of robberies on the route Mamou, Faranah, Kissidougou, Guekedou, Macent and Nzerekore. MS Risk advises all travellers on these routes to remain vigilant and to avoid all travel after dark. Official and unofficial checkpoints may be set up along these routes. Vehicles and passengers are submitted to checks on documentation and baggage. It is advised that you approach such checkpoints with caution as corruption and extortion are common at roadblocks. Occasionally, checkpoints can be a pretext for armed robbery. Road travel is hazardous during the rainy season which occurs from May to October. Torrential rains can cause floods and landslides. MS Risk advises you to monitor the local weather reports and expect difficulties when travelling to affected areas during this season. After democratic elections, President Alpha Conde was sworn into office on 21 December 2010. Although legislative elections to form a new National Assembly have been long-delayed, officials in the country have confirmed that they will be held on 24 September. There remains a volatile and tense political period which may be characterized by unpredictable outbreaks of violence. A number of deaths and injuries were reported during the most recent outbreaks which occurred in March, April and May in the capital of Conakry. MS Risk advises all to monitor the local media reports and to keep away from any large gatherings or military barracks.

## On The Ground Reporting

- 19 August 2013** - A radio station in the eastern region of Guinea was raided by pro-government demonstrators after the station had reported on protests against President Alpha Conde. According to journalist Abdouramane Seinkou Kaba, Bate FM, which is located in the city of Kankan, was attacked on Sunday by "thugs and supporters of the regime," adding that they had destroyed chairs, cables and microphones and taken away a generator, antennae, amplifiers and other equipment in an attempt to "prevent us from broadcasting." A presenter at Bate FM also indicated that local officials, including the district administrator and the regional general secretary of the President's Rally of the Guinean People Party, were behind the attack, stating that 'it is the political and administrative authorities at the highest levels who sponsored the attack, because they wanted to avenge the insult of the youth of Kankan against the president of the republic.' The presenter's remarks pertain to the President's visit to Kankan last week, his first since his election in

2010, when was jeered by hundreds of angry youths who accused him of doing nothing to develop his region of origin.



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

## Security Summary

MS Risk advises against all but essential travel to parts of Liberia, specifically those regions of the country that border with the Ivory Coast.

There is a high level of crime in Monrovia, including armed robbery. The Liberian National Police has a very limited capability to prevent or detect crime, or to provide emergency response in any part of the country. Foreigners have been mugged in the Mamba Point and Sinkor areas of Monrovia, where most international visitors stay.



The roads from Monrovia to Roberts International Airport, the port town of Buchanan and to the border with Sierral Leone at Bo Waterside, and to the border with Guinea at Ganta, are mainly paved and in reasonable condition. Most other roads outside Monrovia are unpaved. Driving and road conditions will significantly deteriorate during the rainy season, which occurs from May to November. Many roads during this time become impassable. MS Risk advises against all travel at night outside of Monrovia, except to or from Roberts International Airport. This is because roads are treacherous and all the roads are unlit. Furthermore, vehicles often do not have any lights. As a result, travellers after dark are more vulnerable to being robbed at an illegal barricade.

Liberia has become increasingly stable since the internal conflict ended in 2003. However the security situation remains fragile. There is a low threat from terrorism. There is a possibility that retaliatory attacks could be carried out in Liberia, this is due to the country's participation in the

intervention in Mali. UNMIL peacekeepers are deployed to the main population centers around Liberia, and patrol the main roads.

## On the Ground Reporting

- **20 August 2013** - The former leader of one of Liberia's main rebel groups, which fought a bloody civil war that claimed thousands of lives, indicated on Tuesday that he had been backed by neighbouring Guinea. Launched from Guinea in late 1999, and led by Sekou Damateh Conneh, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) sought to oust then President Charles Taylor, eventually forcing him into exile in 2003. However, throughout that period, they have been accused of committing atrocities, which led to the deaths of thousands. On Tuesday, Conneh stated that "I was fully supported by the Guinean government, I can say that. I got the support of Guinea because the Guinean borders were under constant threat from Charles Taylor's forces." In what is the first confirmation by the former warlord of the widely held suspicion that his group had been aided by Guinea, Conneh indicated that the support was "financial and logistical," however he gave no details of the extent of the backing. His announcement comes as Monrovia marked ten years of peace in the conflict-scarred West African nation. Although Guinea remained relatively stable throughout the 1990's, Liberia was split apart by fourteen years of successive civil wars which concluded in 2003 and resulted in many displaced civilians and several thousands becoming victims of atrocities. Numerous rebel factions raped, maimed and killed thousands. Deep ethnic rivalries and bitterness continues to be an issue in a country of four million people. In June 2003, LURD laid siege to the capital Monrovia during several bloody battles and was accused of firing mortar shells into civilian areas, killing dozens. Two months later, Taylor gave into the increasing pressure to go into exile and headed for Nigeria. In March 2006, he was arrested and transferred to The Hague in order to face charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Ten years after the war, Taylor remains the only Liberian to stand trial, and that was for his role in neighbouring Sierra Leone's civil conflict. He has never stood trial for the atrocities committed in his own country.

## International Developments

- **27 August 2013** - The international court, which is handling the appeal of Liberian ex-president Charles Taylor, 65, against his conviction of war crimes in Sierra Leone, announced on Tuesday that it would deliver its judgment in September. A statement released by the Special Tribunal for Sierra Leone indicated that the verdict would be announced on September 26. The appeal stems from Taylor's guilty verdict last year after judges found that he had lent his support to Sierra Leonean rebels who waged a terror campaign during a civil war that claimed the lives of 120,000 people between 1991 and 2001. Specifically, judges found that as Liberia's president, from 1997 to 2003, Taylor had provided the rebels with guns and ammunition during the conflict. According to court documents, Taylor had aided the rebels in exchange for "blood diamonds," which were mined through slave labour. During Taylor's appeal hearing in January, his defense team argued that there was no evidence linking him to the crimes committed by Sierra Leone's brutal rebel forces, nor did he provide them with any logistical support, guns or ammunition. His defense also claimed that the trial judges had made legal mistakes in their findings against Taylor and appealed to the court to reverse the conviction and to retract the sentence. The prosecution argued that Taylor's sentence was unduly lenient and that it should be increased to eighty years. His sentencing in May 2012, for "some of the most heinous crimes in human history," was the first handed down by an international court against a former head of state since the 1946 Nazi trials in Nuremberg. The former Liberian president currently remains behind bars at the United Nation's detention unit in The Hague, where he will remain until the appeals proceedings are finalized. If his appeal fails, Taylor will serve his sentence out in a British jail.

