



The West Africa Report

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



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- 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.

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The West Africa Report ~ SUMMARY

October 28 – November 10, 2013



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Central African Republic

- **4 November 2013** - At least seven people were killed in an attack carried out on Saturday by armed men in Bossembele, southwestern region of the CAR.
- **29 October 2013** - On Tuesday, the United Nations Security Council approved sending a special 250-strong military force to the CAR in order to protect UN workers in light of the increasingly chaotic situation.

Ghana

- **30 October 2013** - Police in Ghana have arrested forty-six foreign nationals from China and India, accusing them of illegally mining gold.

Guinea

- **1 November 2013** - Officials in Guinea-Bissau announced this week that national elections will be delayed until 2014.

Ivory Coast

- **29 October 2013** - According to a ruling by the International Criminal Court on Tuesday, former Ivory Coast leader Laurent Gbagbo must remain in detention in The Hague pending a possible trial on charges of crimes against humanity.

Liberia

- **15 October 2013** - On Tuesday, ex-President Charles Taylor was transferred under tight security from The Hague to a British prison where he is likely to spend the rest of his life.

Mali

On the Ground Reporting

- **8 November 2013** - Three people were killed on Friday after clashes broke out between MNLA Tuareg separatists and the Malian army in the northern region of the country.
- **7 November 2013** - According to Malian and regional security sources, the owner of a car used in the kidnapping of two French journalists who were murdered in northern Mali last weekend has been identified.
- **4 November 2013** - On Monday, an international operation, under way to track down the killers of two French journalists who were shot dead in Mali, resulted in local police authorities stating that around a dozen suspects had been arrested.
 - Meanwhile, three Tuareg and Arab rebel movements in northern Mali announced their merger to form a united front in peace talks with authorities in the Malian capital city Bamako.
 - In the latest insecurity to hit the country, on Monday four people were killed in northern Mali after their truck ran over a land mine.
- **3 November 2013** - Two French radio journalists were found dead just hours after being kidnapped by armed men in northern Mali.
- **1 November 2013** - According to reports, more than one thousand Malians burned tyres and set fire to the mayor's residence in the northern city of Gao in a protest against the make-up of a delegation that is representing them at a nationwide conference.
- **30 October 2013** - According to a source from the Malian army headquarters, militants on Wednesday fired shells at the airport in Gao, Mali's second-largest city where French and Malian soldiers are stationed.

Domestic News

- **31 October 2013** - Police and Judicial sources indicated on Thursday that the soldier who led a coup last March has been summoned to appear in court over alleged violence involving men under his command.
- **29 October 2013** - According to Mali's Justice Ministry, the country's government has lifted arrest warrants against four leaders of the West African country's ethnic Tuareg rebellion.

International Developments

- **7 October 2013** - On Thursday, officials in France stated that al-Qaeda's north African branch may have been responsible for the death of two French journalists in Mali at the weekend.
- **5 November 2013** - On Tuesday, as the bodies of two French journalists killed in northern Mali arrived in Paris, officials in France announced that they would stick to their plans of withdrawing most of its troops from Mali by the end of January 2014.
- **4 November 2013** - United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon arrived in Mali late on Monday to begin a regional tour that will highlight the battle against poverty.
- **1 November 2013** - Following an appeal for more UN peacekeepers, the Netherlands announced on Friday that it will send 380 soldiers and four Apache attack helicopters to Mali.

Mauritania

Domestic News

- **21 October 2013** - On Monday, one of Mauritania's main opposition parties announced that it was pulling out of the November 23 elections, despite an earlier pledge to take part.

International Developments

- **17 October 2013** - A new global index released on Thursday by an anti-slavery charity revealed that Mauritania ranks amongst the countries with the highest prevalence of modern slavery.

Niger

On the Ground Reporting

- **4 November 2013** - Authorities in Niger rescued seventy-two illegal migrants who were stranded in the Sahara desert after their truck got a flat tyre.
- **1 November 2013** - On Friday, officials in Niger ordered the "immediate" closure of migrant camps in the northern region of the country after ninety-two people, mostly women and children, died of thirst while trying to cross the Sahara desert.

International Developments

- **29 October 2013** - On Tuesday, France's President Francois Hollande confirmed the release of four French hostages who were kidnapped in Niger in 2010.
- **28 October 2013** - Meanwhile in Niger, officials have stated that dozens of people traversing the Sahara desert, on their way to Europe, are feared to have died of thirst.

Nigeria

On the Ground Reporting

- **5 November 2013** - On Tuesday, Nigeria's army indicated that it had shot dead seen suspected Boko Haram fighters during a raid in a northeastern area where the insurgents have killed dozens last week.
- **4 November 2013** - Last week, Boko Haram insurgents killed twenty-seven people and wounded dozens others after some seventy gunmen stormed the town of Bama in Borno state late on Thursday.
- **3 November 2013** - Gunmen in northeastern Nigeria have killed more than thirty people after attacking a wedding convoy.
 - Meanwhile a church stampede in Anambra has killed at least seventeen people, with many more left injured.
 - In a video released on Sunday, Boko Haram's leader Abubakar Shekau states that he led an October 24 attack in which thirty-five people were killed in the Nigerian city of Damaturu.

Domestic News

- **7 November 2013** - According to a Nigerian official, Nigeria requires the help from officials in Cameroon in order to police their shared border as the country seeks to win the ongoing battle against Boko Haram militants.
- **6 November 2013** - Nigeria's President Goodluck Jonathan has requested that lawmakers extend a state of emergency, which was declared in the northeast in May, for an additional six months, citing that the Islamist insurgency had not yet been contained.

