



The West Africa Report

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

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- Security Consulting
 - Risk assessments and intelligence reporting
 - Planning and management
 - Due diligence and investigations.

- Project Management
 - Interim security
 - Training
 - Special assignments

- Crisis Response
 - Crisis management
 - Business continuity management
 - Hostile operations support to commercial interests

- Virtual Security Director service for clients lacking a full time security executive.

References are always available.

More information is found at www.msrisk.com

24 hr Contact Information:

Email: operations@msrisk.com

Telephone: +44 207 754 3555

MS Risk Limited, South Suite, Ragnall House, 18 Peel Road, Douglas, Isle of Man, IM1 4LZ.

Tel: +44 1624 626400

Directors: S.J. Bingham, V.K. Prentice, P.O.J. Tracy.

Registered in the Isle of Man No 007435V

24 hr Global Contact: +44 207 754 3555
www.msrisk.com

The West Africa Report ~ SUMMARY

November 11 – 24, 2013



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Cameroon

- **16 November 2013** - Cameroon's Defence Ministry announced on Monday that its army had repelled a cross-border raid by gunmen from the Central African Republic (CAR).
- **14 November 2013** - On Thursday, the French Foreign Ministry confirmed that a French priest had been kidnapped in northern Cameroon, close to the border with Nigeria, nine months after Nigerian Islamists kidnapped a family in the same border region.

Central African Republic

On the Ground Analysis

- **17 November 2013** - A para-military police official has confirmed that a CAR magistrate and his assistant have been "cold-bloodedly" gunned down by former members of the Seleka rebel group.
- **13 November 2013** - At least three people were killed and several other wounded in the CAR's capital city on Wednesday after clashes broke out between security forces and former rebel fighters.

Domestic News

- **22 November 2013** - A presidential decree read out on state radio late Friday announced a countrywide curfew from 10PM to 5AM.
- **20 November 2013** - The President of the CAR has indicated to officials at the United Nations that he is negotiating with Joseph Kony even with an African force searching for the war crimes suspect.

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- **19 November 2013** - The CAR's interim president has announced that "exceptional measures" have been designed in order to curb violence that has been carried out by ex-rebels.

International Developments

- **20 November 2013** - On Wednesday, French President Francois Hollande called on the world to act over the mounting violence in the CAR amidst fears of a sectarian bloodbath in the deeply unstable country.
- **18 November 2013** - United Nations leader Ban Ki-moon warned on Monday that anarchy in the CAR risked spiralling further out of control and that upwards of 9,000 peacekeepers would be needed in order to stabilise the country.

Gambia

- **15 November 2013** - After eighteen years, Gambia has broken off its diplomatic relations with Taiwan, a move that has been greeted with "shock and regret" by Taipei, which is now recognised by only twenty-two nations.

Ghana

On the Ground Analysis

- **21 November 2013** - Ghanaian authorities have impounded a South American ship carrying 400 kilo grammes (880 pounds) of cocaine and arrested the vessel's crew members.

International Developments

- **14 November 2013** - According to a UN Special Representative, squalid conditions, poor food and overcrowding in Ghana's prisons have amounted to "cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment."

Guinea

On the Ground Analysis

- **17 November 2013** - Police in Guinea shot dead a teenager during a violent protest over an alleged attempt to kidnap a radio journalist on Sunday.
- **16 November 2013** - In Guinea's capital city, anti-government demonstrations barricaded roads on Saturday in protest of the Supreme country's ruling on September's controversial elections.

Domestic News

- **15 November 2013** - Despite opposition parties attempting to annuls the vote on allegations of fraud, Guinea's Supreme Court has upheld the country's September election results which saw President Alpha Conde's RPG party win most of the seats in Parliament.

Ivory Coast

On the Ground Analysis

- **19 November 2013** - Gunmen have killed a journalist, the head of the Union of the Private Press of ivory Coast (Synapp-CI) in the Ivory Coast's capital of Abidjan.

Domestic News

- **13 November 2013** - According to a military prosecutor, a top security officer in the government of former Ivory Coast President Laurent Gbagbo is set to go on trial for atrocities in the coming weeks.

Mali

On the Ground Reporting

- **20 November 2013** - The French army has killed the second-in-command of wanted of wanted Algerian jihadist Mokhtar Belmokhtar in operation in northern Mali.
 - Meanwhile three French soldiers were wounded on Wednesday in northern Mali when their armoured truck hit a landmine.
- **15 November 2013** - Despite protests, Tuareg rebels in northern Mali handed back two state buildings on Thursday that had become symbols of their separatist struggle.
- **13 November 2013** - According to a Malian prosecutor, a man suspected of having planned the kidnapping of two French journalists, who were later murdered in northern Mali, has been identified as a Tuareg drug trafficker who has links to al-Qaeda's north African branch.
- **12 November 2013** - According to Malian officials and Tuareg separatists, three Tuareg fighters were killed by the army in northeastern Mali on Friday.

Domestic News

- **24 November 2013** - While Malians went to the polls on Sunday to vote in parliamentary elections, intended to seal the country's return to democracy, this historical event has been overshadowed by the threat of Islamist reprisals.

- **21 November 2013** - Opponents of last year's coup voiced their anger on Wednesday over the failure of its leader to comply with a court summons over alleged violence involving his men.

International Developments

- **17 November 2013** - France's Interior Minister Manuel Valls indicated on Sunday that the French government will begin training and equipping Malian police in order to support France's fight against terrorism in the northern region of Mali.

Mauritania

On The Ground Analysis

- **18 November 2013** - Police on Monday crushed a protest involving hundreds of youth who are demanding a boycott of Saturday's parliamentary and local elections.

Domestic News

- **24 November 2013** - Results of Saturday's elections have begun to trickle in however the electoral commission has stated that it is not currently in a position to give an early picture of nationwide trends.

Niger

Domestic News

- **17 November 2013** - Officials in Niger announced on Sunday that they had dismantled a human trafficking network which has been blamed for the deaths of ninety-two migrants in the Sahara desert in October.

Nigeria

On the Ground Reporting

- **23 November 2013** - Suspected Boko Haram militants have killed twelve people in a raid carried out on a village in northeastern Nigeria.
- **19 November 2013** - On Tuesday, Nigerian troops killed two suspected Boko Haram militants in a shootout in the northern city of Kano.
- **16 November 2013** - French hostage Francis Collomp, who was held by Islamist militants in northern Nigeria for nearly a year, is free after reportedly escaping during a shoot-out.
- **15 November 2013** - On Friday, Nigerian troops claimed to have killed nine suspected Boko Haram members in a gunfight in the country's northeast.
 - Meanwhile police on Friday confirmed that they have arrested more than 200 people suspected of "criminal motives" as they prepared to head to a state holding polls to elect the next governor.
 - A Nigerian court has sentenced a suspected Islamist militant to life imprisonment for the bombing of a complex which housed a number of newspapers.
- **13 November 2013** - The US State Department has designated Nigeria's Boko Haram and Ansaru militant groups as foreign terrorist organizations, a move that is likely to be welcomed by the Nigerian government who has been battling Boko Haram for years.
- **12 November 2013** - Nigerians living in three northeastern states, which are under emergency rule, have broadly supported the extension of special powers designed to put an end to the Boko Haram insurgency that has claimed thousands of lives.
 - Meanwhile police in the capital city blocked an anti-corruption meeting by sealing off the hotel conference room where activists had planned to gather.

Domestic News

- **21 November 2013** - Officials in Nigeria have accused Cameroon's security forces of allowing extremists to flee across the border.
- **20 November 2013** - Lawmakers in Nigeria's lower house on Wednesday unanimously backed the extension of the state of emergency in the country's northeastern region, giving the measure final approval.
- **16 November 2013** - On Saturday, residents living in the state of Anambra went to the polls in order to elect the state's next governor, with the results viewed as a benchmark of public support for the country's president before the 2015 national elections.

International Developments

- **13 November 2013** - According to the United Nations, more than 37,000 people have fled violence in northern Nigeria, crossing over into neighboring Niger.

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 13

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

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

Gambia - Page 16

Ghana - Page 17

Guinea - Page 18

Guinea-Bissau - There are currently no restrictions on travel to Guinea-Bissau. Although the security situation is currently calm, the current political situation remains uncertain throughout the country and the possibility of civil or military unrest in Guinea-Bissau remains high. MS Risk advises against all travel to the northwestern regions of the country, specifically those which border the Casamance region of Senegal, including the Sao Domingos/Mpack road. The country's elections have been scheduled for 16 March 2014.

