



The West Africa Report

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

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

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 - Due diligence and investigations.
- Project Management
 - Interim security
 - Training
 - Special assignments
- Crisis Response
 - Crisis management
 - Business continuity management
 - Hostile operations support to commercial interests
- Virtual Security Director service for clients lacking a full time security executive.

References are always available.

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The West Africa Report ~ SUMMARY

December 9 – 22, 2013



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Central African Republic

On the Ground Analysis

- **20 December 2013** – French troops have arrived in the town of Bossangoa, where houses are still burning and where weapons remain rife as sectarian resentment simmers.
- **19 December 2013** – A French military source has reported that heavy gunfire was heard for several hours late on Thursday at a military base in the capital of Bangui.
- **17 December 2013** – On Tuesday, French soldiers launched an offensive on the northern district, Boy-Rabe, in Bangui.
- **13 December 2013** – According to eyewitness accounts, on Thursday night, and into Friday morning, several people died in clashes in the Miskine neighbourhood of northwest Bangui, a sign that that capital city remains unstable despite the deployment of French troops earlier this month.
- **12 December 2013** – According to the United Nations, a militia group has killed twenty-seven Muslims in a village in the CAR.
- **10 December 2013** – On Tuesday, officials in France vowed to continue their mission in the Central African Republic (CAR) after the death of two elite soldiers, which have highlighted the risks of a mission that aims to disarm rogue rebels who have plunged the country into chaos.
 - President Francois Hollande arrived in Bangui on Tuesday after attending a memorial service for South African former president Nelson Mandela in Johannesburg.

Domestic News

- **19 December 2013** – On Thursday, the CAR's Prime Minister Nicolas Tiangaye indicated that the CAR will bring forward its presidential election to next year, bowing to pressure from colonial power France to speed up the transition after a March coup.
- **14 December 2013** – On Saturday, the CAR's president offered to hold talks with Christian militia groups in efforts to end spiralling sectarian violence that has killed hundreds of people in the past week.

International Developments

- **20 December 2013** – French President Francois Hollande indicated that he expects officials in Poland to announce Friday that they will provide military to back France's troops in the CAR.
- **19 December 2013** – The United States envoy to the United Nations Samantha Powers flew into the CAR on Thursday on a surprise visit to urge the country's leaders to help end the violence.
- **18 December 2013** – Officials in France have indicated that other European nations will send troops to the CAR in order to prop up a military force on the ground that is attempting to disarm warring militias.
- **15 December 2013** – On Monday, France's Foreign Minister is set to request his European counterparts for more assistance in the CAR, where a French-backed military force is trying to quell deadly sectarian violence.
- **14 December 2013** – France has raised the alarm over the worsening violence in the CAR as the UN's Secretary General urges Christians and Muslims to stop the bloodshed that has already left more than 600 dead in the past week.
- **11 December 2013** – France's envoy to the United Nations announced on Tuesday that his country wants elections in the CAR to be held "as quickly as possible," preferably by late 2014.
- **10 December 2013** – Following a request from France, the United States announced on Monday that it would help fly African Union (AU) peacekeeping troops into the CAR as part of a French-led effort to restore security there.
 - Meanwhile a French diplomat reported on Tuesday that former rebels in the CAR are putting up a tougher than expected fight.

Gabon

- **20 December 2013** – In a result that came as no surprise to observers, electoral officials announced on Friday that President Ali Bongo's party has won a substantial victory in municipal and regional elections in Gabon.

Gambia

- **18 December 2013** – On Wednesday, Gambia jailed a leading opposition politician for sedition after he aided two supporters planning to flee to Finland.

Guinea

- **16 December 2013** – At least two people, including a law enforcement officers, were killed on Monday after thousands of demonstrators marched in Guinea against the death of a youth said to have been beaten by police
- **12 December 2013** – Opposition parties in Guinea indicated on Thursday that they would take their seats in the National Assembly, effectively ending a period of uncertainty that began when the country's Supreme Court rejected their challenge bid against the September election results.

Guinea-Bissau

Domestic News

- **18 December 2013** – Guinea-Bissau's Interior Minister has announced his resignation after the West African nation allowed a group of Syrians to board a flight to Portugal with alleged false passports.

International Developments

- **16 December 2013** – A European Union delegation in Guinea-Bissau indicated on Monday that the EU is due to approve a food and development aid programme for Guinea-Bissau that will amount to over 10 million euros.
- **9 December 2013** – The United Nations Security Council today urged a return to constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau, which has postponed its presidential and legislative elections until next year.

Ivory Coast

- **12 December 2013** – Events over the last few days have signified an easing of relations between the different political groups in the Ivory Coast.

Mali

On the Ground Reporting

- **17 December 2013** – According to judicial sources, four bodies, thought to be the remains of soldiers murdered over the allegiance to overthrown Malian President Amadou Toumani Toure, have been exhumed in the capital Bamako.
- **16 December 2013** – Officials reported on Tuesday that militants had shelled a camp, where French troops and the United Nations MINUSMA peacekeeping force are stationed, in northern Mali.
- **14 December 2013** – A suicide attack on United Nations forces in northern Mali on Saturday killed two Senegalese soldiers in what a Malian jihadist leader said was retaliation for African countries' support of a French army operation against Islamist militants.
 - Also on Saturday, Seyba Diarra, the right-hand man of coup leader Amadou Sanogo, was detained on charges of assassination.
- **13 December 2013** – Military sources indicated on Friday that the French army is staging a large operation against Islamist fighters in the Timbuktu region ahead of the upcoming second round of parliamentary elections.
- **10 December 2013** – As the country prepares to stage nationwide elections, a French military source reported on Tuesday that French troops had killed nineteen Islamist militants during an army operation in Mali's northern desert.

Domestic News

- **17 December 2013** – According to provisional results announced by the government on Tuesday, the party of Mali's President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, and its allies, have won the West African country's parliamentary elections.
- **16 December 2013** – A spokesman for the government of Mali has indicated that the country's chief prosecutor will launch an investigation into the killings of Arabs and Tuaregs whose bodies were found over the past few months.
- **15 December 2013** – On Sunday, Malians voted in the second round of parliamentary elections, which are intended to cap the nation's return to democracy but which were overshadowed by the deaths of two UN peacekeepers in a militant attack that was carried out on Saturday.
- **11 December 2013** – On Wednesday, the government confirmed that six judges and judicial officers have been charged and taken into custody in an investigation into corruption that was launched by Mali's new leader Ibrahim Boubacar Keita.

International Developments

- **13 December 2013** – The United Nations peacekeeping chief indicated on Friday that his department is currently investigating what appears to be the shooting of protesters by Malian soldiers.
- **12 December 2013** – On Thursday, amidst the on-going unrest in Mali, United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon voiced his concerns over a delay in talks between Mali's government and armed Tuareg rebels.

Niger

Domestic News

- **19 December 2013** – According to sources, talks between French state-controlled nuclear group Areva and Niger authorities, pertaining to the renewal of Areva's uranium mining licenses, will be extended by up to three months.
- **17 December 2013** – According to a state broadcast by President Mahamadou Issoufou late on Thursday, Niger intends to start exporting crude oil to international markets from 2016.

Nigeria

On the Ground Reporting

- **20 December 2013** – Suspected Islamist militants have attacked a military barracks in north-eastern Nigeria in a fierce battle that lasted for several hours.
- **19 December 2013** – On Thursday, the Nigerian army reported that after an armed robbery at a currency exchange business, its troops had killed thirteen suspected Boko Haram gunmen in a shootout near the border with Cameroon.
- **12 December 2013** – In a video obtained by reporters, Boko Haram's leader indicated that the group was behind a daring raid on military installations that was carried out earlier this month in the northern Nigerian city of Maiduguri.

Domestic News

- **20 December 2013** – A Nigerian court on Friday sentenced the man behind a 2011 Christmas Day bombing to life in prison.
- **19 December 2013** – Nigeria's opposition indicated on Thursday that the country should expect a more accountable democracy after the party, which has ruled since 1999 lost its majority in parliament.
- **12 December 2013** – The Nigerian presidency on Wednesday hit back at criticisms made by former president Olusegun Obasanjo, describing his widely leaked letter, which accuses Goodluck Jonathan of leadership failures, as "indecorous" and reckless."

International Developments

- **16 December 2013** – According to officials at the UN, attacks by Islamist group Boko Haram in Nigeria's northern region have killed more than 1,200 people since May, when a state of emergency was declared in the region.