International Developments

- **5 November 2013** - According to the United Nations human rights office, Nigeria's Boko Haram Islamists could be classed as war criminals.

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 - 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. Legislative and municipal elections took place on 30 September 2013. Although the election results have not yet been released, it is possible that protests may occur if fraud allegations by the opposition are announced. Such protests may turn violent with minimal warning. Consequently MS Risk advises any travellers to the country to remain vigilant and to avoid large crowds, political demonstrations and rallies. On 14 May 2013, the Government of Nigeria declared a state of emergency in the states of Adamawa, 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 N'dian 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.

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 rapes. 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 against 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 The Gambia's recent decision to withdraw from the Commonwealth, there has been mounting anti-UK rhetoric by the country's president. This may result in an increase in anti-UK sentiment throughout the country. Consequently MS Risk advises anyone in The Gambia to avoid discussing politically sensitive topics. 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 travellers to avoid all demonstrations.

Ghana - [Click Here](#)

Guinea - The results of the 28 September legislative elections have been released. Consequently, the political situation within the country remains tense and protests may occur as the official results are announced. Such protests and riots may turn violent and it is likely that the capital city and other regions throughout Guinea will be affected by such protests over the coming weeks. 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 in the "Guinea Forestiere" region in the far south-east of Guinea. A large number of injuries were also reported and properties destroyed. Areas of Guinea that border Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, the Ivory coast, Liberia and Sierra Leone are often tense and have an increased military presence. Therefore, MS Risk advises against all travel to the regions bordering the countries listed above. There have been regular reports of robberies on the routes Mamou, Faranah, Kissidougou, Guekedou, Macent and Nzerekore. MS Risk advises all travellers on these routes to remain vigilant and to avoid 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.

Guinea-Bissau - [Click Here](#)

Ivory Coast - [Click Here](#)

Liberia - [Click Here](#)

Mali - [Click Here](#)

Mauritania - [Click Here](#)

Niger - [Click Here](#)

Nigeria - [Click Here](#)

Senegal - Although there are currently no travel restrictions for Senegal, MS Risk advises avoiding 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. Severe water shortages in Dakar have led to a number of demonstrations in the suburbs. Youths have blocked some roads with burning tyres and have clashed with police. MS Risk advises travellers to avoid all demonstrations and to leave any affected areas at the first sign that unrest may develop. 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 collapse due to a landslide caused by heavy rain. At least six people were killed in the accident. MS Risk therefore advises all travellers in the country to exercise due caution when travelling by road throughout the season.

Togo - 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.

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country



Security Summary

Any body traveling to, or residing in, Burkina Faso is urged to maintain a high level of security awareness at all times

Threats and Concerns

There is a general threat from terrorism throughout the Sahel region. 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 Boulsa, 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.

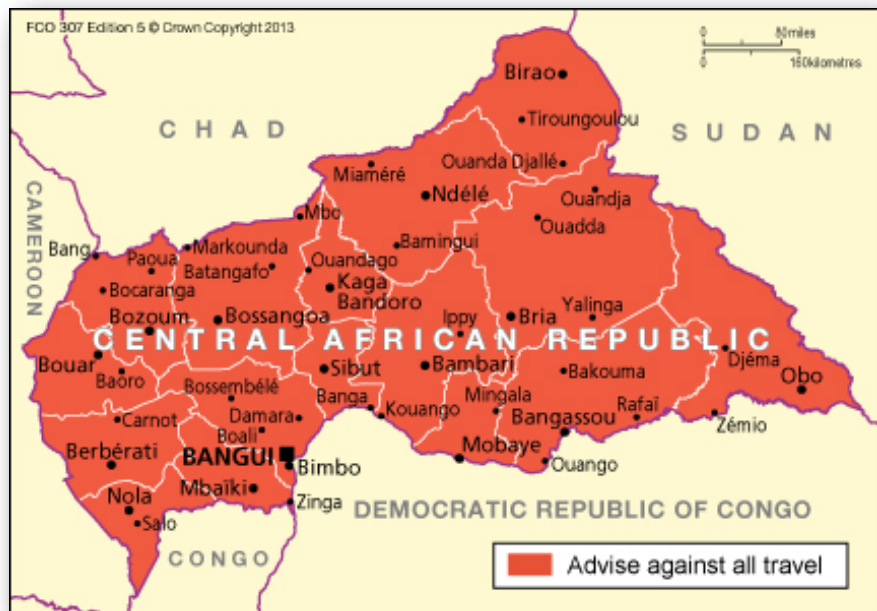
Finally, unconfirmed reports suggest there is an elevated banditry threat on the main routes south and east of the town of Fada N'Gourma en route to Pama and Diapala respectively. Road moves to these areas should be risk assessed and liaison with police should occur until the nature of the threats has 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 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

- **4 November 2013** - At least seven people were killed in an attack carried out on Saturday by armed men in Bossembele, which is located in the southwestern region of the CAR. According to a humanitarian source, who cited the CAR's Red Cross, "the Red Cross officials buried some of the bodies of the victims while others were buried by the residents of the area." The latest attack to occur in the CAR demonstrates the continued persistence of insecurity in the country. It also comes after days of tension in the capital city caused by former fighters of the Seleka rebel group.

International Developments

- **29 October 2013** - On Tuesday, the United Nations Security Council approved sending a special 250-strong military force to the CAR in order to protect UN workers in light of the increasingly chaotic situation. The decision comes after the UN's Secretary General Ban Ki-moon requested special forces last week due to the anarchic conditions in the impoverished nation where rebels seized power in March of this year. According to diplomats at the UN, the force will not be composed of traditional blue helmet peacekeepers. Instead, their rarely used orders will only be to protect UN workers and the UN's premises. The force that will be deployed to the CAR is similar to the one that was sent to protect UN staff members in Iraq during the height of the country's sectarian strife after the US-led invasion in 2003. Under the UN plan, the first 250 troops will be taken from an existing peacekeeping force and will be based in the capital, Bangui. The deployment could later be increased to 560 troops with others sent out to other parts of the country.