Ivory Coast - Page 20

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 21

Mauritania - Page 27

Niger - Page 29

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 Boulouga, which is 25 km north of the capital of Ouagadougou. We particularly advise against all travel to the regions that border Mali and Niger. Since 2008, over 25 Westerners have been kidnapped in the Sahel region, and a number of these hostages continue to be held. AQIM operates directly or through criminal gangs who carry out kidnappings on their behalf or pass on their kidnap victims in return for payment. There is also a high risk of armed groups stopping vehicles (including public buses) to rob them. Such incidents have occurred in various parts of the country, particularly at night. Therefore, all travel between towns by road at night is to be avoided, especially from Ouagadougou to Po where there is a heightened risk. This is especially

severe on market days when bandits often target merchants with stock or cash en route to and from the urban areas.

MS RISK Guidance to Organisations in Burkina Faso:

Although the biggest concern at this time remains in the northern areas of the country, specifically along the porous Mali border and at the junction of the Niger border, the attack and kidnapping in Algeria has demonstrated that such attacks can occur at any place and at any time. In addition, the attack on BP in Algeria came just days after Islamists announced that they would retaliate against French interests in the region. Consequently, it is highly likely that more attacks will take place over the coming months.

There is an increased Burkinabe military presence in the north of the country and companies should review their respective security situations and consider the following:

- Location and safety of personnel
 - Security controls, communications and contingency plans at static locations
 - Work tempo implications
 - Journey management systems in place and working
 - Liaison with the military - use of military escorts, coordination between multiple assets, confirmation that military escorts are coordinated and competent for the task.
 - Reviewing all crisis management contingencies including but not limited to the following:
 - Kidnap (for ransom or ideological purposes)
 - Medical emergency and evacuation cycle for northern area
 - Interdiction of road moves for personnel and any convoys
 - Loss of communications with remote locations - enhanced comms options, access to stores if replenishment is restricted or cut off.
- Media and public affairs contingency

Companies relying on police escorts in the northern region of the country should ensure that travel patterns do not become predictable. Varying routes is difficult due to the limited road networks; therefore, it is even more important to vary the types of vehicles used as well as the times of the journeys and to avoid travel patterns becoming widely known. This is especially critical given the current tensions along the Mali border and the impending ECOWAS operations. All companies linked to the World Bank/International Finance Cooperation should familiarise themselves with the IFC Voluntary Principles on the Use of Security Forces. This applies to military, police or private security services.

Finally, unconfirmed reports suggest there is an elevated banditry threat on the main routes south and east of the town of Fada N'Gourma en route to Pama and Diapala respectively. Road moves to these areas should be risk assessed and liaison with police should occur until the nature of the threats has been clarified. Companies with operations in the region are invited to report incidents to MS Risk to aid in assessing local conditions. Liaising with insurers to ensure appropriate cover is in place to meet special risks where needed is also strongly advised.



Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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

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. Legislative and municipal elections took place on 30 September 2013.



Although the election results have not yet been released, it is possible that protests may occur if fraud allegations by the opposition are announced. Such protests may turn violent with minimal warning. Consequently MS Risk advises any travellers to the country to remain vigilant and to avoid large crowds, political demonstrations and rallies. On 14 May 2013, the Government of Nigeria declared a

state of emergency in the states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. Both Adamawa and Borno border Cameroon's far North, North and Adamaoua provinces. It is possible that military operations there might have an impact across the border in Cameroon. MS RISK advises against all travel to the Bakassi Peninsula as well as within 20km of the border with Nigeria in the 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 Bouba Ndjidda 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.

On The Ground Analysis

- **16 November 2013** - Cameroon's Defence Ministry announced on Monday that its army had repelled a cross-border raid by gunmen from the Central African Republic (CAR). According to officials, six of the attackers were killed and one was captured. A soldier and a villager were also killed in the clashes which occurred on Saturday. According to local reports, about 400 gunmen are suspected to have launched the attack in an attempt to free CAR leader Aboudloulay Miskine. Mr. Miskine, the leader of the Democratic Front of the Central African People (FPDC) group, was arrested in Cameroon in September on suspicion of planning to use the country as a base to launch attacks on the CAR. He broke away from the Seleka rebel coalition, which overthrew Mr. Bozize. A statement released by Cameroon's Defence Ministry indicated that "for the moment, the situation is under our total control, and order, peace and security has been restored in the attacked village." The statement did not name the village. Since March of this year, when rebels in the CAR ousted President Francois Bozize, the border regions between the two countries have been tense. CAR gunmen have often raided villages bordering Cameroon for food.
- **14 November 2013** - On Thursday, the French Foreign Ministry confirmed that a French priest had been kidnapped in northern Cameroon, close to the border with Nigeria, nine months after Nigerian Islamists kidnapped a family in the same border region. Reports now indicate that Father Georges Vandenbeusch had time to alert the French embassy prior to being kidnapped by militants overnight on Thursday. Father Georges Vandenbeusch, 42, was seized near Koza, about 30 kilometres (19 miles) from the border with Nigeria, during the early morning hours on Thursday. According to Paris-based bishop Monseigneur Gerard Daucourt, who is in charge of the priest, fifteen gunmen burst into the compound in Nguetchewe, where the priest had been working, demanding money. According to the bishop, Mr. Vandenbeusch had time to alert the French embassy by phone before the gunmen stormed his private room. His abductors then marched him barefoot across the village before felling on their motorcycles. Monseigneur Daucourt has also indicated that the priest's suitcase was found a road that leads into Nigeria with only a check book in it. According to a nun who worked with Mr. Vandenbeusch at the compound, the gunmen were speaking in English and had arrived on foot. Augustine Fonka Awa, governor of the Far North region, has since travelled to Nguetchewe along with security forces in order to investigate the kidnapping however he has stated that the priest has likely already been taken across the border into Nigeria. According to officials in Nigeria, the Far North region of Cameroon has been used by Boko Haram militants in order to transport weapons and to hide from the six-month ongoing military offensive against them. Officials in Aubja last week appealed to Cameroon to tighten security along the border as the porous region has enabled Boko Haram militants to easily launch attacks and to go into hiding. Mr. Vandenbeusch is likely to have been targeted by militants as he was known to help Nigerians flee attacks carried out by Boko Haram. An official at the Paris prosecutor's office has confirmed that an investigation has been opened into the "kidnapping and illegal confinement by a group linked to a terrorist organisation." France's Foreign Ministry has also indicated that so far no group has claimed

responsibility for the kidnapping however it is believed that members of either Boko Haram or Ansaru, militant groups known to operate in the region, are likely behind the abduction. France's Foreign Ministry are currently in the process of establishing the identity of the kidnappers. The kidnapping of the Roman Catholic priest occurred near the area where another French family had been abducted earlier this year. Seven members, four of them children under the age of twelve, of the Moulin-Fournier family were kidnapped by Islamist militants near Cameroon's northern Waza National Park, which lies just a few kilometres from the Nigerian border, in February of this year. They were taken over the border into neighbouring Nigeria and held hostage for two months. Despite officials from France and Cameroon denying that a ransom payment was made, a confidential report from the Nigerian government indicated that Boko Haram, who was responsible for the kidnapping, had received a ransom payment of US \$3.15 million (£2 million) before releasing the family. Similarly last month, the French media reported that a €20 million ransom payment had been paid in order to secure the release of four French hostages who were abducted in Niger in 2010. This allegation has strongly been denied by the French government. Mr. Vandenbeusch's abduction is the latest in a series of attacks on French targets in West Africa ever since the country launched a military intervention in January to remove al-Qaeda-linked militants from the northern region of Mali. The latest kidnapping of a French national also comes at a time when France has over the past month both celebrated the release of four hostages and mourned the killing of two journalists. On 29 October, President Francois Hollande confirmed the release of four French hostages who were kidnapped in Niger in 2010. The hostages had been held in northern Mali by Islamist militants. While their return to France was seen as a victory, their release was marred when just days later on 2 November two French journalists working for Radio France Internationale (RFI) were killed in Mali by militants claiming to represent al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). According to the militants, the killings were in retaliation for France's ongoing operation in Mali however security experts have since stated that the killings were the result of a failed kidnapping attempt when the militants' vehicle broke down, forcing them to kill the hostages amidst fears that they would be tracked down by French forces. The recent incidents have also sparked an urgent call from French President Francois Hollande, asking all French citizens not to put themselves in harm's way. While France's Foreign Ministry had previously categorised the northern region of Cameroon as a high risk for kidnapping, warning any citizens in the area to leave immediately, reports have now indicated that Mr. Vandenbeusch had repeatedly ignored those warnings. According to French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius, "he had been told several times that the area is dangerous....We had expressly advised him not to stay on but he thought he should remain there." Mr. Vandenbeusch arrived in Cameroon in 2011, having previously been a priest in the Paris suburb of Sceaux. **Update (18 November)** - Despite the kidnapping of a French priest three days ago, colleagues of Georges Vandenbeusch have decided to continue working in the area despite threats of further kidnappings. Since the kidnapping, security has been tightened while the French Foreign Ministry has designated the area, from where seven members of a French family were kidnapped by Boko Haram militants in February, as a dangerous zone prone to militancy and kidnapping. A dozen soldiers from the special rapid intervention battalion (BIR), an elite unit in the Cameroonian army, now make regular patrols in the village and surrounding areas. Two soldiers have been stationed in the Nguetchewe parish in order to protect the religious community. In turn, at Cameroon's request, France has deployed two French police officers, who are normally based in Chad, to assist in the police investigation of the kidnapping. According to military and police sources, officials in Cameroon were aware that Boko Haram, which has claimed responsibility for the kidnapping, were planning to kidnap Westerners in the Far North area of the country. However according to one BIR officer, "we don't have any problem getting information about such plans, but when it is passed on to the relevant authorities, nothing is done."