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 - Page 8

Cameroon - Page 10

Central African Republic - Page 12

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 - Page 18

Gambia - Page 19

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 - Page 20

Guinea-Bissau - Page 22

Ivory Coast - Page 24

Liberia - MS Risk advises against all but essential travel to parts of Liberia, specifically those regions of the country that border with the Ivory Coast. There is a high level of crime in Monrovia, including armed robbery. The Liberian National Police has a very limited capability to prevent or detect crime, or to provide emergency response in any part of the country. Foreigners have been mugged in the Mamba Point and Sinkor areas of Monrovia (including Sinkor beach in broad daylight) where most international visitors stay. The roads from Monrovia to Roberts International Airport, the port town of Buchanan and to the border with Sierra Leone at Bo Waterside, and to the border with Guinea at Ganta, are mainly paved and in reasonable condition. Most other roads outside Monrovia are unpaved. Driving and road conditions will significantly deteriorate during the rainy season, which occurs from May to November. Many roads during this time become impassable. MS Risk advises against all travel at night outside of Monrovia, except to or from Roberts International Airport. This is because roads are treacherous and all the roads are unlit. Furthermore, vehicles often do not have any lights. As a result, travellers after dark are more vulnerable to being robbed at an illegal barricade. Liberia has become increasingly stable since the internal conflict ended in 2003. However the security situation remains fragile. Furthermore, although Liberian President Charles Taylor is currently serving out a long prison sentence in the UK, following his conviction by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Taylor's supporters have warned that UK travellers in Liberia may be at risk of reprisal. Consequently MS Risk

advises all British travellers to be extra vigilant and to avoid discussing any political issues. 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.

Mali -Page 25

Mauritania - Page 33

Niger - Page 35

Nigeria - Page 37

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

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

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

Avoid ALL
travel to
part(s) of
country



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 familiarize 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.



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Avoid all but
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Security Summary

With the recent kidnapping of a French priest in northern Cameroon, MS Risk advises against all travel to the North and Far North regions of Cameroon. The threat of kidnapping and hostage taking remains high at this time, with further such incidents likely to occur. While officials in Nigeria have requested Cameroon to increase security along the shared border between these two countries, the border regions continue to be porous and remain a safe haven for Boko Haram militants seeking shelter from the ongoing military operation in northern Nigeria.

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



On 14 May 2013, the Government of Nigeria declared a state of emergency in the states of 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 Ndiabou 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 Bouda National Park in the North Province. There is currently a travel advisory north of Maroua 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.

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Central African
Republic

Security Summary

MS Risk advises against all travel to the Central African Republic (CAR). Despite French troops deploying into CAR in early December, the situation throughout the country has continued to deteriorate. Reports of violence, looting and human rights abuses across the country have increased and fighting in Bangui alone has reportedly led to the deaths of over 400 people. There is also an underlying threat from terrorism. Attacks can be indiscriminate, including in places that are visited by foreigners.

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. On 22 November 2013, the CAR's interim government announced a curfew from 10PM to 5AM. 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. Despite the French military intervention, Operation Sangaris, being launched in early December, security throughout the CAR remains unstable.



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

- **20 December 2013** – French troops have arrived in the town of Bossangoa, where houses are still burning and where weapons remain rife as sectarian resentment simmers. According to a humanitarian aid worker, who is stationed in the key town, which is one of the most badly affected by the Christian-Muslim violence that has swept the country, “we are on maximum alert.” Panic has spread amongst residents of Bossangoa after two rumours of massacres in the Region. French forces, African troops and relief agencies have also indicated that they received reports of a large attack that was being planned by Christian militias against Muslims. On Wednesday, a French patrol stopped a group of armed Seleka rebels. The French troops later disarmed the men, and placed their Kalashnikovs in storage, with French military sources reporting that between 100 and 200 weapons were seized over a fortnight in the region. Aid workers have also reported that tensions are high in Paoua, which is located 150 kilometres (90 miles) from Bossangoa. On the ground sources have reported that Seleka rebels opened fire, resulting in Christian militias warning of reprisal attacks. So far, there have been no reports of any deaths.
- **19 December 2013** – A French military source has reported that heavy gunfire was heard for several hours late on Thursday at a military base in the capital of Bangui. According to the source, “there was automatic gunfire, with heavy artillery, during several hours at the army base at the airport,” adding “...for the moment, we don’t know what happened.” Sources have indicated that Thursday’s gunfire has left some AU troops wounded. No French soldiers were reported wounded. The military base at the Mpoko airport in the north of Bangui is host to French and African troops sent to the CAR under a UN mandate to try and stop the chaos.
- **17 December 2013** – On Tuesday, French soldiers launched an offensive on the northern district, Boy-Rabe, in Bangui. The district is a stronghold of Christian militia who oppose the Muslim former rebels. General Francisco Soriano, who heads the French troops in CAR, has indicated that the operation was launched in order “...to make the district safe.” French troops deployed in the CAR have so far mainly focused on disarming the Seleka. The CAR, a deploy poor, landlocked nation of 4.6 million, 80 per cent of whom are Christian, has a history of coups, rebellions, army mutinies and civil unrest that has prevented the exploitation of its mineral wealth. However the latest crisis to hit the country is the first to take on a sectarian dimension that has roused international fears of mass slaughter. In the last figures provided by the UN five days ago, some 600 people had been killed, with officials warning that the number was expected to rise. According to the UNHCR, since the crisis began a year ago, more than 710,000 people have been displaced inside the CAR and over 75,000 have fled across its borders.
- **13 December 2013** – According to eyewitness accounts, on Thursday night, and into Friday morning, several people died in clashes in the Miskine neighbourhood of northwest Bangui, a sign that that capital city remains unstable despite the deployment of French troops earlier this month. According to reports, the fighting began on Thursday when ethnic Christians looted the motorbike shop of a man linked to Seleka rebels. The fighting then escalated into reprisal killings before French troops, backed by a helicopter, were able to restore calm on Friday. Witnesses have reported that despite the presence of French troops, tensions are still high in the neighbourhood. Residents in Miskine have also indicated that the town is a Seleka stronghold and have urged the French army and African peacekeepers to increase their intelligence operations in a bid to bring calm to the area. So far, there have been no comments made by the French army.

- **12 December 2013** – According to the United Nations, a militia group has killed twenty-seven Muslims in a village in the CAR. This latest attack has underscored the difficulties faced by French troops in stabilizing their former colony. On Thursday, the Christian militia, known as anti Balaka, killed the Muslims in Bohong, a village located about 75 km (47 miles) from the far western town of Bouar. According to the UN Human Rights office, “the situation is also tense in several towns, including Bouca, Bossangoa and Bozoum, where a vicious cycle of attacks and reprisals continues.” The Human Rights Office further noted “we condemn any attack on places of worship and on religious freedom, and urge all communities to exercise restraint.”
- **10 December 2013** – On Tuesday, officials in France vowed to continue their mission in the Central African Republic (CAR) after the death of two elite soldiers, which have highlighted the risks of a mission that aims to disarm rogue rebels who have plunged the country into chaos. The death of the two French soldiers came hours before French President Francois Hollande visited the country. Antoine Le Quinio, 22, and Nicolas Vokaer, 23, both members of the 8th Parachute regiment that is based in Castres, south western France, died overnight Monday after being caught up in a fierce fire fight during a night patrol in the capital city of Bangui, where sectarian clashes last week killed hundreds. French Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian confirmed the first French losses, stating that they would have no impact on the tactics or the size of the 1,600-strong force that Paris has deployed in its former colony. Claude Bartolone, speaker of France’s National Assembly, told reporters that the soldiers “were injured and very quickly taken to the surgical unit, but unfortunately they could not be saved.” The French troops, along with African peacekeepers, had launched an operation on Monday to forcibly disarm militiamen who claim to be part of a new national army. After last week’s clashes, in which the Red Cross has indicated that 394 people were killed in three days of fighting, tensions throughout the country remain high, with fear of continued violence. While the French army has indicated that it had restored some stability in the capital by Monday night, low-level violence continued on Tuesday.
 - President Francois Hollande arrived in Bangui on Tuesday after attending a memorial service for South African former president Nelson Mandela in Johannesburg. Upon his arrival, the French leader paid tribute to his country’s two fallen soldiers. During the short visit, the French President is expected to meet with Michel Djotodia, the country’s interim president. Francois Hollande has defended France’s military intervention in the CAR, stating that it was necessary to avoid a bloodbath. Speaking in Bangui, the French leader stated, “it was time to act. In Bangui itself, nearly 400 people were killed. There was no time to procrastinate.”