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country



Security Summary

Summary

MS Risk advises against all but essential travel to Bamako. We also advise against all travel to the rest of Mali, especially to the northern regions of the country. Although Bamako is generally calm, the situation throughout the rest of the country is still volatile. Presidential elections were held on July 28 and August 11, however the new government of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita has not yet taken office. If you are in Bamako, MS Risk advises you to maintain a high level of vigilance, to keep a low profile and to stay alert to the local political developments. We also advise that you avoid sensitive areas, including military installations and large gatherings of people.

During the rainy season, which runs from May until October, torrential rains can cause floods and landslides, and may result in houses collapsing. In late August, there were reports of flash flooding that occurred in Bamako. The neighborhoods of Bankoni, Taliko, Lafiabougou,



Djicoroni Woyowayanko, Lafiabougou Bougouba and Bougoudani were all hit by floods during the rains storms which lasted most of the day. MS Risk advises anyone in the capital city to monitor the local weather reports and to expect difficulties when travelling to affected areas during this season.

## *Terrorism*

There still remains a high threat from terrorism in Mali. No curfew is currently in place however MS Risk advises those in the country to monitor the local media for reports of any new measures.

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 neighboring 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.

There have been incidents of armed banditry, car-jacking, and kidnap in the northern regions of Mali. Bandits and smugglers are particularly active across the Mali-Algeria, Mali-Burkina Faso, Mali-Mauritania and Mali-Niger borders and pose a threat to travellers, especially after dark. Authorities in Mali have provided the following numbers in case of emergencies:

- 80 00 11 14
- 80 00 11 15
- 20 22 13 35
- 20 23 95 15
- 20 23 95 11

## *Kidnapping*

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 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.

## *Local Travel*

Although the military intervention has regained control of the major northern cities in Mali, the situation remains tense in the region and there continues to be a high risk of retaliatory action by terrorist groups. MS Risk advises against all travel to the northern region of Mali, especially to the cities/towns of Gao, In Khalil, Kidal, and Timbuktu as well as the surrounding areas. Landmines have been used by groups operating in the north and northeast of Mali.

Night-time checkpoints continue to operate in Bamako. These checkpoints largely control access to military and Government facilities. Checkpoints are in place from approximately 9PM until dawn. MS Risk advises to keep vehicle and personal identification documents with you at all times while travelling by road. Furthermore, approach security checkpoints slowly and comply with instructions that are given.

## **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

## **On The Ground Reporting**

- **29 August 2013** - A government official indicated on Thursday that at least twenty-four people have been killed in flash floods caused by torrential rain in the Malian capital Bamako. The deaths were confirmed in a statement by Tiefing Konate, the country's Minister of Internal Security and Civilian Protection. The statement indicated that the neighborhoods of Bankoni, Taliko, Lafiabougou, Djicoroni Woyowayanko, Lafiabougou Bougouba and Bougoudani were all hit by

floods during the rains storms which lasted most of the day. The statement also confirmed that nineteen people had been killed in Taliko alone. Some of the worst damage during Wednesday's flooding occurred in areas where houses had been built on land that was reserved for drainage. Consequently it is likely that more houses may be destroyed as a result of the flash flood. In a country that already has a large number of its population displaced, such flooding is expected to lead to further widespread displacements and casualties. Parts of Bamako, which is a city of around 2 million people on the Niger river, flood regularly during the West African nation's June to October rainy season. Deaths and injuries are relatively common occurrences.

## Domestic News

- **27 August 2013** - On Monday, Mali's President-elect Ibrahim Boubacar Keita flew to Chad in order to thank the central African country for its role in supporting Bamako's fight against armed al-Qaeda-linked groups. According to presidential aide Sambou Toure, Mr. Keita was in Chad for a few hours on Monday to honor those who fought to liberate Mali's northern towns and cities from an Islamist occupation that lasted several months in 2012. According to a statement released by Chad's presidency, during his visit, Mr. Keita, who is scheduled to be sworn into office next week, met with President Idriss Deby Itno in the eastern desert town of Iriba, where the Chadian head of state is currently on holiday. The statement also indicated that "he came to express his gratitude to his counterpart Idriss Deby, to the Chadian people and to the army for its supreme sacrifice," adding that Mr. Keita returned to Bamako the same day. The 2,000 Chadian soldiers of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali were at the forefront of a French-led military intervention that was launched in January of this year in a bid to oust Islamist rebels who had taken over northern Mali in the chaos following the coup. During the military intervention, Chad lost at least thirty-eight men in battle, with the heaviest fighting taking place in the northeastern Ifoghas mountains. Seen as one of the more experienced armies in Africa, Chadian forces played an integral part in forcing Islamist militants to withdraw from key cities and towns in northern Mali and were often seen fighting alongside French troops.
- **21 August 2013** - Just one day after Mali's constitutional court confirmed that Ibrahim Boubacar Keita had won the August 11 election run off, the new president-elect pledged on Wednesday that he would choose a cabinet that was based on competence rather than party affiliation or family ties. His announcement is an indication that his presidency will likely aim to break away from the traditions of what he calls former weak consensus governments. Keita has pledged reconciliation and peace but despite securing the support of virtually every other first-round contender, the newly elected president has hinted that he will form a technocrat-heavy government. In his first comments since winning the elections, Keita indicated that "...there is no question of sharing out the cake. I have not promised that and it will not happen," further stating that "we need to put Mali to work and this work will be done by those who are competent. It will not be a question of families or political parties." Despite Keita's reputation for firmness, coupled with his recent remarks, he will likely be expected to reward some of the twenty-two of the twenty-five losing first-round candidates who threw their weight behind him in the run-off. Prior to its collapse last year, Mali was long seen as a state of political stability in West Africa. This was partly due to its system of governments of national unity which were set up by former president Amadou Toumani Toure. While avoiding post-election violence, which has been seen in a number of countries throughout the West African region, critics have stated that the tradition of coopting parties effectively denied Mali any form of opposition and instead, it fomented a culture of corruption and impunity that led to the northern rebellion and a coup in the capital.
- **20 August 2013** - Mali's constitutional court announced Ibrahim Boubacar Keita as the country's new leader, confirming that he had won the presidential election run-off with an overwhelming 77.6 percent of the vote. The court also indicated that his rival, former Finance Minister Soumaila Cisse, had gained 22.4 percent of the vote in a turnout of 45.7 percent. The announcement by the

constitutional court confirmed the results of the August 11 elections which had been provisionally announced by the Interior ministry last week.

