



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

September 30 – October 13, 2013



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Cameroon

- **1 October 2013** - Voting on Monday in Cameroon concluded at 6:00 PM (1700 GMT) and while the country's electoral commission indicated that the vote went smoothly, international observers have complained that the elections were marred by irregularities.
- **30 September 2013** - Cameroon's 5.4 million voters headed to the polls on Monday to vote in the legislative and local elections which are widely expected to hand the ruling party of President Paul Biya a victory.

Central African Republic

On the Ground Reporting

- **12 October 2013** - On Saturday, military officials reported that government forces in the CAR had clashed with a vigilante group, which has been targeting Muslims, killing six of its members.
- **8 October 2013** - According to officials, at least thirty people have died while dozens have been left injured after clashes occurred in the Central African Republic.
- **6 October 2013** - According to a police and a senior Catholic official, fourteen people have been killed in violent clashes that occurred between Christians and Muslims in an isolated town in the eastern CAR.

Domestic News

- **9 October 2013** - In a sign that there is an increasing division within the former rebels, President Michel Djotodia fired communications minister Christophe Gazam-Betty.
 - Meanwhile government forces in the CAR have arrested a rogue ex-rebel commander on Wednesday.

International Developments

- **10 October 2013** - On Thursday, diplomats at the United Nations are aiming to pass a Security council resolution which will call for security in the CAR to be improved.

Gambia

- **2 October 2013** - On Wednesday, the Gambian government accused Washington and former colonial power Britain, of leading a “shameless campaign of lying” against it.

Guinea

Domestic News

- **8 October 2013** - On Tuesday, Guinea's opposition walked out of UN-backed talks with the government, accusing officials of rigging last week's legislative elections.
- **6 October 2013** - Amidst calls for the elections to be annulled over “fraud,” provisional partial results showed late on Sunday that Guinea's ruling party was leading in the first parliamentary polls that have been carried out in over a decade.
 - On Thursday, Guinea's political opposition rejected initial results from the country's long awaited legislative election and announced that it would withdraw representatives from the vote-counting process just as vote tallies began to trickle in.
- **2 October 2013** - Reversing a decision to delay the publication of Guinea's legislative elections, officials in the country pledged to begin releasing the results on Wednesday.
 - Meanwhile Guinea's president urged voters not to worry about the aftermath of the country's first legislative elections, vowing to strengthen security forces while calling on politicians to behave with “maturity” as they await the results.

International Developments

- **9 October 2013** - International election observers in Guinea have voiced their concerns over “irregularities” during the country's first parliamentary polls to be held since the 2008 coup

Guinea-Bissau

On The Ground Reporting

- **8 October 2013** - Tensions increased on Tuesday in the capital city of Guinea-Bissau after the kidnapping of a young boy which has led to protests against the alleged protection of the suspected Nigerian kidnappers by the police.

Regional Reporting

- **9 October 2013** - An official from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has indicated that the regional bloc is raising funds in order to help Guinea-Bissau organize elections which have been scheduled for November 24.

Ivory Coast

- **1 October 2013** - On Tuesday, the pre-trial chamber of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague unsealed an arrest warrant for Ivorian politician Chrls Ble Goude for his alleged crimes against humanity.

Liberia

- **10 October 2013** - Justice Minister Jeremy Wright has confirmed that ex-Liberian President Charles Taylor will serve out his 50-war crimes sentence in the United Kingdom.

Mali

On the Ground Reporting

- **12 October 2013** - A boat carrying hundreds of passengers along the Niger River in central Mali capsized over night, with nearly 200 people missing.
- **10 October 2013** - According to officials in Paris, so far this month French special forces killed around ten militants in gun battles in northern Mali as increasing tensions and violence has posed new security threats to the upcoming elections in November and may result in a delay in France's troop withdrawal.
- **9 October 2013** - According to a spokesman, Mali's former coup leader is leaving his longtime military camp and will be taking up residence in a neighborhood reserved for former government leaders.
- **8 October 2013** - Reports have indicated that Islamist militants blew up a bridge on Tuesday, leaving two civilians wounded just one day after they shelled the northern town of Gao and injured one soldier.
- **7 October 2013** - Armed militants fired shells on the northern Malian city of Gao, the first attack on the insurgents' former stronghold in months.
- **30 September 2013** - Gunshots were heard on the streets of Mali's rebel bastion of Kidal on Monday after Tuareg separatists and the army exchanged gunfire the night before.
 - Meanwhile according to military sources, dozens of disgruntled soldiers involved in Mali's 2012 coup fired guns in the air at a protest on Monday, wounding and taking hostage a close aide, Colonel Habib Diallo, of mutiny leader Amadou Sanogo.

Domestic News

- **5 October 2013** - A spokesman confirmed on Saturday that Tuareg and Arab rebels resumed to peace talks with the Malian government nine days after they staged a walkout.
- **2 October 2013** - On Wednesday, as part of a deal signed between the government and rebels in June of this year, the Malian government released twenty-three prisoners who were arrested in clashes in the north.
 - On Wednesday, Mali's new president, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, dissolved an army reform committee dominated by former members of a military junta after condemning an unruly protest that was staged by disgruntled officers at a military base earlier this week.
 - Meanwhile on Wednesday, the Red Cross warned of growing humanitarian difficulties in Mali, where violence between insurgents and the military increased last month.

Regional Reporting

- **7 October 2013** - Algeria's foreign minister has indicated that diplomats, who remain captive after being kidnapped from Algeria's Gao consulate in northern Mali in April 2012, are still alive.

International Developments

- **4 October 2013** - On Friday, the UN's envoy to Mali, Bert Koenders, urged Tuareg and Arab rebels to return to peace talks with the Bamako government as a resurgence of violence in the northern region of the country has sparked feared of further instability.
- **1 October 2013** - During a meeting in Paris on Tuesday, the Presidents of France and Mali warned that a "terrorist" resurgence in the Sahel region might be possible after new fighting between the insurgents and military has taken place in Mali in recent days.

Mauritania

- **4 October 2013** - After talks with the government, over preparations for the vote, collapsed without agreement, Mauritania's main opposition parties announced a boycott of November's legislative elections.
- **30 September 2013** - After years of disputes, Mauritania's government on Monday held its first talks with the opposition in a bid to organize the upcoming November elections.

Niger

On the Ground Reporting

- **12 October 2013** - On Saturday, thousands of people in Niger protests against French nuclear firm Areva, which has been mining uranium in the country for nearly fifty years.

Domestic News

- **6 October 2013** - Niger's Prime Minister announced on Sunday that officials will review the country's dealings with French firm Areva, which has been mining uranium for nearly fifty years.

Regional Reporting

- **4 October 2013** - A high-ranking Niger security official has confirmed that armed bandits have killed a Niger soldier and seriously wounded three others in Nigeria's volatile north-eastern region.

Nigeria

On the Ground Reporting

- **11 October 2013** - According to a road safety official, at least seventeen people have died and ten others have been left injured when the buses in which they were travelling in collided with a tanker lorry.
- **10 October 2013** - Armed gunmen suspected to be cattle rustlers killed ten members of one family before six of the gunmen were shot dead by security forces in Nigeria's central Plateau state.
- **9 October 2013** - On Wednesday, Nigerian soldiers raided an Islamist bomb-making factory located outside the north's largest city of Kano.
- **6 October 2013** - Boko Haram militants have claimed five lives, in an attack that was carried out on a mosque in northeastern Nigeria over the past weekend, before being pushed back by soldiers who killed fifteen of the insurgents.

Domestic News

- **1 October 2013** - Nigeria's President on Tuesday stated that he had formed a panel tasked with laying the ground for a national dialogue to tackle contentious issues such as religious tensions and the sharing of oil wealth.