Domestic News

- **19 December 2013** – On Thursday, the CAR’s Prime Minister Nicolas Tiangaye indicated that the CAR will bring forward its presidential election to next year, bowing to pressure from colonial power France to speed up the transition after a March coup. Under a deal that was agreed upon with regional African powers, interim President Michel Djotodia, the leader of the Seleka rebels who seized power in March, was set to rule until elections in 2015. However after a meeting with US ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Powers, who visited Bangui on Thursday, Prime Minister Tiangaye indicated that “the national electoral authority has been put in place and members will be sworn in by the end of this week, or early next,” adding that “they will be in charge of preparation and organization of the election, which will take place in 2014.” In accordance with a political accord signed in January, Prime Minister Tiangaye also confirmed on Friday that he will not stand at the next elections.
- **14 December 2013** – On Saturday, the CAR’s president offered to hold talks with Christian militia groups in efforts to end spiralling sectarian violence that has killed hundreds of people in the past week. Michel Djotodia, who became the majority Christian country’s first Muslim leader in a March coup, told reporters at Radio France Internationale (RFI) that he was ready to “extend his hand” and “talk” to militia groups. He indicated that the talks would address issues including an amnesty for the groups’ role in the unrest and giving them posts in his transitional government. The

president further added, “they are not enemies. They are our brothers.” Violence between Christians and Muslims has been on the rise since the coup, however the latest attacks have seen several hundred people killed over the past week, prompting United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, along with local authorities, to plead for an end to the atrocities. This week, the UN refugee agency UNHCR reported that more than 600 people were killed, including 450 in the capital Bangui and 160 in other parts of the country. The number of dead and wounded across the country currently remains unknown however the UN’s human rights office has indicated that twenty-seven Muslims had been killed by militia in one village. On Saturday morning in Bangui, a mob hacked a Muslim motorcyclist to death near the airport. Moment later, residents brandished the man’s cut-off hands. Another man was wounded in the violence, later seeing refugee at a nearby French military base.

International Developments

- **20 December 2013** – French President Francois Hollande indicated that he expects officials in Poland to announce Friday that they will provide military to back France’s troops in the CAR. Speaking at the close of a first day of European Union summit talks, Hollande stated that “if the decision were confirmed, “ the French operation would be “considered a European operation and there would be financial aid.” The French President further added, “we don’t need extra troops but a presence.... What I would like to see, politically, is a European presence. That it not be said that ‘France is alone.’” However an EU diplomat has indicated that there was a sharp difference between a European and European Union operation, as only the latter could receive EU funding, and only on condition of unanimous agreement from all twenty-eight EU member states. The diplomat added that such an unanimous agreement “...would take weeks.” President Hollande has also welcomed logistical support that has been offered by Belgium, Britain, Germany, Poland, Spain and the Netherlands. Rwanda’s Foreign Minister Louise Mushikiwabo also indicated on Friday that the government was sending troops to join an African Union force in the CAR. A statement released by Rwanda’s government indicated that “Rwanda was asked by the AU to contribute troops to the CAR and deploy urgently, and yes, right now the RDF (Rwanda Defence Force) is preparing to go.” While the Minister did not provide details of how many troops Kigali would contribute, she did state that they would leave for Bangui “very soon.” Earlier this week, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius indicated that other European countries would deploy ground troops to the violence-hit CAR, however none of the states have been identified.
- **19 December 2013** – The United States envoy to the United Nations Samantha Powers flew into the CAR on Thursday on a surprise visit to urge the country’s leaders to help end the violence. Samantha Power is the highest-level US official to visit the CAR, which has plunged into brutal anarchy with inter-religious violence that has killed hundreds of people. Power, who before joining the US administration was a journalist and vocal human rights activists, indicated that American leaders were “deeply disturbed” by the brutality, which has forced some 400,000 people to flee their homes. Speaking to reporters, Power stated that “the people in Central African Republic are in profound danger, and we all have a responsibility which we must meet to help them move away from the abyss.” During her brief eight-hour stay, accompanied by Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Power was to meet with transitional president Michel Djotodia, as well as with top Muslim and Christian religious leaders. She has urged the nation’s leaders to back the UN-mandated stabilisation force, known as MISCA, as it disarms militias and to “explore every avenue to ensure proper and full implementation” of a roadmap towards elections in 2015.
- **18 December 2013** – Officials in France have indicated that other European nations will send troops to the CAR in order to prop up a military force on the ground that is attempting to disarm warring militias. Throughout the past week, as fighting has continued in the CAR despite the deployment of French ground troops, Paris has urged its European partners to pitch in and help its 1,600 troops who are battling to restore security after two weeks of fighting largely between Christians and Muslims. According to the United Nations, the explosion of sectarian violence,

which has come after months of crisis that was sparked by a March coup, has forced 210,000 people from their homes in the capital city alone. Speaking to reporters on Tuesday, and without naming the countries, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius stated “we will soon have troops on the ground provided by our European colleagues.” He has previously indicated that Poland, Britain, Germany, Spain and Belgium were already helping with logistics. It remains unclear whether other countries will be assisting France on the ground. In Brussels, a Belgian military source indicated that the government was considering the deployment of some 150 soldiers for “a protection mission,” possibly to secure the country’s airports. The Spanish government has also backed plans to send a Hercules military transport aircraft with a “maintenance and support unit” of up to 60 personnel, subject to parliamentary approval. However it is not likely to include combat troops. Washington has also showed its support, and will this week complete an airlift of some 850 Burundians into the country to form part of an eventual 6,000-strong African Union force known as MISCA. The United States has also pledged some US \$100 million in funding to MISCA.

- **15 December 2013** – On Monday, France’s Foreign Minister is set to request his European counterparts for more assistance in the CAR, where a French-backed military force is trying to quell deadly sectarian violence. Speaking to Europe 1 radio on Sunday, Laurent Fabius indicated “tomorrow I will go to the Foreign Affairs Council in Brussels and I will ask that there be more solid, stronger support.” He further indicated that Poland, Britain, German, Spain and Belgium were already helping with logistics. Asked whether some of these five states may actually go further and send troops to the CAR, in order to prop up the French and African forces that are already on the ground, Fabius stated that “two of them are currently considering this,” however he did not identify which countries. Since spiralling into chaos in the wake of a March coup, deadly violence throughout the CAR has pitted Muslims against Christians. Faced with reported of widespread atrocities in its former colony, on December 5 France decided to deploy 1,600 troops to aid an African peacekeeping force that was already deployed. While soldiers began disarming militias, many of them former Seleka rebels who had gone rogue, bands of armed thugs continue to roam the streets, with more than 600 people being killed in the last ten days. Fabius has rejected accusations that the French army had precipitated the massacre of Muslims by disarming the former Seleka and leaving them without weapons and at the mercy of Christian militia who are intent on getting revenge. Speaking on this matter, Fabius stated “the Seleka...still have weapons and sometimes heavy weapons....So the first task is to disarm these heavy weapons....We also go to the Christians to say ‘you must disarm.’”
- **14 December 2013** – France has raised the alarm over the worsening violence in the CAR as the UN’s Secretary General urges Christians and Muslims to stop the bloodshed that has already left more than 600 dead in the past week. As French and African troops struggle to restore security in the country, Ban warned that those committing atrocities would be “held to account.” The UN refugee agency UNHCR has reported that more than 600 people have been killed in violence over the past week, including 450 who were killed in Bangui and 160 in other parts of the country. Warning of a further deterioration in the situation, the agency stated that the death toll was likely to rise as new bodies were found. French Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian has also warned of rising violence as he met some of the 1,600 French troops deployed in Bangui. Le Drian indicated, “the spiral of confrontation has abruptly worsened,” warning of “the early beginnings of a humanitarian crisis.” A week after France deployed troops to the CAR, in order to bolster an African peacekeeping force, bands of armed thugs continue to roam the streets, with heavy bursts of fire still being intermittently heard.
- **11 December 2013** - France’s envoy to the United Nations announced on Tuesday that his country wants elections in the CAR to be held “as quickly as possible,” preferably by late 2014. Speaking at UN headquarters in New York, Ambassador Gerard Araud told reporters that “in light of political tensions on the ground, it would be preferable to have elections as quickly as possible, that is to say in the second half of 2014,” adding that “if the elections could take place in the second half of 2014, in the fall of 2014, that could be positive.” Currently, the CAR has a deadline to hold legislative and presidential elections by 2015.