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



Ghana

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 which in one case 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 reports 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 travelling to the Northern Region, MS Risk advises you to remain alert to the potential of new outbreaks of flooding which 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.

On the Ground Reporting

- **30 October 2013** - Police in Ghana have arrested forty-six foreign nationals from China and India, accusing them of illegally mining gold. According to reports, the foreigners were detained during overnight raids in the country's central region, where they were found to be operating small barges to dredge the bed of the River Offin. Police have indicated that if the forty-three Chinese and three Indians who were detained did not have the correct paperwork, they would be deported. While throughout this year, more than 4,500 Chinese nationals have been repatriated, after a series of security operations that targeted illegal goldmines, officials have indicated that since the clampdown began, some illegal miners have been going out at night in order to avoid detection. Ghana is Africa's largest gold producer after South Africa and its laws prevent foreigners from working in small-scale gold mines.



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

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.

Domestic News

- **1 November 2013** - Officials in Guinea-Bissau announced this week that national elections will be delayed until 2014. According to a proposal shown to political parties on Friday, the country's interim president proposed postponing the polls, which were initially set for November 24. Manuel dos Santos, a representative of the PAIGC party who saw the proposal, has stated that the dates being considered for the elections are in late February and early March 2014. While the United Nations special representative to Guinea-Bissau had previously voiced concern over the upcoming vote, and had stated that it would likely be delayed as a result of financial and logistical issues, this is the first time that officials within Guinea-Bissau's government have proposed postponing the vote.

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



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.

International Developments

- **29 October 2013** - According to a ruling by the International Criminal Court on Tuesday, former Ivory Coast leader Laurent Gbagbo must remain in detention in The Hague pending a possible trial on charges of crimes against humanity. In its ruling, the court indicated that “the appeals chamber dismissed the grounds for appeal raised by the defence,” against a decision ordering Mr. Gbagbo be held pending charges for orchestrating the post - 2010 election violence. In June of this year, judges indicated that they needed more evidence before charging the former Ivory Coast strongman, who has been held by the ICC for almost two years. Consequently, the ICC has yet to confirm the charges against Mr. Gbagbo for his role in the bloody election standoff, which occurred nearly three years ago. Mr. Gbagbo, 68, is accused of fomenting a wave of violence that swept the West African nation after he refused to concede defeat in the November 2010 elections. Five months of fighting followed. Mr. Gbagbo was captured in April 2011 when current Ivorian President Alassane Ouattara’s forces, along with French and UN backing, overran his heavily fortified compound in the Ivorian capital city Abidjan. Seven months later, he was transferred into the custody of the ICC, which had issued an arrest warrant against him, and has been held in the ICC’s detention unit in The Hague ever since.



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

(including Sinkor beach in broad daylight) where most international visitors stay. The roads from Monrovia to Roberts International Airport, the port town of Buchanan and to the border with Sierra 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.



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.

International Developments

- **29 October 2013** - On Tuesday, the family of former Liberian warlord Charles Taylor, who was sentenced to fifty years for war crimes and crimes against humanity, stated that he was being “ill-treated” in a British jail where he is serving out his sentence. Family spokesman Sando Johnson told journalists during a press conference in the Liberian capital of Monrovia that “information we got revealed that he is not given food and even water....If this continues for the next two days, Taylor may die in jail.” The spokesman indicated that friends and contacts of Mr. Taylor had obtained the information noting that his family had not been in contact with the ex-warlord since he was transferred to a British jail earlier this month from The Hague, where he had been held since the start of his trial in 2007. According to a source close to the family, Mr. Taylor’s wife had been able to talk to him for ten minutes the day he was transferred to Britain however since then, there has been no further communication. When asked about the claims, a spokesperson for Britain’s Ministry of Justice stated that “we do not comment on individual cases.” The UN’s Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), which is in charge of Mr. Taylor’s case, has not specified which prison he was sent to. Mr. Taylor was sentenced on eleven counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity. During his trial, judges at The Hague ruled that as Liberia’s president from 1997 to 2003, he supplied guns and ammunition to rebels in neighboring Sierra Leone in a conflict notorious for its mutilations and drugged child soldiers. He was found guilty of supporting the rebels during a civil war that claimed 120,000 lives between 1991 and 2002, in exchange for “blood diamonds” mined by slave labour.

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country



Security Summary

Summary

MS Risk advises against all 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, and President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita and his new government took office in September 2013. Legislative elections are expected to take place in November and December 2013. 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. Night time checkpoints continue to operate in Bamako, largely controlling access to military and government facilities. Checkpoints are in place from approximately 9PM until dawn.



MS Risk advises against all 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, and President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita and his new government took office in September 2013. Legislative elections are expected to take place in November and December 2013. 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. Night time checkpoints continue to operate in Bamako, largely controlling access to military and government facilities. Checkpoints are in place from approximately 9PM until dawn.