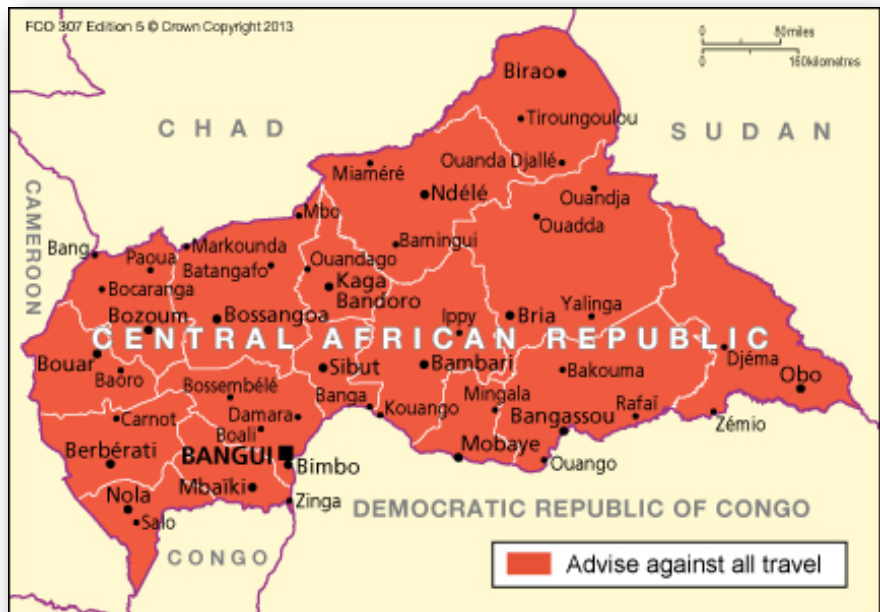
Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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



Security Summary

MS Risk advises against all travel to the Central African Republic (CAR). The armed rebel coalition Seleka has renewed its offensive against President Francois Bozize's government and has taken control of the capital, Bangui. With Michel Djotodia officially sworn into office on August 18, security throughout the country has continued to deteriorate. Reports of rebel activity, banditry and hostage-taking have occurred across the region. In the capital, Bangui, the security situation also remains fragile with reports of continued looting and gunfire. 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.



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

- **17 November 2013** - A para-military police official has confirmed that a CAR magistrate and his assistant have been “cold-bloodedly” gunned down by former members of the Seleka rebel group. According to a source, “Magistrate Modeste Martineau Bria and his aide-de-camp were cold-bloodedly killed on Saturday night” in central Bangui, adding that “ex-Seleka members sped up to them on a motorbike and opened fire.” Magistrate Bria was the director of the judiciary service at the Justice Minister. The motive for the killing is yet unknown however police authorities are carrying out an investigation. Although the CAR’s president Michel Djotodia officially dissolved the rebel movement, many of its members have continued to stage attacks and robberies. Armed gangs, mainly comprised of former Seleka loyalists, now dominate outside the capital Bangui.
- **13 November 2013** - At least three people were killed and several other wounded in the CAR’s capital city on Wednesday after clashes broke out between security forces and former rebel fighters. Wednesday’s violence erupted in the Fatima neighbourhood of Bangui after demonstrators threw stones at a motorcade carrying transitional President Michel Djotodia. Demonstrators indicated that the protests, which involved locals burning tires and blocking roads, followed the abduction of a local resident by Seleka rebels. According to Selemane Adjar, the head of President Djotodia’s communications department, “this attitude angered the Seleka elements who returned to the neighbourhood and fired shots to disperse the protesters, injuring several of them.” Police and members of the paramilitary gendarme force intervened and opened fire on the former rebels, with officials later stating that “the Seleka fighters withdrew after two of their own were killed. Our men lost one gendarme.” Over the past several months, the CAR has continued to descend into chaos after northern Seleka rebels seized control of Bangui in March and ousted President Francois Bozize. Since then, tensions throughout the country have ignited sectarian violence between Muslims and Christians, with United Nations officials stating that both sides may have committed war crimes. Officials at the UN warned earlier this month that continued violence and killings risked spiralling into genocide.

Domestic News

- **22 November 2013** - A presidential decree read out on state radio late Friday announced a countrywide curfew from 10PM to 5AM. The decree comes at a time when the troubled nation has continued to spiral into conflict. It also comes at a time when French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius warned in an interview earlier this week that the country was on the verge of genocide.
- **20 November 2013** - The President of the CAR has indicated to officials at the United Nations that he is negotiating with Joseph Kony even with an African force searching for the war crimes suspect. Abou Moussa, a UN special envoy, has indicated that “when we met President Djotodia he told us that he is in contact with Kony,” adding that “he told us that he had provided him with 20 bags of food...” According to Mr. Moussa, who is the UN envoy for the Central African region where Kony’s Lord Resistance Army has been accused of killing 100,000 people in a two decade reign of terror, Kony had requested the the CAR’s president send him food. Although Mr. Moussa has indicated that it was not known for sure where Kony is, he did state that President Djotodia believes the LRA chief was in the country. Mr. Moussa has further noted that he warned the CAR’s transitional leader against providing food to Kony unless it was part of a deal under which the warlord would surrender. Kony, who launched a rebellion in his native Uganda two decades ago, is wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for war crimes and crimes against humanity including murder, enslavement, sexual slavery and the recruitment of child soldiers. Currently, a 3,000-strong Ugandan-led African force is search for Kony in the CAR, Uganda, South Sudan and other countries in the region. They are backed by about 100 military advisors from the United States, which has offered a US \$5 million reward for the capture of Kony.

- **19 November 2013** - The CAR's interim president has announced that "exceptional measures" have been designed in order to curb violence that has been carried out by ex-rebels. A statement was issued late Tuesday by the office of Michel Djotodia shortly after the United Nations Secretary General announced that the world body would likely have to send thousands of peacekeepers to the CAR. While the statement indicated that "the president wants to assure the Central African people of his determination to hunt down all criminals, looters, troublemakers, human rights violators and their accomplices." While the statement did not provide any additional details, it did state that "exceptional measures are being taken to restore security." Since Djotodia seized power in a coup in March of this year, the remnants of his Seleka rebel coalition have been carrying out attacks throughout the country. In turn, government forces have struggled to assert their authority beyond the capital city. Furthermore, an under-funded and ill-equipped African force has made little impact so far.