Sierra Leone

- **9 October 2013** - Officials in Sierra Leone have indicated that they will intensify their security in response to the heightened threat posed by al-Shabaab militants, expressing their concerns that the West African nation could be targeted because of its support for the ongoing peacekeeping operations in Somalia.

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 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 - [Click Here](#)

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.

Guinea - [Click Here](#)

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 - [Click Here](#)

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



Burkina Faso

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.



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.

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 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.

Domestic News

- **1 October 2013** - Voting on Monday in Cameroon concluded at 6:00 PM (1700 GMT) and while the country's electoral commission indicated that the vote went smoothly, international observers have complained that the elections were marred by irregularities. According to one observer from the Lawyers Without Borders organization, there had been a number of incidents where voters' names and numbers did not match those marked on the electoral roll. According to the unnamed observer, "it is almost certain that there will be an impact on the final numbers," adding that "a number of liberties were taken with the requirements of good practice." The observer also noted that some voters were not guaranteed total secrecy in order to cast their vote. In turn, several opposition candidates indicated that a new biometric voter registration system was vulnerable to fraud and have criticized the government for disbursing campaign funds after the two-week campaign period began. However Samuel Fonkam Azu'u, head of the country's electoral commission, has stated that the vote went smoothly and that the turnout was "quite impressive." Cameroon's president Paul Biya also noted that the legislative and municipal elections marked a step forward for the country's democracy.
- **30 September 2013** - Cameroon's 5.4 million voters headed to the polls on Monday to vote in the legislative and local elections which are widely expected to hand the ruling party of President Paul Biya a victory. The polling stations were due to open at 8:00 AM (0700 GMT) and expected to close ten hours later. The country's borders have also been closed since Saturday, and will remain so until the day after the vote. President Biya has been accused of failing to adhere to a regular timetable for elections in a bid to ensure victory for his own People's Democratic Movement (RDPC) party, which holds the majority of seats in the national assembly and municipal bodies. While the terms of the current cohort of deputies elected in the last elections in 2007 expired in 2012, it has been extended on three separate occasions. According to political commentator Mathias Nguini Owona, the ruling party is looking to "consolidate the hegemonic majority it has enjoyed since the 2007 elections," adding that the main goal of the opposition parties, which includes the Social Democratic Front which currently holds sixteen seats, is to not lose ground in the Assembly and in the municipalities. Although opposition parties in Cameroon have regularly accused the ruling party of electoral fraud and of using state assets in order to wage their campaigns, after two decades of challenges to almost every election, both sides have admitted that these latest elections have resulted in a lack of confidence in many Cameroonians.

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

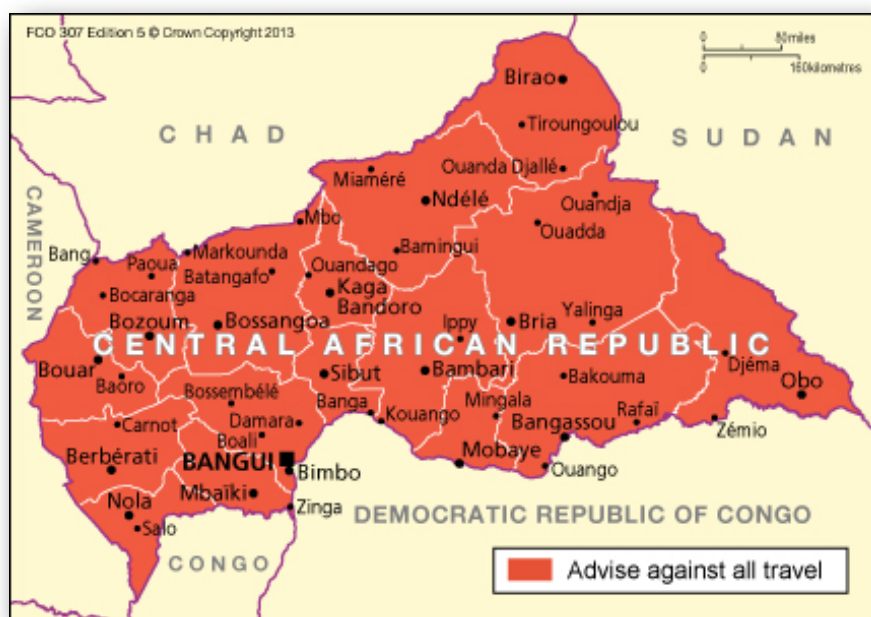


Security Summary

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

- **12 October 2013** - On Saturday, military officials reported that government forces in the CAR had clashed with a vigilante group, which has been targeting Muslims, killing six of its members. According to an army official, “clashes broke out on Friday between security forces sent from Bangui to Bomboro (south of the capital), and the “anti-balaka” self-defence group.” The official further added that six members of the vigilante group had been killed in the clashes.
- **8 October 2013** - According to officials, at least thirty people have died while dozens have been left injured after clashes occurred in the Central African Republic. Reports have indicated that the fighting, which occurred between former rebels and local civil protection groups, broke out on Monday and continued on Tuesday with sources stating that vigilantes attacked the village of Gaga, which is located 200 km (125 miles) north-west of the capital, Bangui. Residents of Gaga have confirmed the latest fighting, with some placing the death toll at sixty. While full details of the attack are still emerging, some residents have indicated that the village first came under attack from apparent supporters of the ousted president and that rebels from the alliance, known as Seleka that overthrew President Bozize, then retaliated. Although the CAR’s current president Michel Djotodia last month formally disbanded the rebels and integrated many fighters in to the national army, rebels linked to Seleka have continued to launch attacks on a number of villages, prompting the emergence of local civilian protection groups. **Update (9 October 2013)** - Officials have indicated that the number of persons killed in clashes that occurred in the town of Gaga has risen to sixty. According to residents, local self-defence militias, known as “anti-balaka,” or anti-machetes, attacked a Seleka position in the mining village of Gaga on Monday, killing four ex-rebels before attacking Muslims civilians. Witnesses have reported that Seleka fighters retaliated against the Christians in the village. According to Judicael Kama, a security official in Yaloke, a town 35 km (22 miles) from Gaga, “we’re waiting for reinforcements in order to go there but the various accounts we’ve gathered from survivors coming from Gaga lead us to believe there are over 60 dead.” Over the past few weeks, Seleka gunmen, many of them from neighboring Chad and Sudan, have been accused of desecrating churches and terrorizing Christian communities. In turn, the violence, which erupted less than a week after at least fourteen people were killed in fighting between Muslims and Christians in the eastern town of Bangassou, is further evidence that the clashes are becoming increasingly sectarian, with UN officials and rights groups stating that both Seleka and their opponents may have committed war crimes.
- **6 October 2013** - According to a police and a senior Catholic official, fourteen people have been killed in violent clashes that occurred between Christians and Muslims in an isolated town in the eastern CAR. According to residents of Bangassou, which is located 750 km east of the capital Bangui, Seleka fighters had backed the town’s Muslims during clashes which saw four people killed on Saturday. Bangassou police official, Edouard Mbiga has reported that clashes initially broke out on Tuesday after a number of Christians had organized a march in order to protest against abuses that have been carried out by the Seleka’s predominantly Muslim fighters who are based in the town. According to the police official, “Muslim community members, backed by Seleka, brought out weapons and blocked the march. The situation deteriorated and there were 10 deaths on both sides. It all started from that.” According to Bangassou’s Catholic Bishop, Juan Jose Aguire, “all four of those killed (on Saturday) were from the Christian community,” adding that “we’re overwhelmed, inundated by thousands of men, women and children seeking refuge from the fighting at the diocese.” While the CAR’s president, Michel Djotodia, has made some effort to curb the violence, notably by firing the head of the army and formally dissolving Seleka, his attempts have failed to rein in his ex-rebel supporters and have instead resulted in calls, notably from former colonial power France, for a robust intervention. In the wake of the fresh violence, France’s Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius stated on Saturday that “it’s an appalling situation...there are abuses every day - thefts, rapes, murders.” The French Foreign Minister added that France has troops stationed in the CAR and that officials are currently “...working with the United Nations, African Union and

regional organizations to find a solution for peace.” France, which intervened earlier this year in the crisis in Mali, has indicated that it will provide operational support for an African peacekeeping mission in the CAR, which will be known as MISCA. While reinforcements for the African force have begun to arrive, the planned 3,600-strong mission will not be fully deployed before 2014. In the meantime, according to a French diplomatic source, officials in Paris, who have already deployed around 450 troops on the ground in order to protect the airport and French interests, are currently looking at three short-term options in order to deal with the deteriorating crisis in the CAR. According to the source, France could seek its own UN mandate, which would effectively allow it to increase its troop numbers to 1,200 in order to quickly restore security on the ground. In turn, it could increase the force to 750 soldiers with a specific role to support MISCA. Officials in Paris may also decide to keep the contingent’s size unchanged and instead, transform it into a rapid reaction force that could be increased if needed.