- **10 December 2013** - Following a request from France, the United States announced on Monday that it would help fly African Union (AU) peacekeeping troops into the CAR as part of a French-led effort to restore security there. According to a spokesman for US Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel, who is in Qatar on a tour of the region, US forces have been ordered “to begin transporting forces from Burundi to the Central African Republic.” According to a US defence official, the Pentagon will make two C-17 transport planes available to transport roughly 850 Burundian soldiers. The official further indicated that the mission to ferry the troops and their equipment should be completed in a matter of days. The Defence Secretary made the decision after conferring by phone Sunday with French Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, who requested “limited” US military assistance to support the international effort. Meanwhile US President Barack Obama has also called for calm and has asked the CAR’s transitional government to arrest those who are committing crimes.
 - Meanwhile a French diplomat reported on Tuesday that former rebels in the CAR are putting up a tougher than expected fight. Speaking to reporters during a visit to the US capital, the diplomat stated, “the security conditions in Bangui are not good at all,” adding that “they are improving, but it is quite clear that Seleka rebels have hidden weapons in various parts of the city, that they are using fake uniforms of regular troops of the Central African Republic.” Another French official has indicated “to be honest we did not expect such behaviour” from the former Seleka fighters, who seized power in a March coup leading to the destabilization of the country. The official further noted that “our soldiers had planned every option, but we are really in the most difficult options foreseeable,” adding “we are dealing with that and I am quite confident, not over confident, but quite confident, that our soldiers and the African soldiers may cope with it.” France’s operation in the CAR has already claimed the lives of two French soldiers who were fatally wounded Monday while conducting a night patrol in Bangui. They are the first casualties since France’s 1,600-strong contingent deployed last week.



No travel
restrictions

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.

Domestic News

- 20 December 2013** – In a result that came as no surprise to observers, electoral officials announced on Friday that President Ali Bongo's party has won a substantial victory in municipal and regional elections in Gabon. In polls that were held last Saturday across the equatorial African nation, the ruling Gabonese Democratic Party (PDG) took 1,517 of the 2,404 council seats, according to provisional results released by the autonomous and permanent national electoral commission (CENAP). A presidential spokesman Alain-Claude Bilie Bi Nze indicated "the PDG is holding up right over the territory, even if in some constituencies in Libreville, it has sustained slight losses." The presidential spokesman added, "the turnout rate is considerably over the 55 – 60 percent mark and this return to the ballot boxes is a good sign. The new addition to this year's election was the use of biometric scanning methods to enroll and identify voters in a bid to prevent fraud. The PDG was the only party to put up candidates in all 122 constituencies of the country and it finished up far ahead of its rivals in the Centre of Liberal Reformers (CLR), while a number of independent candidates also broke through. In Libreville, which is home to more than half the population of 1.6 million, the PDG failed to win an absolute majority, but it remains the leading party, according to provisional results. PDG winners control three of the six administrative departments in the capital, while the CLR took two of the others and the last went to independent politicians. The ruling party also dominates most other towns, apart from Mouila in the south and Oyem in the north, which is a bastion of the Fang ethnic group, known for its opposition to the regime. In the economic capital Port-Gentil, long an opposition stronghold, the PDG narrowly won control of all four administrative districts with 36 councilors out of 73. Definitive results are due to be approved and then proclaimed by the country's Constitutional Court within a month. The party was founded by President Bongo's father, the late leader Omar Bongo, who came to power in 1967 and ruled for 41 years. He rapidly scrapped multiparty democracy, using his new PDG as an all-embracing machined to try to end longstanding tribal and regional rivalries. Multiparty politics were restored in the early 1990's.

No travel
restrictions



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.

Domestic News

- 18 December 2013** – On Wednesday, Gambia jailed a leading opposition politician for sedition after he aided two supporters planning to flee to Finland. Judge Emmanuel Nkea handed United Democratic Party (UDP) treasure Amadou Sanneh a five-year sentence for writing an open letter backing the activists, who intended to seek asylum in the northern European country. All three were convicted of conspiring to commit an act “with seditious intention” while Sanneh was also found guilty of “intent to bring hatred or contempt or exile dissatisfaction against the person of the president of the republic of The Gambia.” Sanneh’s letter on UDP-headed paper indicated that the pair, who were also jailed for five years, risked being killed if they stayed in The Gambia. A sliver of land nestled within Senegal, The Gambia is ruled with an iron fist by President Yahya Jammeh, a military dictator and former wrestler who took power in a bloodless coup in 1994.



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

Violence has broken out in Kankan, in the “Upper Guinea” region in the east of the country. At least three deaths have been reported since 14 December as well as a number of injuries and destruction of property. MS Risk advises all travellers to avoid this region of the country as further instability is likely to continue. The results of the 28 September legislative elections have been released, with the final results being confirmed on 15 November. So far, there have been reports of one death and several injuries as a result of riots that occurred in Conakry over the weekend of 16 and 17 November. Further riots and spontaneous demonstrations are possible, consequently MS Risk advises to remain vigilant, to monitor local media and to avoid large gatherings. 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.

On the Ground Analysis

- 16 December 2013** – At least two people, including a law enforcement officers, were killed on Monday after thousands of demonstrators marched in Guinea against the death of a youth said to have been beaten by police. According to on the ground sources, police used tear gas in order to disperse the demonstrators, opening fire on looters and injuring around twenty people, many of who sustained gunshot wounds. National police spokesman Mamadou-Alpha Barry reported that large crowds had gathered in the streets while hundreds of youths ransacked and set fire to a police station. Another witness reported that ‘sacks of rice, computers, a generator, weapons, police uniforms et cetera were taken by protesters who changed ‘down with the police, down with law enforcement, down with criminals, down with the killers.’” The protests stemmed from the arrest of a youth, a well-known local footballer named Balal Conde, in the eastern city of Kankan on Saturday night before repeatedly beating him and leaving him to die in the street. According to an eye witness, the teen “...was picked up by his family and driven to the central city hospital where he died on Sunday...” Regional governor Nawa Damey has reported that Conde was famous in Kankan, which is Guinea’s large city by area with a population of more than 200,000. The governor stated, “I don’t know what happened. He told his family that he had been beaten by

the police, which we deplore.” While it remains unknown why the youth was initially detained, Damey indicated that the chief of police had launched an investigation, with a number of suspects being arrested in relation to his death.

- **12 December 2013** – Opposition parties in Guinea indicated on Thursday that they would take their seats in the National Assembly, effectively ending a period of uncertainty that began when the country’s Supreme Court rejected their challenge bid against the September election results. In a statement that was released this week, opposition leaders indicated that after having consultations with their members, civil society groups and the international community, they had made the decision to sit in the National Assembly. One opposition leader, Mouctar Diallo, of the New Democratic Forces party indicated, “we cannot let this regime take the reins of parliament and the entire administration. This would be fatal error ahead of the 2015 presidential election.” He added, “if we are not in the Assembly we can not even initiate a parliamentary inquiry to demand more transparency from the government.” The Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea and the Union of Republican Forces, which are parties that comprise the bulk of Guinea’s parliamentary opposition, also indicated that they would participate in the National Assembly. Although President Alpha Conde’s party won the 28 September parliamentary elections which were seen as a final step in the process of restoring civilian rule after a military coup in 2008, opposition parties indicated that the vote was flawed, an announcement which sparked fears of national riots, with pre-election protests already having killed more than fifty people. In mid-November, the Supreme Court validated the provisional election results, at which point opposition parties indicated that they would make a decision as to whether participate in the National Assembly. The Supreme Court confirmed the election results that gave Conde’s RPG party 53 of 114 parliamentary seats, which is short of an outright majority. No date has been set for the Assembly’s next session.

No travel
restrictions



Guinea-Bissau

There are currently no travel restrictions 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 that border the Casamance region of Senegal, including the Sao Domingos/Mpack road. The country's elections have been scheduled for 16 March 2014.

Domestic News

- 18 December 2013** – Guinea-Bissau's Interior Minister has announced his resignation after the West African nation allowed a group of Syrians to board a flight to Portugal with alleged false passports. In response, Portuguese flag-carrier TAP suspended flights between the two nations last week when one of its aircraft from Bissau arrived in Lisbon with a group of seventy-four refugees. Speaking at a news conference held on Wednesday, the Interior Minister Suca Ntchama stated "I took the decision to discharge my duties as interior minister so as not to hinder on-going investigations." According to source familiar with the case, Ntchama, a colonel in the air force, is believed to have facilitated the boarding of the Syrians to Lisbon. He is the second senior government official to lose his job over the affair after Foreign Minister Fernando Delfim da Silva announced last week that he was quitting his post in protest against the implication of government officials and police wrongdoing. Seven police officers have also been suspended and a judge-led inquiry has been set up. Speaking to reporters last week, government spokesman Fernando Vaz stated, "I'm not surprised by TAP's reaction. It is to be expected from the Portuguese government," adding that TAP had "confused commercial issues and politics" and risked being banned from Guinea-Bissau airspace. The incident sparked a diplomatic row between Guinea-Bissau and its former colonial power, from which it gained independence in 1974 after a war that lasted more than ten years. Portuguese media have reported that the TAP crew members were forced to allow the Syrians to board the plane after being threatened by Guinea-Bissau's authorities. However an immigration official at Bissau airport has since indicated that the group, which included thirty children, "all had Turkish passports. This is why we let them board." A police source indicated last week that the Syrians had entered the city via Turkey and Morocco. Portuguese police have also indicated that the refugees have since been provided housing pending the outcome of asylum applications.