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 to 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

- **8 November 2013** - Three people were killed on Friday after clashes broke out between MNLA Tuareg separatists and the Malian army in the northern region of the country. A statement released by the MNLA accused the Malian army of violating a ceasefire agreement and stating that they had arrested “several civilians, and executed three of them, wounding three others.” The Malian defence ministry however has stated that a group of armed bandits had attacked a Malian army patrol. A defence ministry statement released late on Friday stated that “three were killed and four were wounded. A vehicle, arms, ammunition and communications equipment were seized.”
- **7 November 2013** - According to Malian and regional security sources, the owner of a car used in the kidnapping of two French journalists who were murdered in northern Mali last weekend has been identified. According to a Malian security source close to the investigation, “we have informed France of the formal identification of the owner of the kidnappers’ vehicle. It is Bayes Ag Bakabo, a Tuareg.” The source further added that Ag Bakabo was from the same tribe as Ambery Ag Rhissa, a leader of the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) in Kidal, whom the journalists had just interviewed prior to being kidnapped in front of his home. The source also noted that Ag Bakabo was “strongly suspected” of having planned the kidnapping on behalf of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), whose members he was regularly associated with before the kidnapping. Currently Malian security sources have obtained details of possible accomplices and are tracking Ag Bakabo down. An African military source in Kidal has confirmed the information, stating that Ag Bakabo had joined the MNLA after leaving AQIM in order to cover up his association with the Islamist group. French authorities have indicated that the kidnappers likely murdered the two Radio France Internationale journalists after an engine failure in the kidnap vehicle, fearing that they would be pursued by the French army. On the ground sources have also indicated that the journalists were initially “very likely” to have been destined for the AQIM unit led by Abdelkrim Targui, a Tuareg former lieutenant of Abdelhamid Abou Zeid.
- **4 November 2013** - On Monday, an international operation, under way to track down the killers of two French journalists who were shot dead in Mali, resulted in local police authorities stating that around a dozen suspects had been arrested. Ghislaine Dupont, 57, and Claude Verlon, 55, were kidnapped and killed by what French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said were “terrorist groups” in the northeastern town of Kidal on Saturday. Since then the Foreign Minister has stated that while “at present, there is no certainty about who committed the murder...We will do everything to find the killers and punish them.” A police source in Gao has indicated that “a dozen suspects” had been detained following the deaths of the Radio France Internationale (RFI) journalists. Sources in France have indicated that the Paris prosecutor has opened an inquiry into the murders, and investigators from France’s counter-terrorism unit were due to fly to Mali on Monday.
 - Meanwhile, three Tuareg and Arab rebel movements in northern Mali announced their merger to form a united front in peace talks with authorities in the Malian capital city Bamako. According to reports, after several days of talks in Burkina Faso, which is the regional mediator for the conflict, representatives of the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) along with the Arab Movement of Azawad (MAA) and the High Council for the Unity of Azawad (HCUA) adopted a “political platform,” a “negotiating committee,” and a joint “decision-making body.” The three rebel movements further indicated that the decision to merge was “guided by a common political will to prioritize the best interests of the people” of the vast northern desert region they call Azawad, adding that a political solution was the only option in securing peace. According to the groups, the merger will go ahead “within 45 days” after the membership of each of the groups had approved the move, adding that no name has yet been chosen for the new movement.
 - In the latest insecurity to hit the country, on Monday four people were killed in northern Mali after their truck ran over a land mine. According to a local government official in Menaka, four passengers were killed when a pick-up, which was transporting thirty-eight people between the

desert towns of Ansongo and Menaka in the region of Gao, drove over the explosive device. Ibrahim Ag Moha further indicated that “four people died on the spot and eight others were injured, and are currently being taken to hospital in Menaka.” Two of the injured are reported to be in critical condition. The truck was a public transport vehicle. It currently remains unknown who is responsible for laying the mine however a report released by the United Nations earlier this year indicated that unexploded ordnance and land mines littering the West African nation remained a “significant threat.”

- **3 November 2013** - Two French radio journalists were found dead just hours after being kidnapped by armed men in northern Mali. In what French President Francois Hollande has called a “despicable” act, an emergency ministers meeting was called for Sunday. On Saturday, Ghislaine Dupont and Claude Verlon of Radio France International (RFI) had travelled to the northern city of Kidal in order to interview a spokesman for the Tuareg separatist group the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA). According to their employer, the two journalists were abducted outside the home of the spokesman. According to officials at RFI, MNLA spokesman Ambery Ag Rhissa stated that he had heard commotion outside and “saw the kidnappers put the journalists into a beige 4X4.” Officials at RFI further noted that men in turbans and speaking the Tuareg language “ordered Mr. Ag Rhissa to get back inside and forced the journalists’ driver to lie down,” adding that he had heard Verlon and Dupont resist and protest at their abduction. According to RFI, “this was the last time that the journalists were seen alive.” While the exact circumstances of the journalists’ deaths are not yet known, French army spokesman Colonel Gilles Jaron confirmed that French forces in Mali were alerted about the kidnappings and immediately sent out a patrol and two helicopters. According to Colonel Jaron, “the bodies of the two journalists were found by the patrol about 12 kilometers (seven miles) east of Kidal on the ground near a vehicle that had stopped,” adding that it was about two hours after their abduction. Dupont, 57, was an African affairs specialist who had spent twenty-seven years covering the continent since joining RFI in 1986. She had travelled to Ethiopia and Sudan and spent ten years in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Verlon, 55, who had been at the station since 1982, was also a seasoned journalist who was “used to difficult terrain across the world.” In a statement released on Sunday by the president’s office, Francois Hollande expressed “his indignation over this despicable act.” The French leader called a meeting of his ministers for Sunday in order to establish “jointly with Malian authorities and UN forces, the circumstances of the killings.” According to the French president’s office, Hollande and Malian leader Ibrahim Boubacar Keita spoke over the telephone and had reaffirmed their determination “to relentlessly pursue the fight against terrorist groups that are present in northern Mali.” The UN Security Council also “strongly condemned” the slaying of the journalists and “reiterated their full support” for the UN Mission in Mali. The fatal kidnapping of the two journalists came just days after four Frenchmen, held hostage in neighboring Niger for the past three years, were freed.
- **30 October 2013** - According to a source from the Malian army headquarters, militants on Wednesday fired shells at the airport in Gao, Mali’s second-largest city where French and Malian soldiers are stationed. According to the source, there were no victims and the situation has since been brought under control by French army helicopters which were dispatched in order to chase the militants. This attack is just the latest to hit Mali’s northern region in recent weeks. While militants linked to al-Qaeda had previously been under heavy attack in the cities of Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu, effectively forcing them to retreat into the desert, Mali’s fragile peace has not lasted as on September 28, the militants resumed their deadly insurgency. Over the past number of weeks, they have killed a dozen civilians and UN peacekeepers across the northern region.