International Developments

- **20 November 2013** - On Wednesday, French President Francois Hollande called on the world to act over the mounting violence in the CAR amidst fears of a sectarian bloodbath in the deeply unstable country. During a meeting with government minister, Hollande indicated that the international community "cannot accept the abuses currently taking place, must take action and of course France will take its share of the responsibility for doing so." According to French government spokesman Najat Vallaud-Belkacem, the situation in the in the CAR is "extraordinarily serious," adding that "as early as next week, or even before that, there could be a new proposal for a resolution at the UN Security Council to support the deployment of an African force, to which France will give all its backing. A French Foreign Ministry spokesman also indicated that there would be a meeting on Monday at the Security Council on the issue, with options ranging from increasing the African Force which is already present on the ground to sending UN peacekeepers as support.
- **18 November 2013** - United Nations leader Ban Ki-moon warned on Monday that anarchy in the CAR risked spiralling further out of control and that upwards of 9,000 peacekeepers would be needed in order to stabilise the country. In a report sent to the UN Security Council, Ban expressed alarm about increasing retaliatory attacks between Muslim and Christian groups. The report, which was sent out ahead of a Security Council meeting set for next Monday, calls for urgent action on the crisis, with Ban stating that "the population lives in fear." In the report, Ban suggests five ways in which the international community can act. Four of the options involve providing various forms of financial and logistical support for an African force that is already stationed in the country. The fifth option is a UN peacekeeping force that numbers between 6,000 and 9,000 troops with the addition of 1,700 police officers. While the Secretary General does not specify which option is the best, the report does make it clear that the African force, officially known as MISCA, will be less effective than UN peacekeeping troops, even if it is reinforced with international finance. This was confirmed by Philippe Boloignon, Human Rights Watch's UN specialist who has just returned from a mission to the CAR, who stated that "when you read the report with attention, you understand that the African force will not be able to confront the crisis and that only a UN peacekeeping mission can avoid the worst case scenario." UN diplomats have also indicated that the UN leadership prefers a peacekeeping force however it is known that African countries want to handle the conflict themselves. Despite the 2,500-strong African force, which will eventually be increased to 3,650 troops, violence throughout the CAR has worsened. Armed gangs, mainly consisting of former Seleka fighters, now control most of the country. There has also been an increase in clashes between Muslim groups and self-defence units formed by Christian villages. According to Ban, "the increasing attacks and indiscriminate retaliations have created a climate of deep suspicion between Christians and Muslims in some areas of the country," adding that "further manipulation of these fears might well lead to uncontrollable sectarian violence with untold consequences" The UN leader further noted that the Security Council should consider "sanctions" against perpetrators of mass rapes and killings that have already been carried out.



No Travel
Advisory

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

- **15 November 2013** - After eighteen years, Gambia has broken off its diplomatic relations with Taiwan, a move that has been greeted with "shock and regret" by Taipei, which is now recognised by only twenty-two nations. President Yahya Jammeh's announcement late on Thursday makes Gambia the first country to cut diplomatic ties with Taiwan since President Ma Ying-jeou took office in 2008. A statement released by President Jammeh's office stated that "this decision has been taken in our strategic national interest," adding that "despite the end of diplomatic ties with Taiwan, we will still remain friends with the people of Taiwan." Simon Ko, Taiwan's Vice Foreign Minister has stated that officials in Taipei felt "shock and regret" at the move. Gambia was one of only a handful of African countries to retain ties with Taiwan at a time when China has been investing millions of dollars into the continent. The decision to break ties effectively means that Swaziland, Sao Tome and Principe and Burkina Faso are the only African countries that still have diplomatic relations with Taiwan. While Beijing regards Taiwan, which split from mainland China in 1949 at the end of a civil war, as part of its territory, and has in recent years convinced a number of countries that had sided with Taiwan in 1949 to switch their support, officials in Beijing on Friday denied that the government had applied pressure on Gambia. Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei told reporters at a briefing in Beijing that China had learned of Gambia's move "from the foreign media," noting that "before that, we haven't had contact with the Gambian side."

No Travel
Advisory



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

On the Ground Analysis

- **21 November 2013** - Ghanaian authorities have impounded a South American ship carrying 400 kilo grammes (880 pounds) of cocaine and arrested the vessel's crew members. Following a tip-off, military and anti-narcotics agents impounded the Guyana-registered MV Atiyah on Tuesday. A statement issued by the Narcotics Control Board (NACOP) stated that the narcotics have a "... street value of about US \$50 million," adding "the vessel had been monitored at the high seas and when she got into the Ghanaian waters the Ghana navy and NACOB officers arrested and escorted her to the Sekondi Naval Base." Five crew-members, including a Ghanaian were arrested. Officials are currently investing the the case. Ghana is considered a trans-shipment point for traffickers moving cocaine and marijuana to Europe and the United States. Last year, police at London's Heathrow airport intercepted a 1.5 tonne shipment of marijuana and a 7.5 kilogramme shipment of cocaine that had been hidden in the peels of plantains, which is a staple food of the West African nation.

International Developments

- **14 November 2013** - According to a UN Special Representative, squalid conditions, poor food and overcrowding in Ghana's prisons have amounted to "cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment." The

comments, which were made by Juan Mendez, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture, came in the wake of a Human Rights Watch (HRW) report last year which criticised mental healthcare in Ghana for its reliance on forced confinement in harsh conditions. During a recent six-day visit to Ghana, Mr. Mendez visited a number of prisons, mental hospitals and “prayer camps” around the country. In his findings, he stated that “the overcrowding in some of the places that we visited is particularly severe,” adding that “if there is inadequate food, if there is inadequate medical treatment, if there are unsanitary conditions, those are by definition, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment” and in violation of the UN Convention Against Torture, which Ghana has ratified. During his trip, Mr. Mendez indicated that he noticed a reliance by prison authorities on a system where inmates, known as “black coats” were singled out to whip other alleged stubborn colleagues with canes. The UN Special Representative also criticised the quality of mental health care in Ghana, both in hospitals and in the spiritual healing centres, which are known as “prayer camps.” In a psychiatric hospital in Accra, Mr. Mendez noted that there were not enough drugs to treat patients and that hospital staff were improperly using controversial electroconvulsive therapy, stating that “it is not used as a last resort, it is not clear that it is used with clear and informed consent of the patient, and it is used with insufficient anaesthetic.” At one of the “prayer camps,” located in the rural areas of Ghana, Mr. Mendez stated that people were shackled to trees or inside rooms, noting that what he saw was in line with the findings reported in last year’s HRW report. According to government figures, Ghana’s prisons are extremely overcrowded however Mr. Mendez believes that those figures may be higher. Mr. Mendez has confirmed that he will release a report outlining his findings in February 2014, noting that while he will make recommendations that are non-binding, his findings could harm Ghana’s international reputation.



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

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

- **17 November 2013** - Police in Guinea shot dead a teenager during a violent protest over an alleged attempt to kidnap a radio journalist on Sunday. According to family members, Abdoul Aziz Balde, 15, was “mortally wounded by a bullet fired by a police officer,” as security forces and protesters clashed in the capital Conakry. A relative further indicated that “the policeman aimed at him before shooting him with live ammunition and a bullet hit him in his behind,” adding that Mr. Balde began to bleed profusely and was declared dead after being rushed to hospital. The latest demonstrations erupted after Planet FM, a private broadcaster, reported that armed men had come into the radio station looking to kidnap director and journalists Mandian Sidibe. According to reports, a number of listeners reportedly launched a search for the armed men, which turned into a protest as demonstrators put up barricades in a number of neighbourhoods throughout the capital city. Although police attempted to disperse protesters by using tear gas, the crowd responded by throwing stones and other items, wounding three policemen. Police then fired live ammunition, hitting at least two protesters, who were admitted to a clinic in southern Conakry. According to medical and security sources, at least eleven people were wounded during the protests, five by live ammunition.
- **16 November 2013** - In Guinea’s capital city, anti-government demonstrations barricaded roads on Saturday in protest of the Supreme country’s ruling on September’s controversial elections. According to on the ground sources, groups of protesters chanted “no to the electoral stitch-up,” and “death to the Supreme Court,” while others burnt tires, overturned bins and stopped traffic on the main road into central Conakry, forcing a number of traders to close their shops. Riot police were deployed in large numbers to secure a number of the troubled areas across the city however there have been no reports of major clashes with protests and no reports of serious injuries. The latest protests to hit the capital city are a result of the country’s Supreme Court ruling late on Friday which confirmed the results of September’s elections. Although provisional results of the elections were released on 18 October, and had given President Conde’s Rally of the Guinean People (RPG) party fifty-three seats in the national assembly, the results, under Guinean law, had to be confirmed by the Supreme Court.