International Developments

- 16 December 2013** – A European Union delegation in Guinea-Bissau indicated on Monday that the EU is due to approve a food and development aid programme for Guinea-Bissau that will

amount to over 10 million euros. According to a statement issued by the EU delegation, the “Integrated Actions on Nutrition and Agricultural Development (AINDA)” combining “emergency actions and strategies for sustainable development.” During an initial three-year period, the programme will ensure a food supply “to children, pregnant women and tuberculosis patients, at health centres in villages, recuperation centres and schools.” In a second state, the programme will include promotion and support for the cashew sector, which is the main source of income for most Guinean families. The aim of the programme is to boost the population’s financial capacities, promote an increase in and diversification of food production and raise small animals to promote sustainable social and economic development.

- **9 December 2013** – The United Nations Security Council today urged a return to constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau, which has postponed its presidential and legislative elections until next year. The Council also warned that it would consider further measures, such as sanctions, against anyone who hampers these efforts in the West African country. A presidential statement that was released by the 15-member body indicated, “the Security Council urges stakeholders in Guinea-Bissau, including political and military leaders to refrain from any action that could hamper the electoral process and the implementation of reforms, which are key to the long-term stability.” The statement further noted “the Security Council urges the Authorities in charge of the transitional period to ensure there is no further delay or postponement that could further affect the already fragile socioeconomic, security, humanitarian and human rights situation in Guinea-Bissau.” The Council also expressed grave concern at the recent security deterioration in the country, “including many cases of violations and abuses of human rights and acts of violence against persons and property, intimidation, threats and restrictions of freedom of expression and assembly” reportedly carried out by state and non-state armed elements. Such acts of insecurity create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation amongst people, and coupled with political tensions, “undermine an environment conducive to the holding of timely, credible, peaceful and inclusive elections.” Constitutional order has still not been restored in Guinea-Bissau, which is recovering from an April 2012 coup. A transitional government, led by transitional President Serifo Nhamadjo is currently in place until the elections are held. Although the presidential and legislative elections were initially set to take place last month, they have now been rescheduled for 16 March 2014. Briefing the Council in late November, Jose Ramos-Horta, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative and head of the UN political mission in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), stated that lengthy consultations among national stakeholders to agree on the voter registration system and to finalize the electoral budget and timeline had contributed to the delayed elections coupled with affected logistics, including the mobilization of required resources to hold the polls.



Avoid all but
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MS Risk advises against all but essential travel to the western regions of Dix-Huit Montagnes, Haut-Sassandra, Moyen-Cavally and Bas-Sassandra. Since August 2012, there have been a number of shootings around the capital of Abidjan. Attacks have mainly occurred at night with the targets usually being police and military officials. Further such incidents cannot be ruled out at this time. Consequently MS Risk advises those in the capital city to remain vigilant at all times.

Domestic News

- 12 December 2013** – Events over the last few days have signified an easing of relations between the different political groups in the Ivory Coast. After over a decade of strained political relations, the Rally of Republicans (RDR) and the Ivory Coast's Popular Front (FPI) have agreed to work together. Sources have indicated that a political dialogue between the two political camps began on Monday at the RDR headquarters in Abidjan. According to Henriette Diabate, an official from RDR who took part in the talks, the meeting had a symbolic dimension and will help ease relations between the two parties. Speaking to reporters shortly after the meeting, FPI President Pascal Affi N'guessan stated that the two parties had agreed to continue with discussions with their members in order to identify areas of compromise. The delegates from the two parties also indicated that they were "satisfied" with the outcome of the discussions, which were held in a "friendly" environment.

Avoid ALL
travel to
part(s) of
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Avoid all but
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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 took place on 24 November 2013. Election results are expected to be announced in the coming weeks, with a possible election runoff, if required, being held on 15 December. 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 with the previous advice which has been given. MS RISK currently advises against all travel to Mali.

Local Travel

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

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

MS RISK Guidance to Organizations 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 organizations 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

- **17 December 2013** – According to judicial sources, four bodies, thought to be the remains of soldiers murdered over the allegiance to overthrown Malian President Amadou Toumani Toure, have been exhumed in the capital Bamako. Yaya Karembé, the judge investigating war crimes committed during a coup in March last year, which plunged Mali into chaos, had the bodies dug up at a cemetery in southern Bamako on Monday night. According to a source close to the judge,

the four bodies were in separate graves. According to the aide, the bodies had been located during the interrogation of a soldier arrested over the murder of “red berets” loyal to Toure. Another source close to the investigation has indicated that it was “increasingly clear that the four red berets were murdered and, to cover their tracks, the killers hastily buried them at the cemetery, as if they had died of natural causes.” Twenty-one bodies found on December 4 in a mass grave near Bamako are also believed to be red berets. The discovery came a week after the arrest and detention of Amadou Haya Sanogo, the leader of the 22 March 2012 coup against Toure. The Malian government has since indicated that Sanogo has been charged with complicity in kidnappings however sources have noted that he has also been charged with murder, complicity to murder and carrying out kidnappings. Fifteen people, mainly soldiers from his inner circle, were arrested shortly afterwards. On April 30, a group of red berets, loyal to Toure, staged a failed counter-coup in which about twenty of them were killed by Sanogo’s “green berets.” Their bodies were never found. In the months that followed the coup, Sanogo’s then headquarters, which were located in the central town of Kati, were the scene of abuses and killings carried out against soldiers seen as being loyal to Toure.

- **16 December 2013** – Officials reported on Tuesday that militants had shelled a camp, where French troops and the United Nations MINUSMA peacekeeping force are stationed, in northern Mali. According to military sources, “two shells were fired Monday night by unidentified persons at the Kidal camp for French troops and MINUSMA,” adding that there was “no damage or casualties.” The attack was later confirmed by a French military source stationed in Mali who indicated that the shells passed safely over the camp, missing their targets. The attack comes amidst an upsurge in violence in Mali’s north. On Saturday, an Islamist suicide bomber targeted a bank in Kidal, killing two Senegalese UN peacekeepers and wounding at least seven UN and Malian soldiers.
- **14 December 2013** - A suicide attack on United Nations forces in northern Mali on Saturday killed two Senegalese soldiers in what a Malian jihadist leader said was retaliation for African countries’ support of a French army operation against Islamist militants. The blast, which occurred when a suicide bomber ploughed his explosives-laden vehicle into the Malian Bank of Solidarity in Kidal, killed the two peacekeepers who were guarding the bank. A government statement indicated that the car “struck the main door of the bank, killing in addition to the suicide bomber two Senegalese soldiers of MINUSMA and injuring six other people.” The statement further noted that five sustained serious injuries – three peacekeepers and two Malian soldiers – who were later evacuated to Gao. Sultan Ould Badi, a Malian jihadist linked to a number of armed groups, has indicated that the latest attack was in retaliation for African countries’ support of the French-led military operation against Islamist rebels in northern Mali. He further noted “we are going to respond all across Azawad and in other lands...with other operations against France’s crusades.” Badi, a member of northern Mali’s Arab and Tuareg minority groups, rose to prominence kidnapping European hostages in the region and selling them on to armed Islamist groups. He later joined AQIM and was close to one of the group’s top commanders, Abdelhamid Abou Zeid, who was killed while fighting the French army in northern Mali in late February of this year. After Zeid’s death, Badi joined another al-Qaeda-linked group, the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), before launching his own small radical group. According to a Malian security source, Badi current acts as an intermediary between the various jihadist groups that operate in northern Mali. Over the past week, the French army has been carrying out an operation against al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) militant north of Timbuktu. According to French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius, nineteen militants have been killed.
 - Also on Saturday, Seyba Diarra, the right-hand man of coup leader Amadou Sanogo, was detained on charges of assassination. According to sources close to the investigation, Diarra had promised to “cooperate frankly” with investigators in order to shed light on a mass grave containing twenty-one bodies that was discovered on December 4 near the capital Bamako. The dead are believed to be “red berets” loyal to the president overthrown in the coup, Amadou Toumani Toure. The discovery of the mass grave came one week after

Sanogo's arrest and detention, after which about fifteen mainly military aides were also arrested. The government has since indicated that "for now," Sanogo was charged with involvement in a kidnapping, however a source close to judge Yaya Karembe has stated that he faces charges including murder.