Domestic News

- **31 October 2013** - Police and Judicial sources indicated on Thursday that the soldier who led a coup last March has been summoned to appear in court over alleged violence involving men under

his command. According to the judicial source, the intention was to question Amadou Sanogo about “the deaths in the last mutiny against him,” adding that he would also be questioned “on all violence in recent times” of which his men have been accused. A source at a police station in Bamako confirmed the reports, stating that “the police on Thursday received a summons from the Malian courts for General Amadou Sanogo,” adding that “according to the procedure, the notice shall be addressed to the Malian Ministry of Defence, which, in turn, will inform General Sanogo of the summons.” It currently remains unclear when the soldier will be due to appear in court.

- **29 October 2013** - According to Mali’s Justice Ministry, the country’s government has lifted arrest warrants against four leaders of the West African country’s ethnic Tuareg rebellion. The warrants were issued several months ago against rebel leaders in the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNL) and the High Council for the Unity of Azawad (HCUA). According to a Justice Ministry official, “the arrest warrants against Ibrahim Ag Mohamed Assaleh (MNL), Mohamed Ag Intalla, Ahmada Ag Bibi and Alghabass Ag Intall (HCUA) are lifted to facilitate the pursuit of the process of national reconciliation.” The four men, along with about thirty other prominent Tuareg separatist rebels, were wanted for taking up arms early in 2012 in the northern region of Mali.

International Developments

- **7 October 2013** - On Thursday, officials in France stated that al-Qaeda’s north African branch may have been responsible for the death of two French journalists in Mali at the weekend. While the group had earlier claimed responsibility, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius has since stated that officials are “...in the process of verifying it, but it seems plausible.” In his comments, the Foreign Minister also noted that speculation that the pair was killed because the vehicle in which they were kidnapped had broken down was credible. The Minister stated that “the hypothesis of a vehicle break-down is possible,” adding that “what is certain is that this car stopped in the desert and that was the moment in which our compatriots were assassinated by a hail of bullets, four bullets for one and seven for the other.” The Minister also indicated that French forces in the region sent out to locate the journalists had not spotted the kidnappers. In a statement published online on Wednesday by Mauritanian news agency Sahara Medias, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) claimed responsibility for the kidnappings, indicating that the killings were “the minimum debt” owed by France and its leaders “in return for their new crusade” in Paris’s former colony. The statement further added that “this operation was a response to crimes committed by France against Malians and the work of African and international forces against the Muslims of Azawad.” AQIM indicated that the murders had been carried out by a unit led by Tuareg commander Abdelkrim Targui, who was close to Abdelhamid Abou Zeid, one of AQIM’s main leaders in Mali who was killed while fighting the French army in northern Mali in late February.
- **5 November 2013** - On Tuesday, as the bodies of two French journalists killed in northern Mali arrived in Paris, officials in France announced that they would stick to their plans of withdrawing most of its troops from Mali by the end of January 2014. While French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius indicated that 150 French soldiers had been sent to join 200 troops already stationed in the northeastern town of Kidal, where Radio France Internationale (RFI) journalists Ghislaine Dupont and Claude Verlon were killed on Saturday, he insisted that France would pull two-thirds of its soldiers out of Mali by the end of January as planned. The Minister added that recent incidents “do not call into question the overall schedule to reduce the presence of French forces,” noting that “we have about 3,000 men in place, it was intended they remain until the elections for a new parliament on November 24. Then we will reduce this number and normally there should be 1,000 soldiers left in Mali.” While officials in France are keen on maintaining the withdrawal timeline, some in Mali have voiced their concerns amidst an increase in violence in Mali which witnessed continued insecurity by the deaths of two RFI journalists earlier this week. Dupont (57) and Verlon (55) were kidnapped and shot by what French officials have called “terrorist groups.” A French military patrol found the two journalists just hours after they were kidnapped on Saturday. The two were located about 12

kilometers (seven miles) east of Kidal laying near a pic-up truck in which they had been abducted. The killings have shaken France, which just days ago celebrated the return of four hostages who had been held for three years in neighboring Niger. While a Malian police source has since indicated that “a dozen suspects” had been detained in connection with the journalists’ killings, French sources have denied the arrests however they have indicated that seven investigators, including intelligence and police officials, have been sent to Mali in order to assist officials their with the investigation. Mali’s President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita has vowed that his country will “do everything to find the culprits.”