## Regional Reporting

- **23 August 2013** - An al-Qaeda-linked militia that was founded by Islamist commander Mokhtar Belmokhtar announced on Thursday that it would be joining forces with another armed group in order to take revenge against France for its military offensive in Mali. While this move is no surprise to analysts, as the two groups have previously collaborated in carrying out regional attacks, it does cement the fact that the Sahel region will remain the new focal point for global counter-insurgency efforts. Reports surfaced on Thursday that Belmokhtar's Mauritanian-based al-Mulathameen Brigade (the Brigade of the Masked Ones) along with Malian-based terrorist group Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), which is believed to be led by Ahmed Ould Amer, have joined forces under one banner in a bid to unite Muslims and to target French interests in the West African region. In a statement that was published by Mauritanian news agency Nouakchott News Agency (ANI), the two groups indicated that "your brothers in MUJAO and al-Mulathameen announced their union and fusion in one movement called al-Murabitoun, to unify the ranks of Muslims around the same goal, from the Nile to the Atlantic." Belmokhtar and Ould Amer are said to have ceded control of al-Murabitoun to another leader. Although he has not been named, reliable sources indicate that the new commander has fought against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1980's and the US-led invasion of Afghanistan in the 2000's. Reports also indicate that unlike the leaders of most of the armed organizations in the region, this new leader may not be Algerian. The merger between the two groups was first reported by ANI, which has long been a reliable source of information pertaining to jihadist activities in West Africa. In an excerpt of the group's statement, Belmokhtar indicates that he decided not to assume the leadership of al-Murabitoun in order to "empower a new generation of leaders." Further excerpts of al-Murabitoun's first statement also threaten France and its allies in the region and call upon Muslims to target French interests everywhere. The document states that "we say to France and its allies in the region, receive the glad tidings of what will harm you, for the mujahedeen have gathered against you and they pledged to deter your armies and destroy your plans and projects. By the grace of Allah, they are more firm and strong in your face, and your new war only increased their certitude, resolve and determination." Previously believed to have been killed, Belmokhtar is a one-eyed Algerian former commander of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). In 2003, he was designated a foreign terrorist by the United States, with the State Department offering a US \$5 million reward for information that would lead to his capture. He broke away from AQIM in 2012 in a bid to form a new group that would expand its beliefs of forming an Islamist state. In March of this year, it had been reported that he was killed in action in northern Mali. Although the reports of his death were announced by the Chadian military, they were never confirmed by France or the United States. Currently Belmokhtar remains at large. He is believed to be the mastermind behind January's siege of an Algerian gas plant in which thirty-eight hostages were killed. MUJAO is thought to be led by Mauritanian ethnic Tuareg Ahmed Ould Amer, who goes by the nom de guerre "Ahmed Telmissi." The group also broke away from AQIM in mid-2011 with the apparent goal of spreading jihad into areas outside of AQIM's scope. It was one of a number of Islamist groups that occupied northern Mali last year and was responsible for imposing a strict interpretation of Islamic Sharia Law. Despite previously separating themselves from AQIM, citing leadership issues and desires of expanding their control, both groups continued to cooperate and fight alongside AQIM fighters in Mali and in other regions of West Africa. In late May of this year, the two groups targeted a military barracks in Agadez, Niger and a uranium mine in Arlit which supplies French nuclear reactors. The attack in Agadez was reportedly executed by a five-man suicide assault team which resulted in the deaths of at least twenty people. The attack in Arlit was reportedly carried out as a means of attempting to cripple France. Shortly after the attacks, Belmokhtar indicated that the incidents had been carried

out as a form of revenge for the death of Abdelhamid Abou Zeid, an AQIM commander who was killed by French forces in northern Mali earlier this year. Consequently this merger comes with minimal surprise as MUJAO and Belmokhtar's forces have already forged a working relationship. Thursday's announcement just makes this relationship official. However many questions still linger as to whether such a merger will have any impact within a region that continues to be rocked by instability. On the one hand, in examining Mali, the country no longer seems to be the central hub it was a year ago. The recently held peaceful presidential elections, which resulted in the election of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, coupled with 12,600 UN troops that are stationed on the ground, are a move to fill the security vacuum and to stabilize the country by uniting the north and south. However when looking at the greater Sahel region, many vulnerabilities continue to exist in a region of Africa that is sparsely populated and prone to poverty, food insecurity and estrangement from regional governments. The Sahel region continues to see high threats of kidnap and terrorist attacks. These threats, which were further heightened following the French military intervention in Mali, are highly likely to occur again. Furthermore, there are currently at least thirteen hostages being held in the Sahel and surrounding regions, which includes Algeria, Cameroon, Libya and Nigeria. Over the years, many have been killed and threats of kidnappings, especially of French and Western nationals, will likely continue. The surrounding areas also contain threats that may lead to a further destabilization of the region. Terrorist groups such as Boko Haram in Nigeria are waging their own wars at home. While reports that Boko Haram militants may have been trained by al-Qaeda-linked operatives in Mali further fuels the notions the movement of terrorists in the Sahel and surrounding regions continues to be unaffected. The militant groups now joining forces have gained reputations for evading capture and continuing to launch attacks despite security forces' concentrated efforts to stop them. On the other hand, given the long history of al-Qaeda-linked forces making and breaking alliances, the real question remains whether this official union will change anything. Many doubt that al-Murabitoun can bring anything new to the table and that instead this could signify another reorganization in an attempt to strengthen the group, remain relevant and give it a new and better direction. The timing of this announcement is also critical as it comes just two weeks after elections were held in Mali and a new President was selected. This alliance may be an attempt to remind regional actors and international officials that while Mali has won a victory by carrying out successful elections, the war is far from over.

- **20 August 2013** - On Tuesday, Algerian media reported that deadly clashes between Arabs and Tuaregs continued for a second week in an Algerian border town, with another eight people killed. Despite representatives from the rival sides reaching an agreement for a truce late on Friday, the accord failed to take effect on the ground. The bloodshed, which occurred in Bordj Badjii Mokhtar in the southern desert region of Algeria, has sparked fears of a possible spillover of violence from neighbouring Mali, where a longstanding Tuareg rebellion was over taken by Islamist militants last year, prompting the launch of a French-led international intervention in January. Hospital sources have indicated that two people were killed on Monday when a man drove a 4x4 vehicle into a crowd, with another six people killed in the town on Sunday. In all, twenty-three people have died in the week-long violence between members of the Arab Brabiche and Tuareg Idnan tribes. The fighting has also caused severe damage to businesses that serve a vast region of surrounding desert, with reports indicating that the town is now "completely isolated." The government of Algiers, which is located some 2,200 kilometers (1,375 miles) away on the Mediterranean coast, has since dispatched 1,500 special forces troops to the region to restore order. The southern desert region of Algeria has a significant Tuareg community which straddles the border with neighbouring Mali and Niger.