Domestic News

- **9 October 2013** - In a sign that there is an increasing division within the former rebels, President Michel Djotodia fired communications minister Christophe Gazam-Betty. The announcement of his departure was made public on Wednesday on national radio. While no reason for his termination was given, and no replacement has been named, the move signifies that Djotodia’s government may be seeking to distance itself from the very rebels that brought him to power in March. Gazam-Betty, a Christian, is the third Seleka minister to be fired. Djotodia has already removed Cabinet Ministers Nouredine Adam and Mohamed Moussa Dhaffane, both former prominent rebel leaders. The removal of Djotodia’s communications minister comes just weeks after the president formally dissolved the rebel coalition known as Seleka.
 - Meanwhile government forces in the CAR have arrested a rogue ex-rebel commander on Wednesday. According to Justice Minister Arsene Sendé, “seven criminals, led by a so-called colonel going by the name of Mahamat Amine, and who had emerged from the bush in Damara, were detained by our security and defence forces.” Damara lies 75 kilometers (45 miles) north of the capital of Bangui. On the same day, another ex-Seleka warlord, known as “Colonel Abdallah,” who had been ruling over the eastern town of Bangassou, was arrested along with four of his lieutenants. According to local officials, he was later transferred to Bangui. In light of the recent arrests, Justice Minister Sendé noted that “the chief prosecutor and the main police investigations department are sparking no effort in bringing those criminals to justice.” The justice minister’s comments come at a time when the CAR’s newly formed government begins to clamp down on criminals throughout the country who have continued to destabilize the security situation.

International Developments

- **10 October 2013** - On Thursday, diplomats at the United Nations are aiming to pass a Security council resolution which will call for security in the CAR to be improved. In the wake of fresh fighting which has occurred throughout the CAR in recent days, France has signaled that it will submit a resolution to the UN Security Council which will call on UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to provide a report on possible international support for a planned African Union peacekeeping mission known as MISCA. The resolution is also expected to call on UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to submit detailed options within 30 days of the resolution’s adoption, including the possibility of transforming the AU force into a UN peacekeeping force. French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius, who, last month, warned that the CAR risked transforming into a new Somalia, indicated that Thursday’s vote would be a prelude to a more robust resolution that is planned for December. According to Fabius, who will visit Bangui on Sunday, “France is determined to not forget Central African Republic,” adding that “the second resolution before December will enable the addition of

more troops to MISCA, with the support of France.” Update - The UN Security Council has unanimously approved a resolution that will aim to stabilize the CAR. Sponsored by France, the resolution promises support for a new multinational African force that is deploying in the CAR. The resolution also raised the possibility that the operation would be transformed into a UN peacekeeping mission, which would effectively give it more resources and power. The resolution also demands that the weak interim government adhere to previously negotiated plans to hold elections in early 2015. It further demanded that the Seleka and other armed groups “lay down their arms immediately” and follow the unfettered flow of humanitarian aid into the country and that the Security Council would investigate and report all violations of human rights there.



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

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.

Domestic News

- **2 October 2013** - On Wednesday, the Gambian government accused Washington and former colonial power Britain, of leading a “shameless campaign of lying” against it. The comments by the Gambian government come four days after the country withdrew from the Commonwealth, calling it a “neo-colonial” institution. In a statement read out on state media on Saturday, the government lashed out at its “enemies” who it said had concocted lies about its human rights record. The statement indicated that Britain and the United States had backed “so-called Gambians to set up organizations and media facilities to spread nothing but lies against The Gambia by making false ,

outrageous and unfounded statements about the state of human rights.” The statement added that Gambia’s human rights record was “much better” than that of Britain and the US, noting that “the British government has been masterminding this campaign against The Gambia and despite the fact that we are independent they still continue to treat us as their colonial subjects.” Meanwhile, officials in The Gambia slammed the US as a country “lifted from backwardness, poverty and violence to superpower status as well as the largest economy in the world by sweat, blood and tears of millions of African slaves.” President Yahya Jammeh, who has ruled the country since 1994, has often pilloried for rights abuses and is known for ruling the country with an iron fist. In 2007, he removed a UN envoy out of the country after he questioned his cure for AIDS. In 2010, the EU, the country’s top aid donor, cancelled 22 million euros (US \$30 million) in budget support for Banjul over concerns of human rights and governance issues. In August 2012, Jammeh came under fire for sending nine prisoners to the firing squad. He eventually backed down from a mass execution of the rest of those on death row. Update - On Thursday, the Commonwealth has expressed dismay after Gambia’s announcement that it had pulled out of what it called a “neo-colonial institution.” While the bloc’s Marlborough House headquarters in London has not received any formal notification of withdrawal, The Gambia’s government indicated in a statement on Wednesday that it had left the 54-country organization “with immediate effect,” branding it “an extension of colonialism.” A Commonwealth spokesman has stated that the “Commonwealth Secretary-General Kamallesh Sharma has seen with dismay and disappointment, media coverage on the reported announcement by the government of the Gambia of its withdrawal,” adding that “we are in touch with the Gambian authorities to follow up on the media reports in order to establish the facts clearly.” According to the spokesman, a further statement will be issued once clarification has been received from officials in The Gambia. In recent years, The Gambia, has availed itself of Commonwealth assistance in a wide range of fields. Born out of the British empire, the Commonwealth brings together around a quarter of the world’s countries and a third of its population. Only Ireland, in 1949, Fiji, in 1987 however it later rejoined, and Zimbabwe, in 2003, have ever withdrawn before and the bloc, which champions democratic standards, prides itself on having a bulging list of applicants.

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



The long-delayed legislative elections, to form a new National Assembly, were held peacefully on 28 September. While the official results have not yet been released, the Opposition has already called the elections a fraud. 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.

Domestic News

- 8 October 2013** - On Tuesday, Guinea's opposition walked out of UN-backed talks with the government, accusing officials of rigging last week's legislative elections. While partial results to date show President Alpha Conde's ruling RPG party with a slight lead over opposition leader Cellou Dalein Diallo's UFDG and former prime minister Sidya Toure's UFR, opposition groups rejected those results on Thursday and pulled their representatives out of the election's organizing commission on Friday. The withdrawal was confirmed by Toure, who indicated that "we have decided to withdraw from the UN-chaired facilitation committee because we realized that it served no purpose....Not a single one of its recommendations have been acted on since it was created." The opposition has also indicated that many of its supporters were left off the voting register while other names had been duplicated several times. Toure further noted that "we do not accept the results....There has been ballot stuffing, returns annulled from polling stations and ballots changed to favour the ruling party." While the ruling party has stated that there was electoral fraud in the western regions of Boke and Boffa and in the south-eastern region of Nzerekore, all of which are seen as opposition strongholds, it did note that overall, the whole election was sound. In response to the opposition's

comments, Moustapha Naite, spokesman for the ruling RPG party stated that “the opposition should understand that the results coming out reflect the reality on the ground,” adding that the “delays have occurred because the opposition demanded, and was given, a manual count.”