- **13 December 2013** – Military sources indicated on Friday that the French army is staging a large operation against Islamist fighters in the Timbuktu region ahead of the upcoming second round of parliamentary elections. According to a French military source in Bamako, "military operations are on-going" after French troops killed nineteen militants in the area on Tuesday. An African military source in Timbuktu also indicated "a very large military operation is under way, the largest in the Timbuktu region since allied forces retook the main northern cities." Sources have indicated that at least twenty French helicopters were taking part in the operation against al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) militants, along with round vehicles, with reports indicating that the French are now targeting the area around Taoudeni, located about 750 kilometres (450 miles) north of Timbuktu city. Officials believe that the area "has become a refuge for terrorists and drug traffickers."
- **10 December 2013** – As the country prepares to stage nationwide elections, a French military source reported on Tuesday that French troops had killed nineteen Islamist militants during an army operation in Mali's northern desert. The latest violence to hit the country comes as Malians are due to vote on Sunday in a second round of parliamentary polls that will mark the West African nation's first steps to recovery after a military coup last year plunged it into chaos. According to a Bamako-based source, "a French military operation is underway north of Timbuktu. French troops are facing a pretty determined group. At the moment, 19 members of this group have been killed." The source added, "the French troops haven't reported any deaths or injuries." The French Defence Ministry has stated that it will not comment on an "on-going operation," and it remains unknown as to what militant group is involved in the fighting. While Mali saw several months of calm, with French and African troops overseeing the security operations, militant groups launched fresh attacks in September, which have claimed the lives of a dozen people, including civilians and Malian and other African troops. The renewed violence, which resulted in the death of two Chadian UN peacekeepers and a civilian in the remote far northern town of Tessalit, forced officials in France, the UN and Mali to launch Operation Hydra in late October. At the time, the French military stated that the goal of Hydra was "to put pressure on any terrorist movements to avoid their resurgence." Officials also indicated that about 1,5000 troops would be involved in the operation, composing of some 600 French, 600 Malian and 300 UN soldiers. On November 14, France's chief of defence Staff in Paris announced that French forces had "neutralized" several al-Qaeda members in an operation that was carried out 200 – 250 kilometres (125 – 155 miles) west of Tessalit. The following week, security sources indicated that the French military had killed Mauritanian national Hacene Ould Khalil, the second-in-command of wanted jihadist leader Mokhtar Belmokhtar, in an operation in the Tessalit area. Khalil was the deputy commander of the Signatories in Blood, an armed unit founded by Belmokhtar last year after he broke away from al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). While troops in the northern region of Mali continue to fight al-Qaeda-linked militants, the country is also battling the latest separatist rebellion launched by the Tuareg rebels. This has further destabilized the security situation throughout the country. On November 8, the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) ambushed soldiers as they were on patrol at a marker near the border with Niger. The clash followed three attacks by the MNLA on soldiers in the rebel stronghold of Kidal in September, after the militants pulled out of peace talks with the government. The collapse of the talks led to an upsurge in violence that saw two French journalists shot dead on November 2 after being kidnapped in Kidal by AQIM militants.

Domestic News

- **17 December 2013** – According to provisional results announced by the government on Tuesday,

the party of Mali's President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, and its allies, have won the West African country's parliamentary elections. Minister of Territorial Administration Moussa Sinko Coulibaly announced on state television that the Rally for Mali (RPM) party, along with its junior partners, had secured 115 of the 147 seats in the national assembly following a second round of voting that occurred on Sunday. The minister further noted that the exact breakdown was still being worked out. The Union for the Republic of Democracy (URD), the party of beaten presidential candidate Soumaila Cisse, will have between 17 and 19 members in the new parliament, effectively allowing Cisse to become the leader of the opposition. While the official results will be confirmed by the country's constitutional court in the coming days, it appears that the RPM party have made good on a promise to deliver "a comfortable majority" to smooth the path for reforms that the president plans to put in place in order to rebuild Mali's stagnant economy and to ease the ethnic tensions that are still an issue in the northern region of the country. Turnout for the second round of voting reached 37.3 percent, a drop from the 38.6 percent that was achieved during the first round, which itself was deemed disappointing by local and international officials. The second round of parliamentary voting was Mali's fourth nationwide ballot in less than five months, with some observers blaming voting fatigue for the low turnout. Despite a terrorist attack being carried out the day before the elections, there were no serious incidents reported during the ten hours of voting however many voters were believed to have stayed away because of the recent upsurge in rebel attacks against African troops tasked with election security alongside French and Malian soldiers. On Saturday, two Senegalese UN peacekeepers were killed, and seven others wounded, when a suicide bomber ploughed his explosives-laden car into a bank they were guarding in the northeastern town of Kidal. The elections mark the completion of Mali's return to democracy after the country was upended by a coup last year. Louis Michel, the European Union's chief election observer in Mali indicated on Monday that his team had positively evaluated 98 percent of the 705 polling stations observed during the election. He further noted that the "legal framework" for the polls "remains aligned with international standards for democratic elections."

- **16 December 2013** – A spokesman for the government of Mali has indicated that the country's chief prosecutor will launch an investigation into the killings of Arabs and Tuaregs whose bodies were found over the past few months. On Monday, Mahamane Baby stated that while the case has not yet been opened, the "prosecutor of the Republic will soon open a dossier on this matter." Over a period of six months, officials identified the graves of six men, including three Arabs and two Tuaregs. All of them were last seen being arrested by Malian soldiers. One was found with a bullet next to his head while the others had their hands tied. An internal military report, which has not been made public, accuses a unit of Malian soldiers of carrying out the reprisal killings.
- **15 December 2013** - On Sunday, Malians voted in the second round of parliamentary elections, which are intended to cap the nation's return to democracy but which were overshadowed by the deaths of two UN peacekeepers in a militant attack that was carried out on Saturday. Speaking shortly after casting his ballot in the capital city, Mali's President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita stated, "this second round establishes the recovery on a foundation of legitimacy in this country. It will give us more strength, more power to say 'Mali' and that's what Mali needs." In the first round of elections, which took place on 24 November, nineteen of the national assembly's 147 seats were allocated, with voter turnout at 38.6 per cent, a drop of almost 13 percentage points from the first round of voting during the presidential elections. Shortly after the conclusion of the first round of parliamentary voting, Louis Michel, chief of the European Union (EU) observation mission, called on "all political actors" to turn out in the second round, adding that "in the specific context of Mali, voting is not only a right, it is a moral duty." While there were no serious incidents reported during the ten hours of voting, polling stations throughout the country were reporting turnout as low as fifteen per cent, as voters were scared away by a recent upsurge in rebel attacks against African troops tasked with election security alongside French and Malian soldiers. Sources on the ground have indicated that polling stations in Bamako reported an estimated turnout of just fifteen per cent. In Koulikoro, located 50 kilometers (37 miles) southwest of Bamako, many residents indicated that they were not intending to participate as they were unimpressed with the candidates

and feared Islamist violence. The second round of parliamentary elections is Mali's fourth nationwide ballot since July, with some reports indicating that the low turnout may also be due to a lack of interest due to voting fatigue. In the north of Mali, voting took place without incident in the regions of Gao and Timbuktu, with seats in Kidal already decided in the first round. Maiga Seyma, the deputy mayor of Gao, indicated that turnout appeared to be good in its 88 polling stations and that the voting had opened in an atmosphere of calm. The outcome of the election is expected to be announced by the government before the end of Friday, with the president's Rally for Mali (RPM) party vowing to deliver "a comfortable majority" to smooth the path for reforms he plans to put in place in order to rebuild Mali's stagnant economy and ease the simmering ethnic tensions in the north. Update (16 December 2013) – The European Union's chief election observer announced on Monday that Mali's second round of parliamentary polls met international standards. Louis Michel indicated to reporters in Bamako that his team had positively evaluated 98 percent of the 705 polling stations observed on Sunday. He indicated that the "legal framework" for the polls "remains aligned with international standards for democratic elections."

- **11 December 2013** – On Wednesday, the government confirmed that six judges and judicial officers have been charged and taken into custody in an investigation into corruption that was launched by Mali's new leader Ibrahim Boubacar Keita. According to a justice ministry official, "in the context of the fight against corruption and financial crime triggered by the Malian government, six judges and judicial officers were charged with forgery, fraud and extortion." The arrests were confirmed by the Supreme Court on Tuesday, with officials indicating that other cases against "unscrupulous judges" were being investigated. A source close to the case has stated that the suspects were accused of abusing their position to extort money from Malian citizens or to take part in other forms of corruption. Since gaining its independence from France in 1960, corruption has tainted government institutions and the military in Mali, with the country remaining in the bottom third of Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index. A 2012 report compiled by Washington-based think tank the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Foundation indicated that "state complicity with organized crime" was the main factor that enabled the rise of armed Islamist rebel groups in the northern region of Mali. Mali's President, who pledged in the run-up to his election in August that he would lead a "relentless struggle" against corruption, indicated earlier this week that he had referred around 100 cases of corruption and financial crimes to the courts.