## International Developments

- **22 August 2013** - One day after US President Barack Obama congratulated Mali's new President on his victory in the August 11 elections, UN special envoy Romano Prodi stated that Mali's

presidential elections were a “milestone” in restoring peace but that a longer term effort is required to consolidate democracy in the African state. In a statement released on Thursday, Prodi, a former Italian Prime Minister who is special UN envoy to the Sahel, indicated that “the collective focus must now move to embedding democratic institutions, fostering national reconciliation and spearheading development through economic growth and job creation.” He also underscored “the regional nature of the challenges and the opportunities, cautioning that the entire fragile Sahel region needs to be supported so as to build sustainable peace.” According to Prodi, the United Nations is currently working on implementing an integrated UN strategy for the region which will encompass a band of countries in a transitional region south of the Sahara. While the Sahel has long been seen as a dangerous region with a high threat of kidnap, the threat increased following the January 2013 French military intervention in Mali. Regional Islamist groups, including AQIM, are known to operate in the border areas of Mali, Niger and Algeria. In turn, criminal gangs also carry out kidnappings for terrorist groups in return for financial payment.

- **21 August 2013** - US President Barack Obama congratulated Mali’s new President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita on his election victory, vowing that he would work with him as his country emerges from months of internal conflict. In a statement released by the President’s office on Tuesday, Obama stated that “we encourage the candidates and their supporters to accept the results, and to use this election as a foundation for further progress on democracy, national reconciliation, and addressing the security and humanitarian crises in the north.” The statement further noted that “the United States stands with the people and government of Mali as they work to advance peace and stability in Mali and the region.” Secretary of State John Kerry also commended the interim government for its role in securing elections that were peaceful, inclusive and orderly. In a statement released by his office, Kerry indicated that “the transparent and credible manner in which the election was conducted honors Mali’s democratic tradition, and reflects the progress that Mali has made over the past 18 months.” He further added that “to ensure the best possibility of consolidating this progress, Mali’s new government must address the country’s most pressing challenges, including national reconciliation and security sector reform, which is why we particularly emphasize the importance of Malian civilian control and oversight of the military.” Earlier this month, Mali’s constitutional court confirmed Mr. Keita’s landslide victory in the August 11 presidential run-off. Despite announcing during the elections that the polls had been marred by fraud, his rival, former Finance Minister Soumaila Cisse, vowed to make no official complaint to the court after he conceded defeat in the interests of helping to reunite the conflict-scarred nation. Mr. Keita, 68, a former Prime Minister and veteran of the political scene in Bamako, will take office on September 4 and will be charged with leading the West African state out of a seventeen-month political crisis that was sparked by a military coup last March.

- The United States State Department has added an operative from the al-Qaeda-linked Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) to its list of global terrorists. Mohamed Lahbous, who has been involved in kidnapping, weapons smuggling, and armed attacks, was designated by the State Department as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT). He is the third member of the terror group to be added to the list since MUJAO was listed as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist group on 7 December 2012. According to a State Department press release, “as a member of the organization, Lahbous has participated in a number of attacks, including the October 2011 abduction of three aid workers from a refugee camp in western Algeria, and a June 2012 attack in Ouargla, Algeria which killed one and injured three.” The June 2012 attack was executed by a suicide bomber who attacked a gendarme headquarters in Ouargla. MUJAO later claimed responsibility for the suicide bombing. Meanwhile the October 2011 incident, which occurred at the Raguni refugee camp in Tinduf province, involved the kidnapping of an Italian woman along with two Spanish nationals, all of who were providing aid to refugees in the area. Reports indicated that they were kidnapped by members of Lahbous’s group. The State Department’s press release further noted that Lahbous “has also been involved in arms trading and drug trafficking in North and

West Africa.” Lahbous is the third member of MUJAO to have been added to the list of SDGT since the group was added to it in December 2012. On the same day that MUJAO was named an SDGT, Hamad el Khairy and Ahmed el Tilemsi, two founding members of the group, were also added to the list. In June 2013, Oumar Ould Hamaha, a spokesman for MUJAO, was added to the State Department’s Rewards for Justice list.



Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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

## Security Summary

### Summary

MS Risk advises against all travel to the provinces of Tiris Zemmour, Adrar, Tagant, Hodh el Chargui, Dakhlet-Nouadhibou and Inchiri. We also advise against all travel to the northern and eastern regions of the country, especially the desert areas north of Oualata-Tichit-Ouadane-Zouerat line, as well as the border areas with Algeria, Mali and Morocco. MS Risk also advises against all but essential travel to the rest of the country, which includes travel along the Nouakchott-Nouadhibou corridor which comprises of the north-south arterial road that runs between these two cities and which passes through Nouamghar. This is due to extremist groups and armed smugglers that are active in these areas which has resulted in high threats of terrorism as well as a heightened risk of banditry and kidnapping.

On 22 August, officials in Mauritania announced that they have postponed the October 12 elections by six weeks after a coalition of opposition parties indicated that it would boycott the polls in an attempt to cause the vote to fail. The country’s election commission has since indicated that the first round of parliamentary and local elections will occur on November 23 while the second round, if necessary, will occur on December 7. With opposition parties threatening to boycott these elections, demonstrations may be held in a number of locations across the country, including Nouakchott. Although demonstrations have generally been peaceful, some have involved clashes with police. Consequently, MS Risk advises you to avoid political gatherings and demonstrations.

### Terrorism

Following the French military intervention in Mali there has been a heightened possibility of retaliatory attacks that may target Western interests in the region. Attacks could be indiscriminate and by occur in places that are frequented by foreigners. Consequently we advise vigilance.

### Kidnapping

There is a high risk of kidnapping throughout Mauritania and Westerners are the favoured target. In the past, hostages have been held captive for several months before being released. MS Risk advises anyone traveling to Mauritania to take particular caution in the region of Inchire (Akjoujt is the capita) as well as in the areas that border Mali and Morocco.