- **6 October 2013** - Amidst calls for the elections to be annulled over “fraud,” provisional partial results showed late on Sunday that Guinea’s ruling party was leading in the first parliamentary polls that have been carried out in over a decade. According to data released by the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI), President Alpha Conde’s ruling Rally of the Guinean People (RPG) party has secured 16 out of 38 single-seat constituencies following the vote on September 28. The main opposition party, UFDG, has won 12 seats, while the UPR obtained two and the UPG only one. In all, 114 seats were chosen during the elections, with the other 76 seats being allotted by proportional representation. However all three opposition parties have called for the elections to be annulled, alleging that the vote had been tarnished by widespread fraud. The opposition coalition has claimed that the polls were marred by a number of irregularities, which have included ballot stuffing, voter intimidation and minors casting votes.
 - On Thursday, Guinea’s political opposition rejected initial results from the country’s long awaited legislative election and announced that it would withdraw representatives from the vote-counting process just as vote tallies began to trickle in. The announcement raised doubts about whether the election would remain peaceful and be accepted as legitimate by opposition supporters. Sidya Toure, an opposition politician, has alleged that after authorities announced the initial results from the Fria and Dubreka regions, the tallies had been changes as they were being transported to the capital city. Speaking to the Media, Toure stated that “it is increasingly clear that the given results will not conform with the reality of how our compatriots vote. The republican opposition of Guinea rejects the first results just given by the electoral commission for the prefectures Fria and Dubreka.” Toure already alleged on Saturday that the vote had been marred by ballot-stuffing, vote-tampering and the creation of more than fifty fake polling stations, all accusations which the government has denied.
- **2 October 2013** - Reversing a decision to delay the publication of Guinea’s legislative elections, officials in the country pledged to begin releasing the results on Wednesday. Although results had originally been expected to be released within 72 hours of Saturday’s vote, on Tuesday, the National Electoral Commission (CENI) indicated that it would take days longer than expected in order to release the results, longer than expected in order to release the results, adding to the already high political tensions in the West African country. CENI spokesman Alpha Yero Conde stated that “we have decided to publish the results everyday from 8PM (2100 British time), depending on their availability.” The comments by the CENI come just one day after a European Union observers mission urged the commission on Monday to publish results on a bureau-by-bureau basis in order to make them as transparent as possible.
 - Meanwhile Guinea’s president urged voters not to worry about the aftermath of the country’s first legislative elections, vowing to strengthen security forces while calling on politicians to behave with “maturity” as they await the results. During a speech that marked Guinea’s 55th anniversary of independence, President Alpha Conde stated that the election would give the country legitimate national representation in government for the first time. During his speech, which was delivered in N’zerekore, a town in Guinea’s southeastern forest region, President Conde stated that “the political debate must leave the street and take place in parliament.” After decades of military and strongman rule, Conde won Guinea’s first democratic presidential elections in 2010, however the legislative elections have been delayed for nearly two years.

International Developments

- **9 October 2013** - International election observers in Guinea have voiced their concerns over “irregularities” during the country’s first parliamentary polls to be held since the 2008 coup. In a joint statement, the international election observers, which include representatives from the United

Nations, European Union, West African bloc ECOWAS as well as diplomats from France and the United States, indicated that “breaches” had been observed in eight out of the thirty-eight constituencies. The statement indicated that “breaches and irregularities were observed in a certain number of constituencies, preventing a significant number of votes from being taken into account, and could therefore put into question the sincerity of certain results.” The observers have also urged the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) to report these irregularities, when it sends the provisional results to the Supreme court which must verify them. Although the CENI has admitted errors during the September 28 elections, it defended the overall conduct of the vote. While the opposition coalition has already called for the vote to be annulled over “fraud,” the international observers statement is likely to further fuel tensions and may result in violent protests. While some of the provisional results have yet to be released by the electoral commission, despite the vote taking place eleven days ago, most of the thirty-eight directly elected seats in the 114-member parliament have been announced, however not the seventy-six that are chosen by proportional representation. With tensions rising as a result of the delay in announcing the provisional results, many businesses and shops have been closed for more than a week, fearing trouble violent protests, resulting in people having difficulty in purchasing essential products. The party of current PResident Alpha Conde, the Rally of the Guinean People (RPG), is leading with eighteen seats, compared to thirteen for the main opposition Union of Democratic Forces.



No Travel
Restrictions for
this 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.

On the Ground Reporting

- 8 October 2013** - Tensions increased on Tuesday in the capital city of Guinea-Bissau after the kidnapping of a young boy which has led to protests against the alleged protection of the suspected Nigerian kidnappers by the police. According to on the ground sources, hundreds of people, mostly youths armed with bottles and pebbles, rallied near the capital city's main market, challenging a large number of police officers. After firing warning shots and using tear gas in order to break up the protest, police asked the army and peacekeepers of the fifteen-nation Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for reinforcements. Most shops in the capital city remained closed for fear of further violence. In recent days, child kidnappings have been an intense issue that has been discussed throughout the country. The fear of abductions is such that unaccompanied children are no longer allowed to walk the streets alone and people in the company of children they cannot prove are their relatives are arrested immediately.

Regional Reporting

- 9 October 2013** - An official from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has indicated that the regional bloc is raising funds in order to help Guinea-Bissau organize elections which have been scheduled for November 24. According to Sonny Ugoh, ECOWAS communication director, Guinea-Bissau needs about US \$19.4 million for the balloting, adding that "apart from working with international partners, ECOWAS member states are also setting the pace by putting together some \$12 million to support that process." The communication director also noted that "a determination has been made to the effect that the ECOWAS commission gave \$3 million, the EU gave \$4 million and the UN Development Program \$1.5 million." The response by ECOWAS members comes after officials in Guinea-Bissau urged the regional bloc to help finance its election, stating that it lacked the money in order to properly organize, and administer the vote. In response, Ugoh stated that "we are being driven by the sense of solidarity with Guinea-Bissau because we want to make sure the country returns to constitutionalism; and has an election that will enable them to have a president, and members of the legislature." During a recent summit, regional heads of state and government agreed that Guinea-Bissau's interim government should hand over

power to an elected administration by the end of this year. The communication director has stated that the agreement is aimed at ensuring that Guinea-Bissau's citizens can choose their own leaders. The decision by ECOWAS was made shortly after a team of the regional bloc's officials visited Guinea-Bissau in order to assess the political and security situation ahead of the November elections. According to Ugoh, "we have fielded a pre-election finding mission, and this fact finding mission held discussions with all the stakeholders," adding that "two issues were flagged: one was the issue of funding, which has now been resolved with this enthusiastic international support, and the second issue has to do with the timetable for the elections."

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



MS Risk advises against all but essential travel to the western regions of Dix-Huit Montagnes, Haut-Sassandra, Moyen-Cavally and Bas-Sassandra as the situation in these regions remains unstable due to the intercommunity tensions as well as the presence of armed groups. There have been reports of westerners being robbed at gunpoint on the main road from Abidjan to Yamoussoukro. 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.