- **4 November 2013** - United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon arrived in Mali late on Monday to begin a regional tour that will highlight the battle against poverty. The Secretary General, along with World Bank President Jim Yong Kim and top officials from the African Union, African Development Bank and European Union are scheduled to meet in Mali on Tuesday before travelling to Niger later that day and Burkina Faso and Chad on Wednesday. They are scheduled to meet the presidents of each country. Ahead of his visit to Mali, Mr. Ban stated that eleven million of the 80 million people living in the Sahel countries lack sufficient food. According to a statement released by World Bank chief Jim Yong Kim, “the people of the Sahel region desperately need more secure living standards, and our hope is this funding helps build a new path for economic growth in the region.” The European Union and the World Bank have pledged more than US \$8 billion in fresh aid for the Sahel region countries which have been affected by conflict. The Secretary General’s official visit to Mali comes at a time when French and Malian troops are searching for the killers of Ghislaine Dupont and Claude Verlon, who were kidnapped and shot dead by suspected terrorists on Saturday in the northeastern town of Kidal. The deaths of the two French journalists have further highlighted the ongoing security threat just three weeks ahead of parliamentary elections which are meant to mark the completion of Mali’s transition back to democracy following a military coup in March last year.
- **1 November 2013** - Following an appeal for more UN peacekeepers, the Netherlands announced on Friday that it will send 380 soldiers and four Apache attack helicopters to Mali. During a weekly press briefing following a cabinet meeting, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte told journalists that “the Netherlands had decided to answer the UN’s call, “adding that northern Mali is threatening to become a place where terrorists are freely trained.” In a statement released by the Dutch Foreign Ministry, the Dutch force’s main task will be to gather intelligence for the UN’s Multidimensional Integration Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), as well as to train local police. The high-tech Apache helicopters will also be used in an intelligence gathering role and to protect the Dutch forces. The Dutch forces are scheduled to “remain with the mission until the end of 2015.” The announcement comes after an urgent appeal by the UN’s special representative in the West African country for more blue helmets as its peacekeeping forces face a new surge of attacks.



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

- **6 November 2013** - On Wednesday, thousands of Mauritians rallied in the capital of Nouakchott to protest against the upcoming nationwide elections that have been dismissed by the opposition as a sham. According to local sources, demonstrators chanted "unilateral elections kill democracy" as they marched through the city centre. No incidents were reported during the protest, which was closely monitored by security forces. The protest took place on the eve of the official start of the two-week election campaign, with elections set to occur on November 24. The demonstration was organized by the umbrella Coordination of Democratic Opposition (COD), which is composed of eleven parties of which ten are boycotting what they call an "electoral masquerade" after talks on how the vote should be run broke down last month. The ruling Union for the Republic is the only party fielding candidates in all 218 constituencies. Around a third of Mauritania's 3.4 million people are eligible to vote in the first parliamentary and local polls to be held since 2006. Mauritania, a former French colony located on the west coast of the Sahara desert, is seen by Western leaders as strategically important in the fight against al-Qaeda-linked groups within its own borders and in neighboring Mali and across Africa's Sahel region.

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



Niger

Security Summary

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



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 , 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 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 avoiding crossing the border with Nigeria during the hours of darkness.

On the Ground Reporting

- **4 November 2013** - Authorities in Niger rescued seventy-two illegal migrants who were stranded in the Sahara desert after their truck got a flat tyre. According to authorities, the migrants were spotted as officials were on their way to the burial site for some of the ninety-two migrants who died of thirst after a similar incident occurred last month. Azaoua Mamane, from the Niger-based aid group Synergie, has stated that "they were spotted in the middle of the desert by a delegation from Agadez that was on its way to the graves of the migrants who died recently. Mamane further noted that the group, which comprised mostly of women and children under the age of ten, were on their way back from Algeria. According to one of the survivors, their truck, which had left from the main southern Algerian town of Tamanrasset, burst a tyre in the desert, causing a panic amongst the migrants. The survivors were eventually driven back to Arlit on Monday. Agadez, the main city in northern Niger, is a major transit point for migrants hoping to move to either southern Algeria or heading to Libya where they plan to cross the Mediterranean to Europe. According to the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, at least 30,000 economic migrants passed through Agadez between March and August of this year.
- **1 November 2013** - On Friday, officials in Niger ordered the "immediate" closure of migrant camps in the northern region of the country after ninety-two people, mostly women and children, died of thirst while trying to cross the Sahara desert. In a statement read out on public television, the government also announced that all those involved in trafficking migrants, many of whom pass through northern Niger on their way to Algeria or Libya, would be identified and "severely punished." The new measures come just days after the bodies of fifty-two children, thirty-three women and seven men were found in the desert. They had died in October after two trucks carrying them to Algeria broke down. Only twenty-one people survived out of 113 who were attempting to cross Niger's desert border into Algeria. According to the statement, "this tragedy is the result of criminal activities led by all types of trafficking networks."

International Developments

- **29 October 2013** - On Tuesday, France's President Francois Hollande confirmed the release of four French hostages who were kidnapped in Niger in 2010. The men, identified as Thierry Dol, Daniel Larribe, Pierre Legrand and Marc Feret, boarded a French government plane on Wednesday from Niger's capital city of Niamey. They were greeted shortly before noon (local time) by President Hollande after their arrival at an airport outside Paris. The men arrived at the airport in Niger's capital on Tuesday, where they were greeted by France's Foreign and Defence ministers, Laurent Fabius and Jean-Yves Le Drian, along with Niger's President Mahamadou Issoufou. France's Foreign Minister has indicated that the hostages had been freed in neighboring Mali and that they were in "very good shape." According to sources, the four men were taken to Niamey by a French plane from Anefis, which is located in northern Mali, near the border with Algeria. Currently, minimal details pertaining to the release of the four hostages are available. While France's Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian has stated that the four were freed without a military assault or a ransom payment being made, unconfirmed reports have indicated that Paris paid over 20 million euros for their release. It is unknown whether the French government secretly paid for their release or