Domestic News

- **15 November 2013** - Despite opposition parties attempting to annuls the vote on allegations of fraud, Guinea’s Supreme Court has upheld the country’s September election results which saw President Alpha Conde’s RPG party win most of the seats in Parliament. The election results have been upheld despite international observers stating that they were marred by irregularities. The ruling effectively means that the RPG party, Rally of the Guinean People, won fifty-three seats, which falls short of an absolute majority in the 114-seat parliament. President Conde’s main rival, Cellou Dalein Diallo and his UFDG party, won thirty-seven seats while former Prime Minister Sidya Toure’s UFR party security ten seats. The remainder of seats were shared by twelve smaller parties, with a period of coalition building now expected to begin. According to Supreme Court President Mamadou Sylla, “none of the complaints were supported with the necessary proof.” A spokesman for an umbrella group of opposition parties had indicated that they were disappointed by the court’s ruling but that they would hold talks prior to announcing their next step. September’s elections were meant to replace a transitional government which has ruled the country since military rule ended in 2010. While the polls were initially supposed to be held six months after the 2010 presidential elections, they were delayed a number of times with the run-up being marred by violence coupled with ethnic and religious tension. International Developments

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



MS Risk advises against all but essential travel to the western regions of Dix-Huit Montagnes, Haut-Sassandra, Moyen-Cavally and Bas-Sassandra. 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.

On the Ground Analysis

- **19 November 2013** - Gunmen have killed a journalist, the head of the Union of the Private Press of Ivory Coast (Synapp-CI) in the Ivory Coast's capital of Abidjan. According to Guillaume Gbatto, Desire Oue, 40, the managing editor of the "Tomorrow Magazine" review was "gunned down on Friday night at his home by unidentified armed men." So far, there have been no suspects arrested however officials are carrying out an investigation into the shooting.

Domestic News

- **13 November 2013** - According to a military prosecutor, a top security officer in the government of former Ivory Coast President Laurent Gbagbo is set to go on trial for atrocities in the coming weeks. Ange Kessi has stated that a close-door trial of Jean-Noel Abehi will be held sometime between November 21 and December 31, however the precise dates have not been made public "for security reasons." According to the military prosecutor, the charges include "desertion abroad" and "plotting." Jean-Noel Abehi, who commanded an armoured squadron at the Agban paramilitary police barracks in the Ivory Coast's capital city Abidjan, fled the country after a bloody post-electoral crisis that occurred from December 2010 to April 2011, when then-President Gbagbo refused to accept being defeated in the nationwide polls. The conflict claimed 3,000 lives and destabilised a country which had once been a beacon of stability in the region. Mr. Abehi was arrested in Ghana in February of this year and was later extradited back to the Ivory Coast. He is considered by detractors and international humanitarian groups to be one of the main instigators of the atrocities that were committed by Gbagbo's regime, particularly during the final stages of the conflict. According to the military prosecutor, if convicted, Mr. Abehi faces twenty years in prison. The government of President Alassane Ouattara also suspects Mr. Abehi of having been involved in attempts to destabilise the country and carrying out attacks against Ivory Coast security forces in late 2012. The first major trial of an official involved in the crisis was carried out in October 2012 when a top Gbagbo general, Brunot Dogbo Ble, was jailed for fifteen years for complicity in the murder of a retired officer.



Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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

Security Summary

Summary

MS Risk advises against all travel to 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 to the previous advice which has been given. MS RISK currently advises against all travel to Mali.

Local Travel

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

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

MS RISK Guidance to Organisations in Mali:

With western diplomatic missions all warning against unnecessary travel to Mali, those companies with fixed interests in the country need to take measured precautions if they have not done so already. This is especially an issue for organisations with any interest in the so-called Azawad region - that portion of the country which is under insurgent control. Preparations should include the following:

- Thinning out non-essential staff and dependents
- Restricting expat and local national internal travel
- Seeking advice from the security forces
- Ensuring journey management systems are in place and work
- Reviewing crisis management contingencies and carrying out exercises of these plans
- Registration of expatriates with relevant diplomatic missions and seeking advice on what support will be forthcoming (if any) if conditions deteriorate
- Liaison with insurers to know any exclusions or limits to existing cover

On The Ground Reporting

- **20 November 2013** - The French army has killed the second-in-command of wanted of wanted Algerian jihadist Mokhtar Belmokhtar in operation in northern Mali. According to security sources, Hacene Ould Khalil, who went by the nom de guerre Jouleibib, was killed last week in the Tessalit region. A regional security source described the Mauritanian national as Belmokhtar's "genuine

right-hand man.” Joulebib 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). He was also a spokesman for the Signatories in Blood. While a military spokesman in Paris did not comment on the operation, a second regional security source in Mali confirmed the information, stating that “two other terrorists were killed during the operation, a vehicle was destroyed and the French soldiers, who pulled off quite a coup, also recovered documents including a satellite telephone number which will provide valuable information.” The special overnight operation took place in the desert, some 200 - 250 kilometres (125 - 155 miles) west of Tessalit. The Signatories in Blood allegedly masterminded a siege in January of an Algerian gas plant in which thirty-eight hostages died.

- Meanwhile three French soldiers were wounded on Wednesday in northern Mali when their armoured truck hit a landmine. According to a Malian source, “a vehicle of the French army was hit by an explosion likely caused by a bomb, a mine on which the vehicle drove, around 1:00AM (0100 GMT) on Wednesday. Three French soldiers were wounded but their lives are not in danger.” The incident in the town of Kidal and its cause were confirmed by a senior official from Operation Serval. The casualties are being treated in Gao, with French armed forces spokesman Gilles Jaron indicating that they had suffered from noise trauma caused by the loud blast and “should be able to resume their activities in the coming days.” The explosion blew a wheel on the truck at the southeast exit of Kidal as it was returning from patrol to the barracks. The explosion in Kidal comes one week after Tuareg demonstrators laid waste to public buildings in the town in protest at a decision by separatist leaders to end their occupation of state premises. According to eye witness reports, young people set fire to part of the governor’s offices and sacked the public treasury and a nearby state education facility. The separatist National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) pledged two weeks ago to leave the governor’s offices and radio station, in line with the terms of a June peace deal. The accord, which was signed in Burkina Faso, opened the way for a presidential election to be held in Kidal along with the rest of the turbulent west African country in two rounds in July and August.
- **15 November 2013** - Despite protests, Tuareg rebels in northern Mali handed back two state buildings on Thursday that had become symbols of their separatist struggle. The hand over effectively honoured the terms of a peace deal. After a nine-month occupation, the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) withdrew from the governor’s offices, state TV and radio station in the northeastern town of Kidal despite protests by Tuareg rebels. Abdoulaye Bathily, the second-in-command of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Mali, who flew in to Kidal on Wednesday in order to ensure a smooth handover, confirmed that “the rebels, in accordance with their commitments, returned the governor’s office and radio station in Kidal.” The official further added that MNLA leaders had gone through with the move after talks with protesting supporters who were holding a sit-in outside the governor’s offices and the local TV and radio offices of state broadcaster ORTM. The hand over comes five days after the MNLA pledged to return the buildings, a hand over which was in line with the terms of a June peace deal. However the decision has been seen as deeply dividing the MNLA, whose ultimate goal is the independence of Azawad. This division was seen on Thursday when young Tuareg protesters set fire to part of the governor’s offices.
- **13 November 2013** - According to a Malian prosecutor, a man suspected of having planned the kidnapping of two French journalists, who were later murdered in northern Mali, has been identified as a Tuareg drug trafficker who has links to al-Qaeda’s north African branch. According to officials, the suspect, Bayes Ag Bakabo, is a key individual in the kidnapping, which led to the deaths of Radio France Internationale (RFI) journalists Ghislaine Dupont, 57, and Claude Verlon, 55. During a press conference on the investigation, chief Paris prosecutor Francois Molins stated that “we know he is a member of AQIM (al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb), that he is also a drug trafficker,” adding that “he was seen driving the pick-up used to kidnap the two journalists and he was seen buying 140 litres of fuel before the kidnapping.” The prosecutor noted that authorities were “intensively” hunting for Ag Bakabo. During the conference, the prosecutor outlined two possible scenarios

which lead to the journalists being killed. According to Mr. Molins, the vehicle in which they were travelling had broken down just outside of Kidal and “either the two hostages tried to take advantage and flee, or the kidnappers did not want to slow their escape and preferred to execute their victims rather than leave them behind.” Shortly after the murders, AQIM claimed responsibility, stating that it was “the minimum debt” owed by the French people and President Francois Hollande “in return for their new crusade.” Meanwhile it is believed that the mastermind behind the attack is Abdelkrim Targui, a Tuareg former lieutenant of Abdelhamid Abou Zeid, one of the AQIM leaders who was killed in fighting in February of this year. The two journalists were seized in the northern Malian town of Kidal after interviewing a separatist Tuareg leader. They were found dead just hours later. According to Mr. Molis, Dupont had been shot three times while Verlon seven times.