International Developments

- 1 October 2013** - On Tuesday, the pre-trial chamber of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague unsealed an arrest warrant for Ivorian politician Charles Blé Goudé for his alleged crimes against humanity. According to court documents, Blé Goudé, 41, has been charged with individual criminal responsibility, as indirect co-perpetrator, for four counts of crimes against humanity, namely murder, rape and other forms of sexual violence, persecution, and other inhuman acts, that were allegedly committed in the Ivory Coast between 16 December 2010 and 12 April 2011. Although the arrest warrant for Blé Goudé was issued in 2011, it has only now been made public, and it describes the Ivorian ex-minister as a member of Mr. Gbagbo's "inner circle." Blé Goudé has denied leading pro-Laurent Gbagbo militias in the violent attacks that occurred shortly after the 2010 election. During this time, some 3,000 people lost their lives in the crisis after ex-President Laurent Gbagbo refused to accept defeat. Judges have further stated that forces loyal to former President Gbagbo targeted civilians who backed his opponent, the Ivory Coast's current President Alassane Ouattara. Following the post election violence, Mr. Blé Goudé spent more than eighteen months in hiding. He was arrested in January 2013 in Ghana and extradited to the Ivory Coast, where he also faces war crimes charges. He has previously stated that as head of the Young Patriots group, he had only organized rallies and meetings and that he never ran a militia. Mr. Blé Goudé, who was placed under United Nations sanctions in 2006 for allegedly inciting attacks against UN personnel, has indicated that he is prepared to go in front of the ICC in order to clear his name. The arrest warrant for Blé Goudé is the third one that stems from the violence that occurred in the Ivory Coast. It follows warrants that were issued against Laurent Gbagbo, on 23 November 2011, and against his wife, Simone Gbagbo, which was issued on 29 February 2012. Ex-president Laurent Gbagbo, 67, was arrested in 2011 and is currently awaiting trial at The Hague, on four charges of crimes against humanity relating to the election violence. The former president's wife, Simone Gbagbo, has also been indicted by the ICC however the Ivory Coast's ministers have voted

to dismiss the ICC warrant and have instead indicated that they will try her in the country's own courts. Update - A government spokesman announced on Tuesday that the Ivory Coast's government will respond "in due time" to an arrest warrant issued by the ICC for ex-Ivorian president Laurent Gbagbo's youth leader. A spokesman for the government, Bruno Kone, stated that "we're not going to commit to deadlines," adding that the government had "taken note" of the ICC's 2011 warrant, which has only just been made public. Charles Ble Goude, described as being part of Gbagbo's inner circle, is wanted by The Hague-based ICC for crimes against humanity, including murder and rape, allegedly committed during the country's 2010 - 2011 post-poll violence. Ble Goude is currently in detention in the Ivory Coast where he also faces charges under Ivorian law.



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 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.

International Developments

- **10 October 2013** - Justice Minister Jeremy Wright has confirmed that ex-Liberian President Charles Taylor will serve out his 50-war crimes sentence in the United Kingdom. In a written statement to Parliament, Mr. Wright indicated that “following a request from the President of the SCSL (Special Court for Sierra Leone) to the United Kingdom, former president Taylor will now be transferred to a prison in the UK to serve that sentence.” Taylor was originally sentenced in 2012 for aiding rebels who committed atrocities in Sierra Leone during its civil war. The SCSL found Taylor, 65, guilty of eleven crimes including terrorism, rape, murder and the use of child soldiers by rebel groups in neighboring Sierra Leone during the 1991 - 2002 conflict. He was found to have supplied weapons to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels in exchange for a constant flow of so-called blood diamonds. Taylor however has always insisted he is innocent, stating that his only contact with the rebels was to urge them to stop fighting. Although he appealed his sentencing, last month the uN-backed special court in The Hague rejected his appeal, ruling that his convictions had been proven beyond doubt. Shortly after the rejection of his appeal last month, officials in Sweden and Rwanda had offered to imprison him. Taylor is the first former head of state convicted by an international war crimes court since World War II.

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.



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

- **12 October 2013** - A boat carrying hundreds of passengers along the Niger River in central Mali capsized over night, with nearly 200 people missing. According to Konna mayor Sory Diakite, twenty bodies have been recovered. According to the mayor, at least 400 passengers were believed to have been onboard the vessel, which was headed to Timbuktu, however only 210 survivors have been counted. Late Saturday afternoon, crews were still searching the Niger River for bodies. Large boats carry hundreds of people and cargo on the Niger River at this time of year, and the journey can take up to two nights from Mopti to Timbuktu.
- **10 October 2013** - According to officials in Paris, so far this month French special forces killed around ten militants in gun battles in northern Mali as increasing tensions and violence has posed new security threats to the upcoming elections in November and may result in a delay in France's troop withdrawal. Despite the French troops, and a UN peacekeeping mission (MINUSMA), over the past month, there has been a sharp increase in the number of attacks that have been carried out in northern Mali. Particularly those which have directly targeted Malian forces. After receiving intelligence which suggests that militants were in the area, French special forces battled "armed terrorist groups" on October 1 in the village of Douaya, north of Timbuktu. According to officials, militants opened fire from a pick-up truck on a French helicopter while other suspected Islamist militants escaped in vehicles. Furthermore, a MINUSMA source has indicated that twelve pick-up trucks carrying suspected militants had been sighted about 60 km (40 miles) west of Timbuktu in early October. A spokesman in Paris has confirmed that France, which sent troops to its former colony in January, will not draw down its troop numbers to 1,000 from 3,200 by the end of the year as initially planned. Instead, armed forces spokesman Gilles Jaron, indicated that France will "...continue our reduction of troops to 1,000 by late January, early February.
- **9 October 2013** - According to a spokesman, Mali's former coup leader is leaving his longtime military camp and will be taking up residence in a neighborhood reserved for former government leaders. The announcement, which was made by Lt. Mohamed Bou Coulibaly, comes after widespread speculation by the local media pertaining to where Amadou Sanogo would live after recently being promoted from army captain to 4-star general. According to the Lieutenant, Sanogo is expected to leave the Kati barracks by the end of the week and will be living near the home of former transitional president Dioncounda Traore in a Bamako neighborhood reserved for former top government officials. Coulibaly further stated that "unofficially Gen. Sanogo is the military adviser to the president so its better that Sanogo is near him in Bamako." Sanogo, who seized power in a March 2012 coup, and later handed over authority to a civilian transitional government, was promoted to a 4-star general in August, just before newly elected President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita took office. While Sanogo's exact role within the military, and the new government, has been unclear, one presidential aide denied Coulibaly's claims that the ex-coup leader was serving as a presidential adviser. According to Mahamadou Camara, the cabinet director at the Malian presidency, "Sanogo does not have the status of being a former head of state but it's true that in order to provide security while waiting to find a base for him, it's preferable that he stay here." The new 4-star general remains a highly divisive figure in Mali, where human rights groups say he should face trial for abuses that were committed by his forces during their brief rule.
- **8 October 2013** - Reports have indicated that Islamist militants blew up a bridge on Tuesday, leaving two civilians wounded just one day after they shelled the northern town of Gao and injured one soldier. According to Ibrahim Cisse, a local councillor for the Gao region, "early this Tuesday, Islamists dynamited one of two small bridges near...Bentia, about 50 kilometers (31 miles) from the border with Niger, leaving two civilians wounded." The local councillor further added that the assailants, who were "wearing turbans," had arrived by motorbike at the bridge that crosses the Niger River at Bentia and proceeded to destroy it. According to a police source in Gao, "in this place, there are two small bridges. The aim of the Islamists was to blow up both bridges, but fortunately, only the old one was badly damaged," adding that "the new bridge, which is the most

frequently used, sustained only very slight damage.” On the ground sources have reported that Malian soldiers were sent to the area, along with French troops who are deployed in the northern desert region, in order “to avoid other acts of sabotage” by armed extremists. The two bridges in Bentia were attacked just one day after armed militants fired shells on Gao, wounding a Malian soldier. It also comes just ten days after a suicide bomb attack in Timbuktu killed two civilians and four bombers, and left seven Malian soldiers wounded. Responsibility for the attack in Timbuktu was claimed by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), which was founded in Algeria and which operates across the Sahel region south of the Sahara. Meanwhile a spokesman for an al-Qaeda splinter group, the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), claimed responsibility for both the Gao attacks, warning that further such operations will be carried out. In the wake of rising tensions in the north of Mali, on Monday night, Mali’s Defence Minister Soumeylou Boubeye Maiga stated that he wanted to “reassure the population that in coordination with our partners in Serval (the French military operation) and MINUSMA (the UN’s African military force in Mali), our deployment has been strengthened.” He also urged the population “to remain calm and above all to share information with personnel of the armed forces and security forces in order to help them track down the enemy in all its forms.”