For companies with employees remaining in Mauritania, MS Risk advises you to arrange a trustworthy escort that is familiar with the country. The use of varied and unpredictable routes and schedules when moving from one location to another is also highly advised. Exercise a high awareness of personal security at all times and monitor the local developments.



## Domestic News

- 22 August 2013** - Officials in Mauritania have announced that they have postponed its October 12 elections by six weeks after a coalition of opposition parties indicated that it would boycott the polls in a bid to cause the vote to fail. On Thursday, the West African nation's election commission confirmed that the first round of parliamentary and local elections would now take place on November 23 while the second round would go ahead if required on December 7. A government official indicated that such a delay was chosen in order to give the opposition time to rethink its position and to take part in the election. The move follows an August 12 announcement by the Coordination of Democratic Opposition (COD), which comprises of ten opposition parties, that they would "boycott this electoral masquerade." In early August, Communications Minister Mohamed Yahya Ould Horma stated that advanced technology would be deployed in order to ensure that the elections were "transparent and credible." When discussing the possible election postponement, Mauritania's President indicated last week that such a move would "allow all political parties to take part." After gaining independence from France, which was followed by a one-party government under the rule of Moktar Ould Daddah, who was deposed in 1978, Mauritania had a series of military rulers until its first multi-party elections was held in 1992. Although Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz seized power in a 2008 coup and was elected president a year later, the COD has never

accepted his rule as a legitimate president and has demanded that he make way for a neutral leader to administer the vote.

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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



Security Summary

Summary

On 14 May, the Nigerian Government declared a State of Emergency in the states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe.

Since the announcement, military operations have been going on in all three states and curfews have been put in place in parts of Maiduguri, Borno state and Adamawa state. Curfews can be imposed, amended and lifted at a short notice. Consequently you should be alert to announcements made by the respective State Governments and you are advised to monitor any



developments in the affected states. There may be an increased threat of retaliatory attacks elsewhere in Nigeria following the commencement of military operations. MS Risk advises against all travel to: the Riverine areas of Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa Ibom and Cross River States; Warri city, Kano city, Okene City.

We advise against all travel to Adamawa State, Borno State, Yobe State, Gombe State and Bauchi State. This is due to the frequent violent attacks which have been occurring over the past months. More recent attacks have increasingly focused on public places, including bars and restaurants. These attacks have resulted in a large number of deaths and injuries. We also advise against all travel to Kano City and Okene City, which has also seen a frequent number of high levels of violence.

We advise against all but essential travel to Kano state, Kaduna State, Jigwa State, Katsina State, Sokoto State, Kebbi State, Jos City, Riyom and Barkin Ladi Local Government Areas in Plateau State; Okene Region of Kogi State. These areas have witnessed an increase in violent attacks. We also advise against all but essential travel to Mubi Town in Adamawa State and the area north of Mubi Town that borders Borno State where there has also been a rise in violent attacks. We also advise against all but essential travel to the non-riverine areas of Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers and Akwa Ibom States, Abia State, Kaduna City, Zaria City.

Companies with workers in northern Nigeria, even in areas which are not subject to specific advice against travel, will require a high level of security. In light of the recent kidnappings of Westerners, employers are advised to review their security arrangements and to ensure that compounds are protected.

There is a high threat of terrorism occurring in Nigeria. A bomb attack that occurred at a bus station in Kano city on 18 March 2013 resulted in multiple casualties. 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.

### *Kidnapping*

Although recent incidents of kidnapping have mostly occurred in northern Nigeria, MS Risk advises that such kidnappings can take place anywhere in the country.

- On 16 February 2013, after storming the compound of Lebanese-owned construction firm Setraco in Bauchi state, gunmen killed a security guard and abducted a Briton, an Italian, a Greek, two Lebanese and two Syrian workers. The British construction worker is believed to have been killed along with the six other foreign nationals. This was the worst case of foreigners being kidnapped in the mostly Muslim north of Africa's most populous country since an insurgency by Islamist militants intensified two years ago.
- In December 2012, a French national was kidnapped by armed men in Katsina State in northern Nigeria, reportedly from a residential compound.

- In 2012, a Lebanese national was kidnapped in Kaduna State. His Lebanese colleague was killed during the abduction
- In January 2012, a German national was killed in Kano city. He was killed on 31 May 2012.
- In May 2011, a British national and an Italian national were kidnapped together in Kebbi State. Both hostages were killed in Sokoto on 8 March 2012.

## *Threats and Terrorism*

Attacks by Islamist groups in northern Nigeria have become the biggest threat to stability in Africa's top oil producing country. This has been exacerbated by the fact that Western governments are currently concerned that militants may link up with groups elsewhere in the region, including al-Qaeda's North African wing, AQIM. These concerns have been further intensified by the conflict and military intervention in nearby Mali.

## On The Ground Reporting

- **1 September 2013** - Security officials have indicated that suspected Boko Haram fighters have killed at least twenty-four members of a vigilante group in northeastern Nigeria. According to the sources, another thirty-four people are missing. The attack occurred in the outskirts of Monguno, which is located in the state of Borno, and which is about 160k (100 miles) northeast of the state capital Maiduguri. On the ground sources have indicated that at the time of the attack, vigilante youths had been on a mission to capture Boko Haram militants in their camps when they were ambushed. Although the vigilantes had originally arranged to go with the army, after some hours of waiting for the soldiers to arrive, they decided to move into the region by themselves. The vigilantes were ambushed by militants who "had disguised in military uniforms with three captured patrol vehicles of the security agencies." Reports of militants wearing army uniforms is becoming a trend in their attacks as it has been reported in at least two other incidents. Despite the massive military deployment to the northern regions of Nigeria, militant attacks have increased, with mounting fears that more people will be killed. Last week, at least twenty vigilantes were killed in two separate attacks that were carried out in Borno.
- **27 August 2013** - In what is believed to be the latest violence in revenge against vigilantes, two attacks have been carried out by suspected Boko haram militants, resulting in the killing of at least twenty-four people in Nigeria's northeastern region. Residents and officials have indicated that on Sunday, at least eighteen people were killed in the town while on Monday, a military source indicated that another six people were killed in Damasak. Both towns are located in the state of Borno however they are some 200 kilometres (124 miles) apart. A survivor of the attack in Bama reported that the militants "came in military uniform and pretended to be members of the JTF," referring to a security task force. The survivor added that "they asked members of the vigilante group... But they opened fire on members of the group as we assembled for address, killing 14 persons and injuring 10 others." Meanwhile in Damasak, which is located along the border with neighboring Niger, relatives indicated that vigilantes were "traced there after they had travelled to the community in order to sell goods at the local market." Since the declaration of a state of



emergency in the Yobe, Adamawa and Borno, and with the subsequent military intervention, Nigeria's military has encouraged the formation of vigilante groups in a bid to aid them in tracking down Boko Haram members as they pursue an offensive in the northeast which is aimed at ending the Islamist groups' four-year insurgency. Since then, vigilantes have been credited with helping to push the insurgents out of the region however they have also been increasingly targeted in attacks by Boko Haram militants. In turn, a number of security and regional analysts have warned that while Boko Haram militants have been to a large degree scattered into more remote areas of the region, the current situation risks spiraling out of control and may result in further violence in the future that may not be localized in the northern region but may instead be spread out throughout the entire country.