whether that money came from the families of the hostages and their employer. What is known is that Niger's top negotiator, Mohamed Akotey, a former Tuareg rebel, was involved in the negotiations and obtained the release of the four men in an operation that was occurring over the past few days. Mr. Akotey works with French mining firm Areva and is a respected figure in Niger. The news of their release comes days after regional security sources in Gao reported the presence of envoys in the Sahel, who were reportedly there in order "to speed up negotiations towards freeing the French hostages." While officials in France have denied sending envoys, France's "Le Monde" has reported that around eighteen men, comprising of French and Tuaregs, left Kidal on their way to the north-western region of Mali, near the Mauritanian and Algerian borders, on 21 October, with initial plans calling for a return between Friday 25 and Sunday 27. They did not arrive back with the hostages until October 29. Furthermore, although officials in Paris had initially wanted to start negotiations in December 2012, they did not begin the process until May of this year, at a time when operation Serval was beginning to decrease its intensity. The four men were captured on 16 September 2010 in raids that targeted two French firms operating a uranium mine in Arlit. They were all employees at a uranium mine run by Areva, a French nuclear company. Militants belonging to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) later claimed responsibility for the kidnappings. While over the past three years, there had been sporadic signs of proof of life, their family members continued a campaign for their release. France's January 2013 military intervention in neighboring Mali caused an increase in fears that the hostages could be killed in reprisal. Throughout their captivity, the hostages were apparently held in different locations in order to prevent them from being freed by a French assault. Reports have indicated that they were brought together just days before their release. Three other people who were kidnapped at the time, Françoise Larribe, along with a Togolese and Madagascan, were freed in February 2011. The last proof of life pertaining to these four men had been released by AQIM in September. A video purporting to show seven kidnapped Westerners, including the four Frenchmen, had been deemed credible by France's foreign ministry. The video included statements from the four men, as well as from a Dutchman, a Swede and a South African who were abducted from Timbuktu in northern Mali in November 2011. The fates of the other foreign hostages remains unclear. A number of other foreign hostages are still being held in the Sahel region, including Frenchmen Serge Lazarevic, who was kidnapped along with Philippe Verdon in northeastern Mali on 24 November 2011. In March 2013, AQIM claimed to have killed Philippe Verdon. This was later confirmed in July by French authorities. Portuguese born, French citizen Gilberto Rodriguez Leal, 61, was kidnapped in Diema, western Mali, on 20 November 2012. AQIM claimed responsibility for the kidnapping. Mr. Leal's current whereabouts are unknown. Francis Collomp, 63, a French national working for Vergnet was kidnapped by Boko Haram on 19 December 2012.

- **28 October 2013** - Meanwhile in Niger, officials have stated that dozens of people traversing the Sahara desert, on their way to Europe, are feared to have died of thirst. According to the governor of Agadez, five bodies have been found while a further thirty-five are missing after a vehicle carrying the passengers broke down, forcing them to set off in order to seek help. The bodies found are of two women and three girls aged 9 – 11. The rest of the travellers consisted of "entire families, including very many children and women." Reports have indicated that after



one vehicle broke down, passengers went to look for spare parts in order to bring them back for repairs. It is believed that the migrants broke up into small groups. Days later, the survivors, who reached Arlit, a town known for its uranium mining, alerted the army however the troops arrived too late at the scene. The authorities have called off the search for the missing. According to the mayor of Agadex, Rhissa Feltou, two vehicles had left the town of Arlit, which is located north of Agadez, earlier this month. They were carrying “at least” sixty migrants. The city of Agadez lies on one of the main migrant routes from West Africa to Europe.



Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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

Security Summary

Summary

There have been reports of a security incident involving gunfire that occurred in the Apo district of the capital city of Abuja on the morning of 20 September 2013. The incident may have involved suspected Boko Haram militants. Consequently any travellers in the capital city are reminded to remain vigilant at all times as further attacks may occur with minimal warning.



On 14 May, the Nigerian Government declared a State of Emergency in the states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. That state of emergency has now been extended for an additional six months. 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, Zamfara 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

- **5 November 2013** - On Tuesday, Nigeria's army indicated that it had shot dead seen suspected Boko Haram fighters during a raid in a northeastern area where the insurgents have killed dozens last week. According to Borno state army spokesman Mohammed Dole, "in simultaneous operations conducted...in the area of Bama on Monday, the military recorded huge successes as seven suspected Boko Haram militants were killed and several others injured." The army spokesman added that vehicles, explosives and weapons were also recovered during the raid on rebel camps around Bama. The raid comes just days after some seventy suspected Islamist fighters stormed the town of Bama last week, killing twenty seven people and burning down some 300 homes.
- **4 November 2013** - Last week, Boko Haram insurgents killed twenty-seven people and wounded dozens others after some seventy gunmen stormed the town of Bama in Borno state late on Thursday. According to a local official, Boko Haram militants entered the town in a convoy of motorcycles and pickup trucks, adding that "they shot down 27 persons and injured 12...About 300 houses were burnt." In recent weeks, Bama, and other remote parts of northeastern Nigeria, have seen a series of brutal attacks which have left hundreds dead.
- **3 November 2013** - Gunmen in northeastern Nigeria have killed more than thirty people after attacking a wedding convoy. According to local sources, the attack occurred on a notoriously dangerous stretch of road between Bama and Banki in Borno State, east of the regional capital Maiduguri, with sources indicating that the groom was one of the victims. Wedding guests, including friends and relatives of the groom, were returning to the state capital Maiduguri after the ceremony, which was held in Michika in nearby Adamawa state. Survivors of the attack have reported that there were about fifty people in the convoy. The fate of the bride and her family members remains unknown. A statement released late Sunday by an army spokesman in the region stated that "the report received from our troops indicated that some terrorists attacked a bus at Bulakuri village and killed five persons," adding that the bodies had been taken to Bama.
 - Meanwhile a church stampede in Anambra has killed at least seventeen people, with many more left injured. Officials have indicated that the stampede occurred at about 06:00 (05:00 GMT) on Saturday in eastern Nigeria, with reports stating that more than 100,000 people had gathered at the venue of the incident, the Holy Ghost Adoration Ground in Anambra state. While officials have confirmed that at least seventeen people have been killed, local media has reported that the death toll could be higher. Anambra is located about 300 kilometers (185 miles) south of Abuja.
 - In a video released on Sunday, Boko Haram's leader Abubakar Shekau states that he led an October 24 attack in which thirty-five people were killed in the Nigerian city of Damaturu. In the video, the head of the Islamist group states "look at what happened in Damaturu (capital of northeastern Yobe State)," adding that "since we killed them with out hands - in fact I was the