- **7 October 2013** - Armed militants fired shells on the northern Malian city of Gao, the first attack on the insurgents’ former stronghold in months. Suspected Islamist militants targeted the city with artillery fire on Monday, wounding one Malian soldiers. Although the attack was similar to the guerrilla-warfare that was used by the insurgents in the months following the January offensive, until Monday’s violence the area had not seen an attack since May. The attack was confirmed by residents and Idrissa Cisse, a municipal official in Gao, who stated that “this morning from around 06:30 AM (0630 GMT) a series of four explosions hit the town. One Malian soldier was wounded and a house was damaged.” By mid-morning, French helicopters were patrolling the skies, with local residents stating that calm had been restored in the city. A spokesman for an al-Qaeda splinter group, the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), indicated that the group had claimed responsibility for the attack on Gao, warning that further such operations would be carried out.
- **30 September 2013** - Gunshots were heard on the streets of Mali’s rebel bastion of Kidal on Monday after Tuareg separatists and the army exchanged gunfire the night before. According to an aide of the regional governor, Adama Kamissoko, “the shooting has resumed in the centre of Kidal. Shots were fired around 7:00am (0700 GMT). We do not know what is happening at the moment. But this is the same place as on Sunday.” resident confirmed that the fighting had resumed within the city, with the exchange ending more than hour later. Fighters of the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) later indicated that three of its fighters had been wounded. The recent clashes in the northern Malian town come one day after the Malian army came under attack in central Kidal on Sunday when fighters from the MNLA, the main Tuareg group involved in peace talks between rebels and the government, which broke down on Thursday.
 - Meanwhile according to military sources, dozens of disgruntled soldiers involved in Mali’s 2012 coup fired guns in the air at a protest on Monday, wounding and taking hostage a close aide, Colonel Habib Diallo, of mutiny leader Amadou Sanogo. Reports have indicated that the soldiers, who are based in the garrison town of Kidal, were unhappy at not having been promoted alongside colleagues who were also involved in the ousting of the president in March of last year. According to a defence ministry official, “the soldiers who worked with the military junta are unhappy because they have been left behind. Some of them were on the front line but they have not been promoted and they are angry,” adding that “measures are being taken to fully restore order in Kati” and that an investigation is underway. There has also been confusion over whether the hostage has been release, with some soldiers inside the camp stating that he had been rushed to hospital for treatment on a bullet wound while others indicating that he was still a hostage. Military sources have indicated that it remains unclear whether the Colonel was deliberately targeted or whether he was caught by a stray bullet. Sanogo led a group of fellow

mid-level officers to overthrow then-president Amadou Toumani Toure on 22 March 2012. The mutiny precipitated the fall of northern Mali to Islamist militants linked to al-Qaeda however a military intervention carried out by French and African troops in January of this year pushed the militants out of the region's main cities. Since the election of Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, who was sworn into office in September, several instigators of the coup, or their relatives, have been given promotions, including Sanogo, who was elevated from captain to lieutenant-general. The former junta leader now lives and works in Kati, however military sources have indicated that he was not present during the protest.

Domestic News

- **5 October 2013** - A spokesman confirmed on Saturday that Tuareg and Arab rebels resumed to peace talks with the Malian government nine days after they staged a walkout. The announcement of the continued peace talks comes at a time when the northern region of Mali has been affected by a suicide bombing coupled with renewed fighting that has occurred in the wake of the rebels' September 26 decision to withdraw from the critical talks. Shortly after a meeting in Burkina Faso's capital with President Blaise Compaore, who is mediating the talks, Ibrahim Ag Mohamed Assaleh of the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad confirmed to reporters that "we declare the lifting of our suspension on our participation in the peace process," adding that "the decisions to temporarily suspend our participation allowed us to hold an internal dialogue among our movements and have fruitful clarifying exchanges with the mediator." Assaleh also indicated that he was speaking on behalf of the High Council for the Unity of Azawad and the Arab Movement of Azawad. The rebels' walk out on September 26 dealt a blow to hopes of lasting peace in a country that only last month elected a new president after enduring eighteen months of political crisis that was sparked by a military coup in March of last year. One day after the peace process broke down, two Malian soldiers were wounded by a grenade attack in the rebel stronghold of Kidal. A suicide bombing attack followed swiftly in another northern city, Timbuktu, resulting in two civilians killed and six soldiers wounded.
- **2 October 2013** - On Wednesday, as part of a deal signed between the government and rebels in June of this year, the Malian government released twenty-three prisoners who were arrested in clashes in the north. Mali's Justice Minister, Mohamed Ali Bathily, confirmed the release, stating that "putting into practice the Ouagadougou accord, we have signed the decision to liberate 23 people." The release stems from an agreement that was reached between Malian authorities and the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), a rebel Tuareg group, in June, which effectively enabled Malian troops to enter the rebel bastion of Kidal ahead of nationwide presidential elections which eventually saw former prime minister Ibrahim Boubacar Keita elected president. The agreement also allowed for the release of fighters who were detained during a Tuareg uprising last year. It also provides for talks on autonomy for a large part of northern Mali to start between Tuareg rebels and the new administration. The release of the prisoners also comes after the rebels last month indicated that the government had not kept to its commitments to start prisoner releases, resulting in an announcement that they were withdrawing from peace talks.
 - On Wednesday, Mali's new president, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, dissolved an army reform committee dominated by former members of a military junta after condemning an unruly protest that was staged by disgruntled officers at a military base earlier this week. During a speech on Wednesday that was broadcast on state television, the president stated that "I will not tolerate indiscipline and anarchy," adding that "investigations are under way into the reasons and the individuals behind this slap in the face of the nation which comes at a time when soldiers from other nations have left their countries...to come defend us." In response, Keita Officers who participated in a military coup last year fired into the air on Monday in the southern town of Kati, which is located close to the capital city, protesting that they had not received promotions they said had been promised. Their former leader, Captain Amadou Sanogo, was named head of

the Committee for Reform of the Armed Forces and was later promoted to four-star general by a transitional government, in what diplomats have stated was an effort to encourage him to retire.

- Meanwhile on Wednesday, the Red Cross warned of growing humanitarian difficulties in Mali, where violence between insurgents and the military increased last month. According to Christophe Luedi, head of the ICRC delegation in Mali, “the humanitarian consequences of the armed violence in the north of the country, combined with difficult weather conditions, are hitting civilians hard,” adding that “it’s very hard for people to get enough to eat outside help, or to earn what they need simply for their families to survive. If this situation persists, the result could be even greater dependence on humanitarian aid. The renewed outbreak of violence over the past few days can only exacerbate the situation.” According to a statement released by the organization, so far this year, the Red Cross has distributed food aid to over half a million people in Kidal, the other northern cities of Timbuktu and Gao and the central town of Mopti, many of whom were displaced by the conflict, to “help people meet their most urgent food needs and also regain some measure of self-reliance.” It has also distributed seed for crops and animal feed to farmers and livestock herders. The Red Cross added that while livestock were “suffering from a lack of water and grazing resources” in some parts of Mali, several thousand people had been hard hit by flooding in August during Africa’s rainy season in other areas. Clashes between rebel Tuareg group, the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), and the Malian army in the northern city of Kidal erupted just days after peace talks between the rebels and the government broke down.

Regional Reporting

- **7 October 2013** - Algeria’s foreign minister has indicated that diplomats, who remain captive after being kidnapped from Algeria’s Gao consulate in northern Mali in April 2012, are still alive. According to the Foreign Minister Ramtane Lamamra, at least four hostages are believed to still be held, however there have been unconfirmed reports that one was killed. The Islamist militant group, the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), stormed the Algerian consulate and kidnapped the consul along with six other diplomats last year. While three of the hostages were released in July 2012 the consul remains captive. Furthermore, since their kidnapping, there has been little information released.