- **12 November 2013** - According to Malian officials and Tuareg separatists, three Tuareg fighters were killed by the army in northeastern Mali on Friday. The Malian Ministry of Defence issued a statement indicating that four rebels had also wounded in Menaka, 100 kilometres (62 miles) from the border with Niger. The deaths were later confirmed by Mossa Ag Atthaer, press officer for the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad. According to Mr. Attaher, despite the recent clashes, Tuareg separatists are planning to hand back to the government the governor’s administrative offices and the local radio in the northern town of Kidal on 14 November. The rebels have held the buildings since early 2012.

Domestic News

- **24 November 2013** - While Malians went to the polls on Sunday to vote in parliamentary elections, intended to seal the country’s return to democracy, this historical event has been overshadowed by the threat of Islamist reprisals. The polls mark Mali’s first steps towards recovery after the country plunged into chaos in the wake of last year’s military coup and will finalise a process that began with the election of its first post-conflict leader in August. Speaking shortly after casting his ballot in the capital Bamako, President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita stated that he “...wanted to express my joy at coming to vote,” adding that “if you had told me a few months ago that we would be staging parliamentary elections I would have thought I was dreaming. But this is reality. Mali is standing on its own feet and moving forward.” While some 6.5 million Malians are eligible to cast ballots for a new national assembly, with more than 1,000 candidates running for 147 seats, the initial turnout across the country was weak. Today’s voting takes place amidst an upsurge in violence by al-Qaeda-linked rebels who continue to be a threat in the northern desert region of Mali. Al-Qaeda-linked insurgents ousted from the northern towns they occupied by French and African troops in January resumed their deadly insurgency on September 28 after a lull of several months. Since then, a dozen civilians, as well as a number of Malian and Chadian soldiers in the United Nations MINUSMA peacekeeping missions, have been killed in the country’s vast desert north. A great portion of the worry ahead of today’s polls has also focused on the largely lawless region of Kidal, which was occupied for five months by ethnic Tuareg separatists until a ceasefire accord signed in June enabled the Malian army to enter the town. **Update** - In the first sign of disruption in the parliamentary polls, officials reported that ballot boxes were stolen in the Timbuktu region on Sunday. According to reports, one ballot box was stolen by armed men while several others were taken by a politician. According to Oumou Sall Seck, the mayor of the district capital of Goundam, “gunmen took a ballot box in the town of Bajakary, 80 kilometres (50 miles) from Goundam. I’ve sent people there to establish the facts,” adding that “in Takoubao, another town about 15km from Goundam, voter cards were confiscated.” So far, there has been no immediate indication of who might be behind the incidents or whether they are connected.
- **21 November 2013** - Opponents of last year’s coup voiced their anger on Wednesday over the failure of its leader to comply with a court summons over alleged violence involving his men. In October, Amadou Sanogo had been ordered to answer questions before a judge pertaining to “the deaths in the last mutiny against him” at his former headquarters in the central town of Kati, and “all violence in recent times” of which his men have been accused. Since his failure to appear in court,

anti-coup coalition The United Front for Safeguarding Democracy in the Republic (FDR) has stated that it was “deeply outraged” that Sanogo had not responded to the summons. A statement issued by the FDR indicated that “for several weeks, Captain Sanogo has been piling on the delaying tactics to avoid explaining the serious crimes committed in Kati from the time he reigned supreme there,” adding that “one day he is sick, another day he is supposedly a former head of state.” The statement further noted that the FDR was “shocked by the apparent complacency which the government is displaying regarding Captain Sanogo, which gives the impression that he is untouchable.” In August of this year, Sanogo was controversially promoted from captain to lieutenant-general prompting fellow ex-junta members also seeking promotion to mutiny at his Kati barracks, located near the capital Bamako. This forced the Malian army to intervene in order to prevent a further destabilisation of security. In turn, the bodies of three missing soldiers were subsequently discovered in and around the barracks and around twenty officers, including Sanogo’s former deputy, were arrested.

International Developments

- **17 November 2013** - France’s Interior Minister Manuel Valls indicated on Sunday that the French government will begin training and equipping Malian police in order to support France’s fight against terrorism in the northern region of Mali. The announcement was made shortly after the Minister held a meeting with Mali’s President and Prime Minister during a two-day visit as part of a wider regional tour focused on security which began as France started to wrap up its military operation in Mali. Speaking to reporters in Bamako, Mr. Valls stated that “we will ensure that our relationship...is translated very quickly into action, in terms of support and equipment for the police to deal with security problems.” The Minister indicated that logistical support would include the provision of protective gear, weapons, vehicles, noting that training would be provided first. The Minister also added that “there is an urgency here in Mali to rebuild the rule of law and our cooperation will also continue in the field of intelligence.” Mr. Valls’ trip to Mali is the third on a four-nation tour of West Africa, which included stops in Senegal and the Ivory Coast. He flew to Nouakchott later on Sunday, where he met with Mauritania’s President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz and signed an agreement with the government relating to sharing intelligence in a bid to strengthen cooperation in fighting terrorism. Like the agreement with Mali, the arrangement with Mauritania will include the training of police officers, provision of some equipment and a focus on the drug trade. Mauritania, a former French colony located on the western coast of the Sahara desert is seen by Western leaders as strategically important in the fight against al-Qaeda-linked groups not only within its own borders, but also in neighbouring Mali and across Africa’s Sahel region.

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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



Security Summary

Summary

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

On 22 August, officials in Mauritania announced that



they have postponed the October 12 elections by six weeks after a coalition of opposition parties indicated that it would boycott the polls in an attempt to cause the vote to fail. Despite the opposition boycotting the elections, on 23 November 2013, parliamentary and local elections were held in Mauritania. Election results are expected to be released within a week. A second round of elections, if necessary, may be held on 7 December. While the election day passed relatively peacefully, as the election results are released, demonstrations may be held in a number of locations across the country, including Nouakchott. Although demonstrations have generally been peaceful, some have involved clashes with police. Consequently, MS Risk advises you to avoid political gatherings and demonstrations.

Terrorism

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

Kidnapping

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

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

On the Ground Analysis

- **18 November 2013** - Police on Monday crushed a protest involving hundreds of youth who are demanding a boycott of Saturday's parliamentary and local elections. According to eye witness accounts, police beat the activists and sprayed them with tear gas as they waved placards and chanted slogans outside the offices of the election commission in the capital of Nouakchott. Several protesters were wounded in the clashes. According to Idoumou Ould Mohamed Lemine, spokesman for the Coordination of Democratic Opposition (COD), which organized the protest, "the police violently attacked the demonstrators despite the peaceful nature of their movement, using tear gas and batons," adding that any people, mostly women, were wounded and transported to hospitals in Nouakchott." The COD has condemned "these acts of violence which are contrary to democracy and the free expression that the government prides itself on." Around 1,500 candidates have been campaigning since November 7, vying for the leadership of 218 local councils and 147 seats in parliament. However ten parties of the eleven-member COD are boycotting what they call an "electoral masquerade" after talks on how the vote should be run broke down in October.

Domestic News

- **24 November 2013** - Results of Saturday's elections have begun to trickle in however the electoral commission has stated that it is not currently in a position to give an early picture of nationwide trends. The commission has indicated that counting had been delayed in many regions where people were allowed to cast their ballots after the official deadline, adding that the definitive results from Saturday's election would be made available "perhaps in the middle of the week." State television has put the turnout at around sixty percent, a figure that, if confirmed, would severely undermine a campaign by a large group of opposition parties which called for a boycott of the polls.

• **23 November 2013** - On Saturday, Mauritians voted in nationwide elections that have widely been overshadowed by a widespread boycott organised by opposition parties. Attention will also however be focused on the performance of an Islamist party, which has been allowed to take part in the elections for the very first time. speaking shortly after visiting his local polling booth in Nouakchott, President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz stated that "I think these elections today are a victory for democracy in my country." Around a third of Mauritania's 3.4 million people are eligible to vote in the first parliamentary and local elections to be held since 2006. These elections have also been sent a test of strength for the President, five years after he came to power in a coup and four years after he won a widely contested presidential vote. His Union for the Republic (UPR) is expected to retain power however opinion is divided over whether the main Islamist party, Tewassoul, which has only been legalised in 2007, will emerge greatly strengthened in Saturday's polls.