International Developments

- **13 December 2013** – The United Nations peacekeeping chief indicated on Friday that his department is currently investigating what appears to be the shooting of protesters by Malian soldiers. Herve Ladsous has indicated that one of the three people wounded in the shooting had died over the weekend, further noting that if proven beyond a doubt that Malian soldiers did shoot, that is "absolutely unacceptable." The investigations stem from reports by residents of Kidal who stated that soldiers had fired on a demonstration at a local airfield on November 28. The demonstrators had gathered to protest the arrival of Prime Minister Oumar Tatam Ly who was visiting the northern region on an official visit. While at the time, residents of Kidal reported that five people had been hurt, a Malian army commander last month disputed the residents' accounts of the shooting, stated, "we began to shoot in the air to clear the protesters, and then we returned to camp." Mamary Camara added "the women who were injured were certainly injured by the protesters, not by us."
- **12 December 2013** – On Thursday, amidst the on-going unrest in Mali, United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon voiced his concerns over a delay in talks between Mali's government and armed Tuareg rebels. Speaking three days before the country is set to vote in a second round of legislative elections, Ban noted that the strife-torn country had "made progress toward re-establishing constitutional order," praising the "orderly" first round of voting last month." However

Ban did stipulate “...the political process between the government and armed groups has been delayed,” adding that he was “...concerned about the security situation in the north.” During a general debate on the situation in the Sahel, Ban added that the UN mission in Mali, MINUSMA, would continue to be strengthened.



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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. Despite the opposition boycotting the elections, on 23 November



2013, parliamentary and local elections were held in Mauritania. Election results have been released, with the ruling party winning a majority of seats.

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.

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



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 Tillabéri 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.

Since May 2013, outbreaks of cholera have been reported in several places in Niger. As of 25 November 2013 a total of 577 cases, including 13 deaths, have been reported.

Domestic News

- **19 December 2013** – According to sources, talks between French state-controlled nuclear group Areva and Niger authorities, pertaining to the renewal of Areva's uranium mining licenses, will be extended by up to three months. According to a source in Paris, Areva and Niger have been in talks for nearly two years about the renewal of Areva's 10-year licences, which expire on 31 December 2013. The source has indicated that "the two sides will need a little more time to come to an agreement," adding that the talks would probably take two or three more months. While a source in the Niger capital of Niamey has stated that Areva and Niger have agreed to extend the existing contracts for the Somair and Cominak mines by three months, as they cannot reach an agreement, Areva has, so far, not made any comments on the extensions.
- **17 December 2013** – According to a state broadcast by President Mahamadou Issoufou late on Thursday, Niger intends to start exporting crude oil to international markets from 2016. Without giving further details, the President indicated, "the government has been instructed to accelerate construction of the pipeline to export crude oil from 2016." While Niger has previously expressed interest in exporting oil via a pipeline that links its neighbour Chad to that Atlantic Ocean via Cameroon, it had not provided a timeframe for the project. Niger became an oil producer in 2011 when it began pumping around 20,000 barrels per day from the Agadem field, which is located in the eastern region of the country. Output has so far been used for the local Soraz refinery, which is co-owned by the government and China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC). Last month, CNPC was awarded a second operating permit in Agadem, which the government says contains 1 billion barrels of oil.



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Security Summary

Summary

MS Risk advises all in Nigeria to exercise extreme caution over the following Holiday period. You should be particularly vigilant around religious and public holidays, in public or crowded places. Terrorist attacks during this period have occurred in the past are likely to be repeated.

In November, a French national was kidnapped in northern Cameroon, near the border with Nigeria, by suspected Boko Haram militants. It is currently believed that the French national has been taken across the border into Nigeria and is likely being held captive in the northern region of Nigeria. MS Risk advises all to avoid travelling to the northern regions of the country, especially to the states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, which are currently under a state of emergency. Continued kidnappings of foreign nationals, especially French nationals, is highly likely to continue.

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



On 14 May, the Nigerian Government declared a State of Emergency in the states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. That state of emergency has now been extended for an additional six months. Since the announcement, military operations have been going on in all three states and curfews have been put in place in parts of Maiduguri, Borno state and Adamawa state. Curfews can be imposed, amended and lifted at a short notice. Consequently you should be alert to announcements made by the respective State Governments and you are advised to monitor any developments in the affected states. There may be an increased threat of retaliatory attacks elsewhere in Nigeria following the commencement of military operations. MS Risk advises against all travel to: the Riverine areas of Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa Ibom and Cross River States; Warri city, Kano city, Okene City.

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

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

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

There is a high threat of terrorism occurring in Nigeria. A bomb attack that occurred at a bus station in Kano city on 18 March 2013 resulted in multiple casualties. Attacks could be indiscriminate, including government, security and educational institutions, international organisations as well as public venues and areas such as restaurants, bars, markets, hotels, shopping centers, places of worship and other areas that are frequented by expatriates, foreign tourists and business travelers. Terrorist attacks have been known to occur on religious and public holidays. There have been regular attacks on churches in northern Nigeria at times of worship. The US government has published an Emergency Message for US citizens, detailing information that Boko Haram may be planning attacks in Abuja. This information has been assessed as being credible and attacks could occur at any time, including against international hotels that are frequently visited by Westerners. There is also an increased level of kidnap threat in Nigeria in which foreign nationals have typically been the targets of such kidnaps.

Kidnapping

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

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

- In December 2012, a French national was kidnapped by armed men in Katsina State in northern Nigeria, reportedly from a residential compound.
- In 2012, a Lebanese national was kidnapped in Kaduna State. His Lebanese colleague was killed during the abduction
- In January 2012, a German national was killed in Kano city. He was killed on 31 May 2012.
- In May 2011, a British national and an Italian national were kidnapped together in Kebbi State. Both hostages were killed in Sokoto on 8 March 2012.

Threats and Terrorism

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

On The Ground Reporting

- **20 December 2013** – Suspected Islamist militants have attacked a military barracks in north-eastern Nigeria in a fierce battle that lasted for several hours. Residents indicated that the attack began at about 03:00 local time (02:00 GMT) on Friday, with gunfire and explosions being heard. On the ground sources have reported that the Nigerian military deployed fighter jets at 06:00, in order to put an end to the assault on the camp located on the outskirts of Bama town. The fighting died down about an hour later. Several residents have reported that the insurgents had swarmed the barracks in a convoy of 4x4 trucks, armed with assault rifles, explosives and rocket-propelled-grenades. Families of soldiers inside the barracks, and residents of Bama, have reported that women and children are amongst the dead. This is the second serious attack on the Nigerian military this month in a region that continues to be under emergency law. This is also not the first time that Bama, which is located 40 kilometres (25 miles) south-east of the Borno state capital, Maiduguri, has been attacked. In May of this year, Boko Haram fighters raided the town's barracks, police station and government buildings, killing more than fifty people and freeing 105 prisoners. A week later, the government declared a state of emergency in Borno and two neighbouring states, Adamawa and Yobe. Despite claims made by Nigerian officials that the on going military operations have been a success, it is evident that the Islamist fighters still pose a considerable threat to the stability of the country. Earlier this month, Boko Haram launched co-ordinated attacks on Maiduguri's air base and other military barracks that left buildings as well as aircraft destroyed. The UN reported this week that more than 1,200 people had been killed in the Islamist-related violence in the northeast of Nigeria since the state of emergency was declared.
- **19 December 2013** – On Thursday, the Nigerian army reported that after an armed robbery at a currency exchange business, its troops had killed thirteen suspected Boko Haram gunmen in a shootout near the border with Cameroon. According to traders who witnessed the attack, a gang of about thirty gunmen stormed the currency exchange at a local market in the city late Wednesday, killing five traders and carting away money in various currencies before their encounter with the army. Troops caught up with the fleeing gunmen 25 kilometres (15 miles) away and engaged them in a shootout, killing thirteen of them. A statement released by Lieutenant Colonel Beydid Martins, commander of a special army unit in Mubi, confirmed the attack, stating "our men succeeded in killing 13 suspected Boko Haram terrorists in a shootout near Digil village (in eastern Nigeria), where troops caught up with them after they robbed a bureau de change in Mubi," adding "we recovered rifles and stolen cash from the terrorists." Mubi, a town located in

the state of Adamawa, has previously been targeted by a series of attacks that have been blamed on Boko Haram. In the past three weeks, the military has imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew in the town after another armed robbery targeted the town's main market. Furthermore, the Nigerian army has repeatedly accused Boko Haram of armed robbery to fund its four-year insurgency.