- **24 August 2013** - In what appears to be an apparent ransom bid, gunmen in southern Nigeria kidnapped a prominent Lagos-based lawyer. In a statement released by Festus Keyamo, a lawyer and colleague of the victim, Mr Keyamo confirmed that Chief Mike Ozekhome was kidnapped however no exact date was provided. The statement described the incident as "one kidnap too many and it further draws local and international attention to the poor state of security in our country," adding that "it also highlights the state of joblessness among youths in our country which is one reason why they turn to this dangerous trade for their livelihood." Mr. Keyamo has appealed to the kidnapers to release Mr. Ozekhome who is a senior lawyer and a critic of corrupt and bad governments in Nigeria. National police spokesman Frank Mba has since indicated that a manhunt has been launched for Mr. Ozekhome and his kidnapers. Kidnapping for ransom, which was rife in the southern oil-producing Niger Delta before a 2009 amnesty deal for oil militants, has spread to other parts of the country in recent months, in which a number of prominent Nigerians and their relatives have become targets.
- **23 August 2013** - Officials have confirmed that Islamist insurgents dressed as soldiers opened fire on worshippers leaving a mosque in Nigeria's far northeast, killing at least thirty-five people in what is the second such attack to occur this month. This latest incident, which occurred in Dumba, was carried out on Monday however information relating to the attack was not made public until Friday as the village is located in a remote area where telecommunications remain down because of the ongoing military intervention. On the ground sources have indicated that Boko Haram gunmen dressed as soldiers entered the village early on Monday and took up positions at a crossroads, where they fired upon worshippers leaving a mosque after morning prayers. The source noted that the attack was believed to be in reprisal for a raid that was carried out by soldiers and vigilantes in the village the previous week. That raid resulted in the arrest of a number of Boko Haram militants. This is the second such incident to occur this month as several days ago, suspected Islamist militants, who were also disguised as soldiers, lured residents out of their home and opened fire on them. Four people were killed in the town of Gamboru Ngala, which is located near the border with Cameroon. With Boko Haram militants being pushed out of their local areas in northern Nigeria, it seems that the terrorist group is changing its tactics, and is taking advantage of the ongoing military intervention by disguising themselves as Nigerian troops in a bid to attack residents and cause confusion. This modus operandi will likely be seen in the following weeks as Boko Haram militants try to maintain their strongholds and influence throughout northern Nigeria.
- **21 August 2013** - Suspected Islamist militants disguised as soldiers lured residents out of their homes and opened fire on them, killing at least four people. The incident, which involved suspected members of Boko Haram, occurred around 1:00AM in the town of Gamboru, Ngala, near the border with Cameroon. It began when gunmen, dressed in military uniforms, entered the Fulatari neighborhood and called on residents to come out and see the Boko Haram members they claimed to have arrested. According to eye witness accounts, "they took up positions and shot whoever came out of his house to see the Boko Haram men they claimed they arrested." Residents of the town have indicated that the attack appears to be in reprisal for the recent arrests of Boko Haram members. On Monday, troops stationed in the town arrested seventeen Boko Haram suspects after a shootout following a tip-off by residents who feared an imminent attack. Wednesday's

incident also comes just days after Nigeria's military claimed that Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau "may have died" from a gunshot wound suffered during a clash with soldiers on June 30." So far, however, there has been no further confirmation of his death and violence attributed to the extremist group has continued.

## Domestic News

- **28 August 2013** - A Nigerian court on Wednesday ordered the extradition to the United States of a man who has been accused of being a member of al-Qaeda's Yemeni affiliate, assigned to find English-speaking recruits. The suspect, who has been identified as Lawal Olaniyi Babafemi, also known as "Abdullah" or "Ayatollah Mustapha," has been indicted on four charges in the United States, including supporting a foreign terrorist group. He is alleged to be a member of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) however there is no indication in the documents made public that he was linked to Nigerian Islamist extremist group Boko Haram. Court documents have revealed that Justice Ahmed Mohammed of the federal high court in Abuja ruled that "an order is hereby made that the respondent in this case, Lawal Olaniyi Babafemi...be extradited to the United States of America to face the indictment against him," adding that "it is also ordered that the respondent...shall be surrendered to the officials of the United States of America not later than 15 days from the order of this court." Mr. Babafemi, 33, did not speak in court other than to confirm to the judge that he did not oppose his extradition. According to court documents, Mr. Babafemi travelled to Yemen between January 2010 and August 2011 in order to train with AQAP militants as well as to seek out senior members Anwar al-Awlaqi and Samir Khan, two highly influential militants who have since been killed in a drone strike. Court documents also revealed that during interviews with FBI agents, "Babafemi admitted travelling to Yemen," adding that "AQAP members have him...approximately \$8,600 in order to return to Nigerian and recruit English-speaking individuals to work in AQAP's English-language media operation." The Nigerian court's extradition ruling stems from an indictment that was filed on 21 February 2013 in a US district court in the eastern district of New York. The charges against him in the US include conspiracy to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization and unlawful use of firearms. The court documents also revealed that he had received firearms training. Mr. Babafemi is not the first Nigerian to be accused of acting on behalf of AQAP. In 2009, "underwear bomber" Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, who had travelled to Yemen in 2009 and met with al-Awlaqi, attempted to blow up an airliner on Christmas Day. He has since been sentenced to life in prison in the United States.