International Developments

- **4 October 2013** - On Friday, the UN’s envoy to Mali, Bert Koenders, urged Tuareg and Arab rebels to return to peace talks with the Bamako government as a resurgence of violence in the northern region of the country has sparked feared of further instability. The rebels, who are fighting for autonomy in northern Mali, announced on 26 September that they were pulling out of talks with the government, citing that officials in Bamako had not kept in line with the Ouagadougou accord that was reached between them back in June of this year. The withdrawal dealt a blow to hopes of durable peace in Mali. Shortly after the rebels announced that they were walking away from the talks, violence returned to northern Mali, with two Malian soldiers wounded by a grenade attack in Kidal that was carried out the following day. Highlighting the renewed violence, the UN envoy urged a swift return to talks, stating that “that’s the only solution.” After meeting with Burkina Faso President Blaise Compaore, who has taken on the role of mediator in the Mali crisis, Koenders added that “it is important now that the negotiations between the parties resume as soon as possible.”
- **1 October 2013** - During a meeting in Paris on Tuesday, the Presidents of France and Mali warned that a “terrorist” resurgence in the Sahel region might be possible after new fighting between the insurgents and military has taken place in Mali in recent days. With the spark of clashes between

Tuareg rebels and Malian soldiers in the northern region of the country over the past few days, coupled with rising tensions, Mali's President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita cut his visit to France short after holding talks with his French counterpart Francois Hollande, where he indicated that reconciliation was still his priority despite talks with the rebel National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) recently collapsing. In a joint statement released by Hollande's office shortly after the talks, the two leaders stated that "the Franco-African intervention put an end to the terrorist threat, but it could try to rebuild...we must remain vigilant." The meeting between the two heads of state came at a time when security in Mali has begun to deteriorate after a car bomb attack, which has been claimed by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) killed two civilians and wounded several soldiers on Saturday. While calm has since returned to the rebel bastion of Kidal, after fighting had occurred between the MNLA and the Malian army that is stationed in the town, tensions continued to be high. This in part has been due to peace talks between the rebels and the government breaking down on Thursday. The clashes in Kidal came after Tuareg rebels pulled out of the talks, which have dealt a blow to the hopes that peace will last in the west African state.



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

- **4 October 2013** - After talks with the government, over preparations for the vote, collapsed without agreement, Mauritania's main opposition parties announced a boycott of November's legislative elections. After three days of talks with the government, the Coordination of the Democratic Opposition (COD), stated that ten of its eleven member parties had decided to boycott the vote. The talks had been the first to occur between the two sides in the past four years. A statement released by the COD indicated that "ten political parties have decided to boycott except the Islamist Tewassoul party, which will participate in the election." In response, Mauritania's communication minister stated late on Thursday that there was a possibility that the talks with the opposition would resume, however so far, there has been no indication that this will occur any time soon. Although the government has scheduled the municipal and legislative elections for November 23, the opposition has demanded that the polls be postponed until April in order to allow time to prepare a voter census and electoral roster. It has also indicated that it wants guarantees of the independence of the electoral commission. The last legislative election was held in 2006. A vote was due in 2011 but has been repeatedly delayed due to disagreements between the opposition and the government over its preparation.
- **30 September 2013** - After years of disputes, Mauritania's government on Monday held its first talks with the opposition in a bid to organize the upcoming November elections. The talks were between five camps, including one led by the government's Communications Minister Mohamed Yahya Ould Horma, who has vowed that advanced technology would be used in the upcoming elections to ensure that they were "transparent and credible." The opposition is organized around the Coordination of Democratic Opposition (COD), a ten-party coalition that has threatened to

boycott the local and legislative elections. According to Jemil Ould Mansour, the head of the Islamist Tewassoul party, which is also a key member of the COD, “the dialogue has started, it begins with a preparatory meeting behind close doors to determine the content and form of the consultations.” While the elections had initially been scheduled to occur in October, officials in Mauritania were forced to postpone them after a coalition of opposition parties stated that they would “boycott this electoral masquerade” in a bid to cause the vote to fail. While President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz came to power in a 2008 coup, and was elected president the following year, the opposition has never accepted his rule as legitimate and has in the past demanded that he make way for a neutral leader who would administer the vote. Although the COD has since abandoned its call for the president to stand down, one source close to the opposition coalition has stated that the opposition will likely continue to ask for the formation of a new independent government, stipulating however that they would not make this a precondition for the upcoming elections as they know that the government would reject the demand. **Update (3 October 2013)** - After two days, the Mauritanian government and the opposition coalition suspended their political dialogue over the upcoming elections. According to reports, the sides could not agree on the postponement of the legislative ballot.

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



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.



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

- **12 October 2013** - On Saturday, thousands of people in Niger protests against French nuclear firm Areva, which has been mining uranium in the country for nearly fifty years. The protesters, which included a mix of local elected representatives and residents, marched on the streets of Arlit in northern Niger. They have accused the nuclear giant of “polluting” the environment, “provoking radioactivity,” and “not showing interest in the concerns of local inhabitants.” The protests come as Niger’s government has announced that it will review the country’s dealings with Areva. According to one of the organizers of the protest, “the aim of the protest, which has gathered about 5,000 people, is to support the government in its upcoming discussions with Areva on the subject of our uranium.” Last Sunday, amidst accusations that the partnership was unbalanced, Niger’s Prime Minister Brigi Rafini vowed that the government would review the French firm’s operations “with a fine-tooth comb.” The Prime Minister specified that the West African country’s contracts with Areva subsidiaries Somair and Cominak, which end this year, would be reviewed. Areva is the world’s second-largest uranium producer and extracts more than a third of its uranium in Niger, which is amongst the world’s top producers of uranium but which is also one of the world’s poorest countries.

Domestic News

- **6 October 2013** - Niger’s Prime Minister announced on Sunday that officials will review the country’s dealings with French firm Areva, which has been mining uranium for nearly fifty years. According to Brigi Rafini, “we are going to discuss the question of uranium with our traditional partner Areva,” which is the world’s second-largest uranium producer, adding that “we are preparing in particular to review our contracts.” Amidst accusations that the partnership is unbalanced, Niger’s Prime Minister vowed that that contracts would be reviewed “with a fine tooth comb,” adding that while “its the first time that we’re going to do this. For several decades, these contracts have been renewed automatically....Now we need to put them on the table and go through them with a fine tooth comb to make sure Niger gets its share. Specifically, contracts with Areva subsidiaries Somair and Cominak, which end in 2013, will be reviewed. The review of Areva’s contracts stems from comments made last October by Niger’s government, which stated that the relationship between the country and the firm was “very unbalanced, noting that it wanted a bigger share of the proceeds.” The group’s total production in Niger is nearly 3,600 tonnes, second only to its production in Kazakhstan, however the company’s heavy presence in Niger has also given rise to tensions with the local authorities. In April, Areva stated that it had agreed to pay 35 million euros (US \$47 million) over three years to the country, partly to compensate for the delay in opening a giant mine at Imouraren, which is now set to open in mid-2015. That mine, which is expected to become the second-largest open-cast uranium plant in the world, represents an investment of more than 1.2 billion euros. Areva employs 2,700 people in Niger and estimates that the workforce of its subcontractors their to number around 5,000.