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

Security Summary

MS Risk advises against all travel to the following parts of Niger: all areas of the country north of the city of Abalak, including the Air Massif region; the province of Agadez (including the road linking Assamakato Agadez and the city of Agadez); areas of Tahoua province north of the city of Tahoua, including the city itself; the area of Tillaberi province north of Niamey, including the road from Niamey to Gao and the road from Niamey to Menaka; areas within 40 km of the border with Nigeria in Diffa, Zinder and Maradi provinces. MS Risk advises against all but essential travel to the rest of Niger, including the capital city of Niamey. There remains a high threat from, including kidnapping, in Niger. On 1 June 2013, three guards were killed and twenty-two inmates escaped from the main prison in Niamey during an attack by suspected Islamist militants. Travellers in Niamey should continue to monitor developments and be alert to announcements and remain vigilant at all times. On 23 May 2013, a military barracks in the town of Agadez and a uranium processing facility near the town of Arlit, approximately 150 miles north of Agadez, were attacked. A number of people were killed and injured. The terrorist group which claimed responsibility for the two attacks has publicly threatened to carry out further attacks in Niger. On 14 May 2013, the Government of Nigeria declared a state of emergency in its northern states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. Both Borno and Yobe border southern Niger. Consequently there is a risk that instability may spill over the border from Nigeria to Niger. There is a high threat of kidnapping from terrorist groups including AQIM and MOJWA. These groups have kidnapped Westerners in Niger and in the wider Sahel region, including in Niamey and



the north and west of Niger. Further kidnappings are likely to occur. There is a threat of retaliatory attacks in Niger, due to the country's participation in the French-led intervention in Mali. Levels of crime are high, especially in the capital city of Niamey. Thefts, robberies and residential break-ins can occur at any time. Banditry, smuggling and other criminal activity is common in border areas, especially after dark. Bandits are thought to be operating in the border area with

Nigeria, south of Zinder. MS Risk advises avoiding crossing the border with Nigeria during the hours of darkness.

On the Ground Reporting

- 17 November 2013** - Officials in Niger announced on Sunday that they had dismantled a human trafficking network which has been blamed for the deaths of ninety-two migrants in the Sahara desert in October. According to Justice Minister and government spokesman Marou Amadou, "we have just dismantled a trafficking ring and have arrested around 30 leaders including police, drivers and vehicle owners" in the north and south of the country. Reports have indicated that dozens were arrested, including a driver who authorities believed left the victims to die. In October, 113 Niger migrants, mostly women and children, were headed to Algeria when the two trucks they were travelling in broke down in the harsh desert. Only twenty-one people survived after the group attempted to cross the Sahara desert. The rest died of thirst. The investigation to dismantle the ring after the tragedy brought together security and defence teams in Agadez and Arlit, two cities located in northern Niger that have served as the main transit points for migrants travelling from West Africa to Libya, Algeria and Europe.

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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



Security Summary

Summary

Earlier this month, 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

- **23 November 2013** - Suspected Boko Haram militants have killed twelve people in a raid carried out on a village in northeastern Nigeria. According to police officials, about thirty gunmen also burnt houses and stole cars in the village of Sandiya, in the state of Borno. The raid, which occurred on Thursday, took place about 85 kilometres (53 miles) from the Borno state capital, Maiduguri. Local residents have reported that Boko Haram militants had accused villages of collaborating with security forces in order to track them down.
- **19 November 2013** - On Tuesday, Nigerian troops killed two suspected Boko Haram militants in a shootout in the northern city of Kano. According to a military spokesman, the clashes followed the arrest on Monday of two armed insurgents in nearby Katsina state. A statement released by Captain Ikedichi Iweha also indicated that "items recovered from the militants included two AK-47 rifles, five magazines, 91 rounds of 7.62 special ammunition, among other items."
- **16 November 2013** - French hostage Francis Collomp, who was held by Islamist militants in northern Nigeria for nearly a year, is free after reportedly escaping during a shoot-out. Reports have indicated that Mr. Collomp had managed to escape from his cell during an army operation that was carried out against the militants. A source close to the case has indicated that Mr. Collomp fled after his cell door was left open. He then hailed a taxi which took him to the police, from where he was brought to Kaduna. According to Femi Adenaike Adeleye, the police commissioner in the regional capital of Kaduna, Mr. Collomp escaped in the northern city of Zaria on Saturday while his captors were praying," adding that "he watched his captors' prayer time. They always prayed for 15 minutes. And yesterday they did not lock the door to his cell." The commissioner further added that Mr. Collomp had been held in the city of Kano after his abduction and that he had been brought to Zaria about two months ago. On Sunday, French President Francois Hollande has thanked Nigeria's authorities for helping secure the release of Francis Collomp, 63, in the northern city of Zaria. Mr. Collomp left Abuja on a flight to Paris late on Sunday. He was accompanied by French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius. Didier Le Bret, the head of the French foreign ministry's crisis centre, indicated that Mr. Collomp was "weakened" but in good enough health to travel." He is expected to arrive in Paris around 6:00AM (0500 GMT) on Monday, where he will be met by French Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault. Mr. Collomp was kidnapped on 19 December 2012 by about thirty armed men who attacked the residence of his employer, French wind turbine manufacturer Vergnet, in the northern Nigerian state of Katsina. The kidnapping, which left two bodyguards and a bystander dead, was claimed by Ansaru, a militant group linked to Boko Haram.

At Least Seven Remain

With the release of Mr. Collomp, and four other French hostages earlier this month, at least seven French hostages are still being held captive abroad.

Mali

- On 24 November 2011, Frenchmen Serge Lazarevic and Philippe Verdon are kidnapped from their hotel in Hombori, northeastern Mali, while on a business trip. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) claimed responsibility on December 9. Mr. Verdon was killed earlier this year. His death was confirmed by French officials.
- On 20 November 2012 - Gilberto Rodriguez Leal, a Portuguese-born French citizen, is abducted by at least six armed men in Diema, western Mali, while travelling by car from Mauritania. On 22 November, al-Qaeda-linked Islamist rebel group the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) claimed responsibility for the kidnapping.

Cameroon/Nigeria

- 14 November 2013 Roman Catholic priest Georges Vandenbeusch abducted from his home near the town of Koza in northern Cameroon, about 30 kilometres (20 miles) from the border with Nigeria.

Syria

- 6 June 2013 two French journalists, Didier Francois from Europe 1 Radio and Edouard Elias, an independent photographer working for the same station, are reported missing in Syria. The office of French President Francois Hollande indicated that the pair were intercepted by unknown kidnapers at a checkpoint while travelling towards Aleppo.
- 9 October 2013 - The capture of reporter Nicolas Henin and Photographer Pierre Torres is announced by their families and the French Foreign Ministry. The two men were kidnapped on June 22 while working in the northern city of Raqqa. None of the armed groups fighting for control of the town have claimed responsibility, nor have any demands been made.

- **15 November 2013** - On Friday, Nigerian troops claimed to have killed nine suspected Boko Haram members in a gunfight in the country's northeast. A statement released by army spokesman Colonel Muhammad Dole indicated that "in a midnight encounter with Boko Haram insurgents, troops of the 7 division Nigerian Army killed nine Boko Haram terrorists while others fled with various degrees of injuries." The statement also indicated that "during the encounter, arms and ammunitions were recovered and two pick-up vehicles were destroyed," adding that one soldier was wounded late on Thursday in clashes that occurred in the Damboa area of Borno state. According to the spokesman, troops have since intensified their patrols inside the forest areas of Damboa and nearby Gwoza in order to prevent any further attacks by the insurgents. The Nigerian army's claims of the attack and killing of nine Boko Haram militants could not be independently verified. The latest attack in northeastern Nigeria comes just days after the United States designated Boko Haram and Ansaru, an offshoot of Boko Haram, as terror groups. This official designation resulted in the Nigerian government releasing a statement on Friday indicated that that the United States' designation of Boko Haram and Ansaru as foreign terrorist organisations would strengthen ties between the two nations. According to the statement, the designation would also "enable the two countries to work more closely towards reducing the capability and capacity of the groups to unleash terror."
 - Meanwhile police on Friday confirmed that they have arrested more than 200 people suspected of "criminal motives" as they prepared to head to a state holding polls to elect the next governor. According to state police commissioner Mohammed Katsina, "we have arrested some 181 people loitering around Owerri" the capital of Imo, adding that "they are suspected of having entered the state with criminal motives." Imo state police spokeswoman Joy Elomokor later indicated that the number of arrests had risen by Friday afternoon, stating that "we have

arrested and detained a total of 203 suspects so far, most of them are from Osun state” in southwest Nigeria. According to the spokeswoman, two rifles were recovered from the suspects. Saturday’s vote in the state of Anambra is being closely watched as a key test for President Goodluck Jonathan’s popularity before his expected campaign for re-election in 2015. Fears of election-linked violence and vote-rigging have prompted officials to tighten security and place restrictions on movement.