- Meanwhile officials in Nigeria have charged two of its citizens with assisting an Iranian militant cell in planning possible attacks that would have targeted Israeli interests. In February of this year, Nigeria's secret service (SSS) arrested Abdullahi Mustapha Berende and Saheed Oluremi Adewumi and another Nigerian, accusing the three men of being members of a "high profile terrorist network" that was planning attacks on home soil. Berende has been accused of travelling to Iran to help with "material assistance and terrorist training...in the use of fire arms, explosives and other related weapons." he has also been accused of knowing about spying on two Israeli targets in Lagos, the Chabad Lubavitch Jewish centre and the Lagos Branch of AA Consulting, but failing to alert the police. The charges do not specify whether he himself is accused of doing the spying, however the SSS had previously suggested that he did. The charges also indicate that he took US \$30,000 in funding in order to carry out the operations. Berende and Adewumi have also both been accused of aiding an Iranian terrorist group. Officials in Iran have yet to comment on the case. With the June arrest of three Lebanese men, over their alleged links to Hezbollah, authorities in Nigeria have become increasingly concerned about an apparent surge in interest in the West African country by Shiite Muslim militant groups who have links to either Iran or Lebanon. While the threat remains to be minimal, in comparison to the threat from al-Qaeda-linked groups like Boko Haram, recent cases have caused officials to be increasingly concerned. In turn, Iran has been in the spotlight in Nigeria before. In 2010,

authorities at Lagos port found a shipment of artillery rockets, rifle rounds and other weapons from Iran. A Nigerian and an Iranian were each sentenced to five year's in prison in May for smuggling the weapons. In a case in 2004, an Iranian diplomat was arrested on suspicion that he was spying on the Israeli embassy in Nigeria's capital Abuja.

- **21 August 2013** - Doubts have emerged this week over the Nigerian military's claims that the leader of Islamist extremist group Boko Haram may have been killed. Questions have been raised over the timing of the announcement, which came on the day that the Joint Task Force (JTF) concluded its work and handed over its duties to a newly created military division that has been charged with the battle to end Boko Haram's four-year insurgency. On Monday, a security task force in north-eastern Nigeria issued a statement indicating that Abubakar Shekau, who was declared a "global terrorist" by the United States, "may have died" from a gunshot wound after a clash with soldiers on Jun 30." The statement further noted that "it is greatly believed that Shekau may have died between 25 July to 3 August 2013" after being taken over the border into Amitchide in neighboring Cameroon. The statement also indicated that an intelligence report suggests that Shekau was shot when soldiers raided a Boko Haram base at Sambisa Forest in north-eastern Nigeria. However by Tuesday, local media reported that there had been increasing unease within the military pertaining to the claims. Task force spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Sagir Musa declined to comment when contacted about the statement, indicating only that he had left Maiduguri, which is the epicentre of Boko Haram's insurgency and where the force was based. National defence spokesman Brigadier General Chris Olukolade has also distanced himself from the statement. Some sources have indicated that senior members within the military were unhappy with the release of the statement as there was not yet enough evidence to make such claims and that intelligence was still being analyzed. Claims of Shekau's death come one week after the Nigerian military stated that on 14 August, it had killed Boko Haram's second-in-command, Momodu Bama, also known by his alias "Abu Saad." However so far, there have been confirmations relating to his death. In turn, a video message released on 12 August depicted a man who appeared to be Shekau, who insisted that he was in good health. He had also referred to attacks which had occurred in early August. The military statement released on Monday however has specified that the video was a fake. So far there have been no independent confirmations pertaining to this video. Washington's response to these latest claims have come with the US State Department stating that it had seen the reports pertaining to Shekau and that it was currently "working to ascertain the facts," nothing that he had already been falsely reported dead in 2009. US State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf added that "he is the most visible leader of Boko Haram, and if his death turns out to be true, the loss of such a central and well-known figure would set back Boko Haram's operations and remove a key voice from its efforts to mobilize violent extremists in Nigeria and around the world." Shekau has been considered the leader of Boko Haram ever since the terrorist group's founder Muhammad Yusuf, died in 2009 while in police custody. Since taking over, the terrorist group's insurgency has seen a violent turn, with thousands being killed in attacks that have been carried out on school children, teachers the UN, the police, north-eastern traditional leaders, journalists, mobile phone towers and ordinary Nigerians going about their lives. In March of this year, the United States placed a US \$7 million (5.3 million euro) bounty on his head. If these most recent claims of Abubakar Shekau's death are confirmed, his passing will likely represent a significant moment in the future of the terrorist group, however it is unlikely that Boko Haram will end its violence in the northern regions of the Nigeria. Instead, this may fuel further retaliatory attacks that will likely target political and security officials along with military bases. Furthermore, the group has a number of factions, such as al-Qaeda-linked Ansaru, which has claimed responsibility for the kidnapping and killing of a number of Westerners. Such factions are believed to operate independently and any confirmations of Shekau's death will likely result in retaliatory kidnappings and attacks that will be linked to his death.

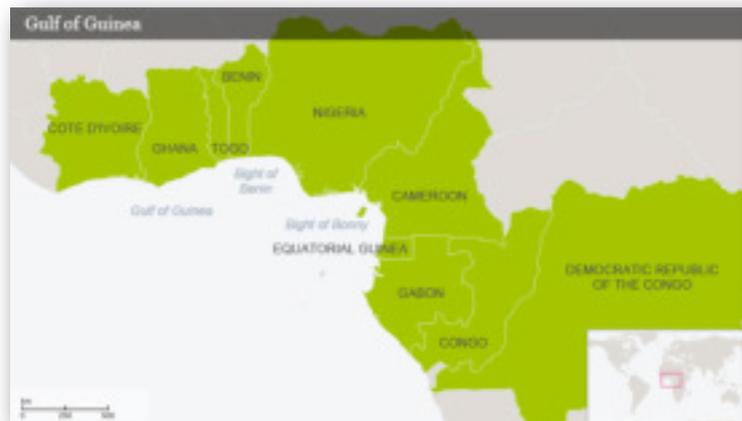


No travel restrictions for this country

There is currently no travel advisory for Togo. Crime is on the rise in Lome. Local authorities warn of a rise in violent robberies and car-jacking incidents that target both foreigners and Togolese alike. Togolese authorities have also warned motorists to only stop for individuals in uniform, particularly after dark. You should avoid travelling alone where possible even within Lome city limits, especially after dark. There is a possibility of retaliatory attacks in Togo, due to its participation in the intervention in Mali.