Regional Reporting

- **4 October 2013** - A high-ranking Niger security official has confirmed that armed bandits have killed a Niger soldier and seriously wounded three others in Nigeria’s volatile north-eastern region. Meanwhile officials in Nigeria have confirmed that the military carried out air strikes on a Boko Haram camp just days after the militant group’s insurgents killed forty students at a school in

northern Nigeria. In new violence that has hit Nigeria's northern region, which is considered as the home base of Boko Haram, officials have indicated that "a soldier from Niger was killed yesterday (Wednesday) around 7:00pm (1800 GMT) and three others were wounded in an attack by eight armed bandits on Nigerian territory." The three wounded soldiers were taken to a hospital in eastern Nigeria's Diffa region, which is located near the border with Niger. According to reports, the soldiers were part of a West African force that is based in Baga, a town that is located in Nigeria's Borno state. Sources have claimed that the soldiers were "ambushed by Boko Haram, 10 kilometers (6 miles) from the border with Niger." Meanwhile Nigeria's military has launched air strikes on a Boko Haram camp, killing several Islamist militants, near a northeastern college campus where insurgents killed forty students over the past weekend. According to a military spokesman in Yobe, Lazarus Eli, the operation, which was carried out on Tuesday, involved troops tracking "... Boko Haram terrorists to their camp in the forest outside Gujba," adding that fighters jets bombarded the camp while troops launched a ground offensive, which left several terrorists dead." The latest military operation comes just after heavily armed Boko Haram gunmen attacked an agricultural college in Gujba on Sunday, killing forty students as they slept in their dorms. Gujba is located roughly 30 kilometers (18 miles) from Yobe's capital city of Damaturu. The weekend school massacre cast further doubts on the success of the ongoing military campaign, which was launched in May of this year. Since June, more than one hundred people have been killed as a result of a number of school attacks that have been carried out by Boko Haram militants. Dozens of others have also been killed in violence that has occurred across the northeast, which is Boko Haram's historic stronghold. According to an estimate made earlier this year, the four-year insurgency has cost more than 3,600 lives, however the current figure is likely much higher. Boko Haram's insurgents have stated that they are fighting in order to create an Islamic state in Nigeria's mainly Muslim north.



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. 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

- **11 October 2013** - According to a road safety official, at least seventeen people have died and ten others have been left injured when the buses in which they were travelling collided with a tanker lorry. According to the head of the Federal Road Safety Commission in Kwara state, Mary Wakama, "the accident happened on Friday morning when two buses travelling from Lagos to Katsina (north) collided with an empty tanker lorry. Seventeen people - all men - died on the spot while 10 others were injured." Two of those injured were in "critical" condition. The accident occurred at a village near Ilorin, the state capital, with reports indicating that driver fatigue may have contributed to the accident. Nigeria has one of the worst road accident records in Africa, with poor roads, badly maintained vehicles and reckless driving all contributing to the thousands that are killed every year.
- **10 October 2013** - Armed gunmen suspected to be cattle rustlers killed ten members of one family before six of the gunmen were shot dead by security forces in Nigeria's central Plateau state. According to State police chief, Chris Olakpe, "cattle rustlers believed to be (ethnic) Fulani attacked Kukek village in the state. They murdered about 10 members of a family. Six of the attackers were mowed down in an exchange of fire with security forces." The police chief added that several other people in the village were wounded in the attack. Security officers have been deployed to the affected community in order to restore peace. Hundreds of people have been killed in the past few years following communal or ethnic-religious violence in the state which lies between the Christian-dominated south and mainly-Muslim north of the country.
- **9 October 2013** - On Wednesday, Nigerian soldiers raided an Islamist bomb-making factory located outside the north's largest city of Kano. According to the military, during the raid, soldiers seized guns, fertilizer and equipment used to assemble suicide vests. Brigadier General Iyasu Abbah, a Nigerian army commander in Kano, stated to reporters that Boko Haram fighters had already fled by the time troops arrived at a house located in the village of Gunduwawa. Brigadier General Abbah further added that "the materials used for making IED's were found. They were manufacturing the weapons there. We also found three...IED's, one primed explosive suicide backpack and 19 empty IED cylinders." They also found 24 detonators, fertilizer, remote controls, automatic weapons and hundreds of rounds of ammunition. Intelligence reports have suggested that those who had amassed the weapons were planning on disrupting celebrations for an upcoming Muslim holiday. While Kano has remained relatively quiet for much of this year, as Boko Haram militants have focussed their attacks on the northeastern regions of the country, the town has been periodically attacked by the militant group. In July a bomb blast in a bus park, in an area predominantly inhabited by Igbo Christians from the south, killed at least fifteen people. In turn,

despite the ongoing military offensive, Boko Haram remains to be the largest security threat to Nigeria.

- **6 October 2013** - Boko Haram militants have claimed five lives, in an attack that was carried out on a mosque in northeastern Nigeria over the past weekend, before being pushed back by soldiers who killed fifteen of the insurgents. The latest attack to be carried out by the militant group occurred on Saturday morning in the town of Damboa, in Borno state. According to a military statement that quoted Captain Aliyu Ibrahim Danja, an army spokesman for the region, "the terrorists...attacked worshippers in a mosque and killed five of them who came to perform their morning prayers," adding that they also "set ablaze the official residence and palace of the District Head along with some shops." The statement also noted that "while they were unleashing their mayhem, troops under 7 Division engaged the terrorists, killing 15 in the process while others fled in disarray." With the communication network in the northern region of the country having been turned off, details of this and other attacks have been slow to emerge and often difficult to verify.

Domestic News

- **1 October 2013** - Nigeria's President on Tuesday stated that he had formed a panel tasked with laying the ground for a national dialogue to tackle contentious issues such as religious tensions and the sharing of oil wealth. During an address marking the 53rd anniversary of Nigeria's independence, President Goodluck Jonathan stated that "when there are issues that constantly stoke tension and bring about friction, it makes perfect sense for the interested parties to come together to discuss," adding that "our administration has taken cognizance of suggestions over the years by well-meaning Nigerians on the need for a national dialogue on the future of our beloved country." According to the president, the committee, which will be headed by former senator Femi Okurounmu, has one month in order "to establish the modalities for a national dialogue or conference," noting that the committee will design a framework and come up with recommendations as to the form, structure and mechanism of the process. While the president did not discuss the proposed conference's agenda during his address, Nigeria has recently been plagued ethnic, sectarian and social tensions. Amongst those issues threatening the country's unity is Nigeria's oil wealth, in which producing regions, such as the Niger Delta, have been arguing that they are receiving less than their fair share. Another issue that is damaging relations, even within Jonathan's ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP), is the issue of which region should get the next presidential tenure. Jonathan, a Christian from the south, was elected in 2011 and is expected to seek another term in 2013, this however has angered politicians in the north who have argued that power should return to their region. In turn, Nigeria is also grappling with a four-year militant insurgency that was brought on by Boko Haram. Militant attacks, and the response by the army and allied vigilantes, have killed dozens of people every week.

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



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 caused by heavy rain and at least six people were killed. MS Risk therefore advises all travellers in the country to exercise due caution when travelling by road throughout the season.

Domestic News

- 9 October 2013** - Officials in Sierra Leone have indicated that they will intensify their security in response to the heightened threat posed by al-Shabaab militants, expressing their concerns that the West African nation could be targeted because of its support for the ongoing peacekeeping operations in Somalia. At a meeting on Wednesday, Francis Munu, police inspector general, stated that new security measures would require government offices to issue identity cards for their staff and maintain visitors' logs, while petty traders would be kept away from government buildings. The new security measures are in response to al-Shabaab's attack on a Kenyan mall last month, which according to the militant group, was in retaliation for Kenya sending troops into Somalia nearly two years ago. The attack killed at least sixty-seven people, and al-Shabaab has vowed that similar attacks will occur unless Kenya withdraws its troops from Somalia. The new measures in Sierra Leone are due to the fact that the country deployed an 850-member battalion to the African Union (AU) mission in Somalia. While the Sierra Leone does not border with Somalia, last month's attack in Nairobi aptly demonstrated the militant group's capabilities of carrying out massive attacks outside of Somalia and has subsequently sparked fears that its militants may target interests further out on the continent.



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References are always available.

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