commander of the operation - so, you cannot say I'm making conjecture." The authenticity of the video, which is about eleven minutes long and titled the "Battle of Damaturu", has not been independently confirmed. Thirty-five bodies dressed in military uniform were brought to a morgue in Nigeria's restive northeast after a coordinated assault carried out by Boko Haram militants targeted security forces. The attack in Damaturu was the first significant raid in a major urban centre in several weeks by the insurgent group. Shortly after the attack, police and residents reported that large numbers of Boko Haram fighters, some in vehicles and some on foot, had stormed Damaturu shortly after dark. Armed with guns and explosives, they attacked and torched four police buildings, sparking a fierce, hours-long gun battle with local security forces.

Domestic News

- **7 November 2013** - According to a Nigerian official, Nigeria requires the help from officials in Cameroon in order to police their shared border as the country seeks to win the ongoing battle against Boko Haram militants. At a meeting of the Cameroon-Nigeria trans-border security committee, General J.B. Samuel, head of the Nigerian delegation, told reporters that "we really need the collaboration and support of Cameroon to completely put to silence the Boko Haram Islamist sect." While a Cameroonian official for the region has indicated that his country had already taken precautionary measures to strengthen security along the Nigerian border, no further details were provided. The 1,700 kilometer (1,060 mile) border between Nigeria and Cameroon stretches from the Atlantic coast to Lake Chad. President Goodluck Jonathan's military operation, announced in May, has targeted Boko Haram militants in three northeastern states of the country, resulting in Boko Haram militants being pushed further north towards the border with Niger and into the remote hills bordering Cameroon to the east.
- **6 November 2013** - Nigeria's President Goodluck Jonathan has requested that lawmakers extend a state of emergency, which was declared in the northeast in May, for an additional six months, citing that the Islamist insurgency had not yet been contained. In a letter sent by the President to lawmakers in both chambers of Nigeria's parliament, Jonathan stated that "we have achieved considerable successes in containing the activities of the terrorist elements...However, some security challenges still exist." The President has requested the extension of "the state of emergency by a further period of six months with effect from November 12, 2013." In May of this year, the President enforced emergency measures in the northern states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe, regions of the country where he stated Boko Haram insurgents had seized territory, chased out local officials and effectively threatened Nigeria's sovereignty. On 15 May, one day after the state of emergency was imposed, Nigeria's military announced the launch of a massive operation aimed at permanently ending the uprising. While thousands of additional troops and air power have since been deployed to the region in a bid to curb attacks, the success of the military offensive remains uncertain. Although the military has described Boko Haram as being in a state of disarray and on the defensive, the fact that hundreds of civilians have been killed by the terrorist group in recent weeks has cast doubts on these claims. Furthermore, although the attacks appear to have partly shifted out of major cities and into the more remote areas of the country, the number, scale and brutality of the attacks has remained unchanged. While lawmakers swiftly approved Jonathan's initial request for a state of emergency in May, it remains unclear whether securing the extension will be as smooth. Furthermore, while continuing massacres around Borno and Yobe may provide political justification for an extension, a bid to extend emergency rule in the state of Adamawa will likely be "problematic," as the area has seen far less violence than Borno and Yobe and residents have been growing increasingly frustrated with the situation. Lawmakers will likely debate and vote on the request in the coming days. **Update (7 November)** - Lawmakers on Thursday approved a request made by the country's president to prolong emergency rule in the restive northeast by a further six months. Senators unanimously backed Jonathan's request and agreed "to extend the

state of emergency in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states on the same terms and conditions.” As such, the emergency rule in the three states will be extended for a further six months from November 12.

International Developments

- **5 November 2013** - According to the United Nations human rights office, Nigeria’s Boko Haram Islamists could be classed as war criminals. The announcement by the rights office on Tuesday came shortly after the UN condemned a bloody attack on a wedding convoy in northeastern Nigeria. According to Cecile Pouilly, spokeswoman for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, “members of Boko Haram and other groups and entities, if judged to have committed widespread or systematic attacks against a civilian population...could be guilty of crimes against humanity.” In recent days, the insurgents have killed dozens of people in the northeastern region of Nigeria, first storming a town on motorbikes and pick-up trucks and then carrying out highway ambushes. Boko Haram militants have also been blamed for Saturday’s slaying of more than thirty people, including the groom, when a wedding convoy was halted on a road near the border with Cameroon. Pouilly has called the attack on the wedding convoy “atrocious,” condemning Boko Haram’s campaign of “cowardly attacks” against civilians, politicians, members of government institutions, foreigners and security forces. In turn, the human rights group has also slammed government troops for killing civilians and for other violations in the battle zone. According to Pouilly, “we are also following up closely with the Nigerian authorities allegations of abuses and human rights violations which may have been committed by security forces when conducting operations.” She further noted that the Nigerian military was in the process of finalizing a report on people detained in connection with the insurgency and has indicated that the UN has urged the government to disclose its findings.