- **12 December 2013** – In a video obtained by reporters, Boko Haram's leader indicated that the group was behind a daring raid on military installations that was carried out earlier this month in the northern Nigerian city of Maiduguri. During the 40-minute clip, Abubakar Shekau states "Allah the Almighty has given us victory in the attack we launched inside Maiduguri..." Speaking in Arabic, Hausa and Kanuri, which are widely spoken in north-eastern Nigeria, Shekau added, "we stormed the city and fought them and Allah blessed us with lots of booty." The video, which was obtained through an intermediary, shows Shekau dressed in military fatigues with a turban and Kalashnikov assault rifle leaning on his chest. He speaks for 19 minutes while the rest of the tape depicts images of burning buildings and aircraft said to be from the December attack in Maiduguri, which is the capital of Borno state. It also shows a display of weapons, including dozens of Kalashnikovs and rockets, the banned Islamist group says it seized in the attack. The authenticity of the tape has not yet been independently verified. On December 2, witnesses reported that gunmen, who arrived in pick-up trucks, besieged an army and air force base, destroying aircraft, razing buildings and setting shops and petrol stations ablaze. Local residents also reported that the attackers were carrying AK-47 assault rifles and rocket propelled grenades, which prompted local authorities to impose a city-wide curfew. The early morning raid was seen as significant as the Nigerian military had previously claimed to have pushed the militants out of the major urban centres and into the more remote, rural areas.

Domestic News

- **20 December 2013** – A Nigerian court on Friday sentenced the man behind a 2011 Christmas Day bombing to life in prison. The verdict is one of the highest profile convictions linked to the Boko Haram Islamist insurgency. Federal High Court Judge Adeniyi Adetokunbo-Ademola indicated that prosecutors had established that Kabiru Umar helped plan and orchestrate the blast at the St Teresa's Roman Catholic Church in Madalla, a town located near the capital Abuja. The bombing killed forty-four and left another fifty injured. The judge also found that Umar was guilty of planning to attack police and government targets in northwestern Sokoto state. Umar, who used the alias Kabiru Sokoto, reportedly worked as a taxi driver around Abuja while serving as a senior commander in the Islamist group. Church bombings were once a near-weekly element of the Boko Haram conflict, however such attacks have declined dramatically over the past twelve months, even as other forms of violence have increased. Rights groups have been pressuring Nigeria to take more Boko Haram cases to court, stating that the widely used tactic of rounding up suspected Islamist militants and holding them indefinitely violates both domestic and international laws.
- **19 December 2013** – Nigeria's opposition indicated on Thursday that the country should expect a more accountable democracy after the party, which has ruled since 1999 lost its majority in parliament. On Wednesday, thirty-seven lawmakers, elected as members of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), defected to the opposition All Progressive Congress (APC), effectively stripping the PDP of its majority in Nigeria's 360-seat lower house. The PDP now has 171 members in the lower house. Furthermore, the lawmakers who defected have drafted a petition, which seeks to block a court from declaring the seats vacant, a legal move the PDP is expected to pursue. The petition also claims the names of 22 PDP senators in the upper house, effectively indicating that they may also be planning to leave the party. The PDP has 74 senators in the 109-member upper house and losing its majority there would plunge the party and the President deeper into crisis. Speaking shortly after the defection, APC spokesman Lai Mohammed indicated that "I think there is a window of how after 14 years," speaking in reference to the PDP's complete dominance of national politics since military rule ended in 1999. Mr. Mohammed further added

that “the PDP can no longer take the electorate for granted,” adding that with the 2015 general elections looming, “we should have a more competitive, accountable democracy.” In recent months, President Goodluck Jonathan’s PDP has suffered numerous unprecedented political setbacks, including the defection of five powerful state governors in November. However some are questioning whether it is premature to celebrate a new era of accountability and whether the APC is actually motivated to clean up a government that has regularly been ranked as one of the world’s most corrupt. According to Debo Adeniran, of the Coalition Against Corrupt Leaders, “there is no ideological differences between the two parties,” adding that the lawmakers defected because they were “disgruntled” with the PDP and were resorting to “antics” to settle personal scores. The APC is currently led by former Lagos state governor Bola Tinubu, who has himself been widely accused of stealing public resources during his 1999 – 2007 tenure. The party’s other top leader, and potential presidential challenger, is Muhammadu Buhari, who headed an iron-fisted military dictatorship from 1983 until his ouster two years later. While the APC insists that the PDP is crumbling because President Jonathan has allowed graft to flourish, has failed to improve infrastructure, including electricity supply, and has failed in the fight against Boko Haram, many argue that the real division within the PDP are linked to Nigeria’s 2015 presidential and parliamentary polls. Furthermore, while President Jonathan has so far refused to declare his plans on running in the upcoming elections, it is widely expected that he will seek re-election, even as he has faced mounting pressure within his own party to stand aside. He has also been accused of breaking an unwritten rule in the party, which calls for the presidency to rotate between Christians from the south, like Jonathan, and Muslims from the north.

- **12 December 2013** – The Nigerian presidency on Wednesday hit back at criticisms made by former president Olusegun Obasanjo, describing his widely leaked letter, which accuses Goodluck Jonathan of leadership failures, as “indecorous” and reckless.” A statement released by presidential spokesman Reuben Abati indicated that Obasanjo’s letter to President Jonathan was deliberately leaked to the media in an effort to “impugn the integrity of the president.” In the 18-page letter, the former head of state, who ruled from 1999 to 2007, accuses Jonathan of failing to tackle a litany of problems, from corruption to piracy, kidnapping and oil theft. He also takes the president to task over party infighting and a crackdown on dissenters. In the letter, Obasanjo writes “I want nothing from you personally except that you should run the affairs of Nigeria not only to make Nigeria good, but to make Nigeria great for which I have always pleaded with you and I will always do so. And it is yet to be done for most Nigerians see.” The former president added that he was speaking out because he felt the country was heading in the wrong direction, adding “I could sense a semblance between the situation that we are gradually getting into and the situation we fell into as a nation during the Abacha era.” The Abacha era refers to Sani Abacha, a dictator who ruled Nigeria from 1993 until his death in 1998. He is known for ruling the country with an iron fist, jailing and driving his critics into exile. Abacha’s regime jailed Obasanjo and several others, for their alleged involvement in a failed coup plot in 1995. While the president has yet to make any comments on the letter, the presidential spokesman has indicated that Jonathan would in due time respond to the letter and “the most reckless, baseless, unjustifiable and indecorous charges levied against him and his administration.” He added that it was “highly unbecoming, mischievous and provocative” that the letter was “deliberately leaked to the mass media in a deplorable effort to impugn the integrity of the president and denigrate his commitment to giving Nigeria the best possible leadership.” Obasanjo contested and won elections in 1999 and 2003 on the platform of the ruling People’s Democratic Party (PDP), which is now enmeshed in crisis. He guided his chosen successor, Musa Yar’Adua, to an election win in 2007. Yar’Adua died in office and was succeeded by Jonathan.

International Developments

- **16 December 2013** – According to officials at the UN, attacks by Islamist group Boko Haram in Nigeria’s northern region have killed more than 1,200 people since May, when a state of

emergency was declared in the region. A statement released by the UN humanitarian agency OCHA indicated that “some 1,224 people have been killed in Boko Haram related attacks.” The UN also reported that “the humanitarian situation in northeast Nigeria has been increasingly worrisome over the course of 2013,” adding that there have been 48 separate “Boko Haram related” attacks in the region since the emergency rule was declared. Amongst the most gruesome was a pre-dawn massacre at an agricultural college in Yobe state, during which gunmen entered dormitories under the cover of darkness and shot dead forty students in their sleep. The UN toll is the first independent fatality figure to have emerged since the operation was launched. While the toll includes civilians, military personnel as well as insurgents killed by security forces repelling attacks, OCHA spokeswoman Choice Okoro indicated that the UN figure did not include insurgents killed during targeted military operations. Defense officials have in recent months released a series of statements claiming scores of rebel deaths in operations targeting Boko Haram strongholds. The details of those statements have however been difficult to verify amidst the on-going communication blackout in which much of the northeast and the military has been widely accused of downplaying fatalities among civilians and its own personnel. In turn, the OCHA noted that “information on the situation is scarce,” with figures of those displaced by the conflict and those who have fled to neighbouring states “hard to gauge.” Following waves of deadly violence by Islamist rebels, on 14 May Nigeria placed the states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe under emergency rule. President Goodluck Jonathan deployed thousands of troops, backed by air support, to the northeast in order to end the four-year-old uprising.