## Domestic News

- **28 August 2013** - Togo's Prime Minister Kwesi Seleagodji Ahoomey-Zuno and his government have resigned from their posts one month after parliamentary polls saw the ruling party win two-thirds of the majority. A statement released by the presidency confirmed that Ahoomey-Zuno has submitted "the resignation of the whole of his government to the president of the republic." Reports have indicated that President Faure Gnassingbe has accepted their resignations and is expected to name a new government soon. In nationwide polls that were held on 25 July of this year, Gnassingbe's UNIR party won 62 of 91 seats, effectively allowing the president's family to maintain its decades-long grip on power. The closest opposition party, the Let's Save Togo coalition, won only nineteen seats. Despite opposition parties alleging fraud and calling the vote a "sham," the country's Constitutional Court confirmed the results of the election on August 12. Observers from the African Union (AU) and from the west African bloc ECOWAS have also stated that the elections were held in acceptable conditions. The polls were the latest step in the country's transition to democracy after Gnassingbe Eyadema's rule from 1967 until his death in 2005, when the military installed his son, Faure Gnassingbe, as president. He subsequently went on to win the 2005 and 2010 presidential elections which the opposition claims were fraudulent.



## At Sea

### Hijacks

- None reported during this time period.

### Unsuccessful Attacks/Robberies

- **27 August 2013** - Pirates in two boats approached a Cameroon-flagged passenger Ro-Ro, the Brenda Corlett, at 0830 LT near Parrot Island, Calabar, Nigeria. A Nigerian Navy gunboat was escorting the vessel following a tip off from local fishermen that pirate boats were in the vicinity. The Nigerian Navy's gunboat gave chase, resulting in one boat escaping into the nearby creeks, however the other boat was stalled. On approaching the boat, seven pirates fired their AK-47's at the gunboat, resulting in an exchange of gunfire with four pirates reportedly killed. One of the pirates was detained.
- **13 June 2013 (Late Report)** - While underway, two speed boats with fourteen pirates on board armed with pistols and AK-47 rifles attacked a tug at 0315 LT, approximately 30 nautical miles south of Kwa Ibo, Nigeria. Eight pirates boarded the tug, captured four crew members, stole their personal belongings and took them ashore. On 21 June 2013, the four kidnapped crew members were safely released. It is believed that a ransom payment was made for their safe release.

### Weather Analysis

- **Gulf of Guinea** - Southerly winds of 10 - 15 knots and seas of 4 - 6 feet.
  - **Extended Forecast** - Southwest winds of 10 - 15 knots and seas of 4 - 6 feet.
- **Synoptic Discussion** - The Gulf of Guinea is under the influence of high and low pressure systems, bringing strong southerly winds and moisture into the area. Expect mostly cloudy conditions with rain showers and possible thunderstorms.

### Piracy News

- **28 August 2013** - On Wednesday, the European Union announced that it was preparing to increase security efforts in the Gulf of Guinea as the West African maritime region has developed into the new global piracy hotspot. Speaking at a maritime security conference in Nigeria's economic capital, German Rear Admiral Jurgen Ehle, who heads an EU military working group for

West Africa, indicated that the new measures, which will likely be announced in October, will not include sending warships to the region, a move that helped reduce pirate attacks in the East African region. Instead, the EU's efforts will focus on helping to improve coordination between regional navies, training and other measures, rather than deploying forces. In essence, "the main part of the strategy...is less to send ships," specifying that the focus will be on "military advice" and civilian programmes to curb poverty, which is fueling much of the unrest. Over the past year, the number of attacks in the Gulf of Guinea have dramatically risen and have overtaken the number of attacks off the coast of Somalia, which has seen a sharp decline that has been attributed to international navies patrolling the waters coupled with greater vigilance by vessels transiting the region, in which many now have armed security teams on board. In 2010, the Gulf of Guinea saw 39 attacks, the numbers however have increased over the past two years, with 53 attacks occurring in 2011 and 63 in 2012. Many of the attacks that have occurred in the area have seen tankers hijacked with the aim of stealing fuel cargo for sale on the black market. Other instances have occurred of Nigeria's oil-producing southern coast, where industry vessels have been raided, sometimes with expatriate workers kidnapped for ransom.

- Meanwhile Nigeria's Navy has killed six pirates and injured one other in the latest attack to stop the outlaws from expanding their territory in the Gulf of Guinea. According to Delta state navy spokesman Lt. Delightful Yohana, the pirates engaged the navy in a gun battle off the coast of Calabar in Nigerian and Cameroonian waters late on Sunday. Nigeria's navy fired back, killing the six pirates while the other attacker is in custody. The operation is the latest in a string of victories for the Nigerian navy that has amped up its presence offshore and bolstered it with support from its air forces. According to Yohana, in the last two weeks, the navy has killed eighteen pirates and arrested another five.
- **19 August 2013** - On Monday, the Nigerian Navy confirmed that its soldiers killed twelve pirates in a gun battle as they attempted to flee from a fuel tanker that they hijacked off the coast of the Gulf of Guinea last week. According to Navy Flag Officer Rear Admiral Sidi-Ali Hassan, pirates hijacked the St. Kitts and Nevis-flagged MT Notre on August 15, but an emergency signal was sent to the navy, which resulted in several gunships being deployed in order to recover the vessel. The navy's gunships caught up with the vessel and forced it into Nigerian waters but while negotiating the vessel's release, the pirates attempted to escape on a speed boat. Although the navy boats pursued the pirates, they were fired upon. Sidi-Ali Hassan has indicated that "the gun battle lasted about 30 minutes after which they were overpowered. On taking over the speed boat, four of the militants were alive and unhurt while the rest of the pirates were killed in the crossfire." The crew of the MT Notre, which was carrying 17,000 metric tonnes of gasoline at the time of the hijacking, were all rescued unharmed.



## 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.

MS Risk is always mindful and compliant to legislation and guidelines on the use of private security services including, but not limited to the US FCPA (1977), UK Bribery Act (2010), Canadian Bill C-48 (2007), ASX 8 Corporate Governance Principles, and the World Bank/IFC Voluntary Principles on the Use of Government and Private Security Forces. MS Risk is a signatory of the Swiss government's International Code of Conduct. It is transparent and compliant to market expectations on legal and ethical conduct in the performance of services.

MS Risk has a dedicated team of researchers, a 24/7 hotline service and a pool of trained and experienced consultants to support client needs.

MS Risk supports clients in a variety of business sectors with the following services:

- Security Consulting
  - Risk assessments and intelligence reporting
  - Planning and management
  - Due diligence and investigations.
- Project Management
  - Interim security
  - Training
  - Special assignments
- Crisis Response
  - Crisis management
  - 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](http://www.msrisk.com)

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