- A Nigerian court has sentenced a suspected Islamist militant to life imprisonment for the bombing of a complex which housed a number of newspapers. Abuja Federal High Court Judge Adeniyi Ademola found Umaru Umaru Mustapha, 34, guilty of terrorism for the April 2012 bombing in the northern city of Kaduna, which killed four people. He has been sentenced to life in prison with hard labor. The court also ordered Mustapha to pay a fine totalling 150 million naira (US \$945,000; 700,000 euros) to the families of the victims of the blasts. Mustapha was arrested in a car after throwing explosives at the office complex of This Day, Moment and the Sun newspapers in Kaduna. The office of This Day, located in the Nigerian capital Abuja, was also bombed at about the same time in what was seen as a co-ordinated attack. Five people, including the bomber, were killed in that attack. The 2012 bombings were the first such attacks against the news media in Nigeria.
- **13 November 2013** - The US State Department has designated Nigeria’s Boko Haram and Ansaru militant groups as foreign terrorist organisations, a move that is likely to be welcomed by the Nigerian government who has been battling Boko Haram for years. Officials at the State Department have described the move as “an important” step in helping Nigeria “root out violent extremism.” Up to now, the Obama administration had refused to designate the militant group as a terrorist organisation, fearing that the title would provide Boko Haram greater legitimacy within global jihadi circles. While the State Department designated three alleged Boko Haram leaders as terrorists, it did not declare the militant group a terrorist organisation. With terrorist splinter groups threatening the Sahel region, one of the reasons behind the US decision to designate Boko Haram as a foreign terrorist organisation is the fact that US officials have cited links to al-Qaeda’s affiliates in West Africa and to extremist groups in Mali. In turn, while Boko Haram was initially viewed as an organisation which only posed a domestic threat, another reason why the US had not previously designated it as a terrorist organisation, over the last three years, as its attacks have intensified, there have been signs that Boko Haram is now focusing on a more international agenda. The move to designate Boko Haram and Ansaru as foreign terrorist organisations is significant as it effectively means that US regulatory agencies will be instructed to block all business and financial transactions with Boko Haram. It will also become a crime under US law to provide material support to the group. However it is unlikely that the US will attempt to identify Boko Haram’s financial backers, an undertaking which the Nigerian government has up to now failed to achieve. Boko Haram, which began its insurgency in 2009, desires to impose Islamic law in northern Nigeria. Since the beginning of its insurgency, the militant group has been blamed for thousands of deaths, targeting both the military and civilians. The Islamist group is responsible for the 2011 bombing of the United Nations headquarters in Abuja. The militant group, and other splinter terrorist groups, are seen as being the largest security threat in Nigeria. Despite an ongoing military campaign, which was launched by President Goodluck Jonathan in May of this year, and which was recently extended for an additional six months, the militant group has continued to carry out its attacks throughout northern Nigeria. In one of the most recent incidents, fighters dressed in military uniform killed nineteen motorists after blocking a highway in the northeast of the country. Ansaru was formed in January 2012 however it only rose to prominence about six months later after a video was released in which the militant group vowed to attack Westerners in defense of Muslims worldwide. While the group, which is based in Nigeria and seen as an off-shoot of Boko Haram, has had a short existence, it has nevertheless proved to be a threat, using dynamite to penetrate heavily-fortified compounds and taking foreigners hostage. Two months after being formed, officials in the UK indicated that Ansaru’s militants had killed a Briton and an Italian hostage who had been kidnapped in the northwestern state of Sokoto. In December 2012, following an attack on a well-guarded compound in the northern town of Rimi, Ansaru claimed responsibility for the kidnapping of a

French national, Francis Collump. It carried out a similar attack in February 2013 when seven foreign nationals were captured from a housing compound owned by a Lebanese construction company.

- **12 November 2013** - Nigerians living in three northeastern states, which are under emergency rule, have broadly supported the extension of special powers designed to put an end to the Boko Haram insurgency that has claimed thousands of lives. The states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe first saw a massive influx of troops in May of this year and have since been affected by a communications black-out aimed at tackling militants who want to impose a harsh form of Islamic law in the region. Although improved security in the states of Yobe and Adamawa resulted in mobile and satellite networks being switched back on in June, Borno, which has been the worst affected state, continues to be in the dark.
 - Meanwhile police in the capital city blocked an anti-corruption meeting by sealing off the hotel conference room where activists had planned to gather. According to on the ground sources, roughly a dozen officers and two police vehicles were seen outside the venue on Tuesday afternoon. According to one of the hotel's employees, the police had made it clear when they arrived that they had been instructed to break up the meeting, however national police spokesman Frank Mba, along with Abuja police spokeswoman Altine Daniel, have stated that they had no prior knowledge of the operation. The meeting, which had been scheduled to take place at the Nikon Luxury Hotel in Abuja, had been partly organised by Dino Melaye, a former lawmaker turned activist who has called for the resignation of a cabinet member accused of illegally procuring two armoured vehicles worth US \$1.4 million (870,000 euros). Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), which is one of Nigeria's leading rights groups, has condemned "reports that a detachment of heavily armed Nigerian policemen were sent to seal off the Nikon Luxury Hotel" suite where the meeting had been scheduled. According to SERAP, the meeting was going to focus on Nigeria's freedom of information law and had scheduled speakers from Europe, the United States and Nigeria. While such crackdowns on civil society organisations are common in a number of African countries, in recent years, they have become a rarity in Nigeria.

Domestic News

- **21 November 2013** - Officials in Nigeria have accused Cameroon's security forces of allowing extremists to flee across the border. Deputy Governor Zanna Umar Mustapha of Nigeria's Borno State has indicated that authorities in Cameroon habitually refuse to either arrest or chase militants fleeing after attacks in Nigeria. In a meeting with army officials on Wednesday, Deputy Governor Mustapha requested that a stronger military force be present along the porous border between the two countries. Cameroon's Governor Fonka Awa Augustine of the Far North region in Cameroon however has indicated that he is puzzled by these complaints, stating that Cameroon is "in full collaboration" with Nigeria and has "stepped up" cooperation since a French priest was kidnapped last week in northern Cameroon by suspected Nigerian militants and transported into Nigeria.
- **20 November 2013** - Lawmakers in Nigeria's lower house on Wednesday unanimously backed the extension of the state of emergency in the country's northeastern region, giving the measure final approval. On November 6, President Goodluck Jonathan had requested a six-month extension of emergency powers in the states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe, where Boko Haram militants have carried out waves of attacks. While the senate had signed off on the request the following day, the lower house requested detailed briefings from Nigeria's security chiefs prior to voting on the extension. A statement on the approved resolution indicated that "the House resolves to approve the extension of the proclamation of the state of emergency rule...in Adamawa, Borno, Yobe states to remain in force for a further period of six months."
- **16 November 2013** - On Saturday, residents living in the state of Anambra went to the polls in order to elect the state's next governor, with the results viewed as a benchmark of public support for the country's president before the 2015 national elections. Some 1.8 million voters are registered to decide the successor of incumbent Peter Obi, who will step down next March after

completing a maximum of two, four-year terms. In all, twenty-three candidates are vying for the governorship, including Nigeria's main opposition All Progressive Congress (APC) party, which has yet to hold Nigeria's presidency since the country returned to civilian rule in 1999. A win for President Goodluck Jonathan's People's Democratic Party (PDP) is likely to be seen as an indicator of public opinion before his expected campaign for re-election in 2015. As voting began at 12:30PM (1130 GMT), the state capital Awka was calm however fears of violence linked to the election resulted in tight security measures being put in place in the mineral-rich southeast state. In the capital city, security forces mounted road blocks and patrols. A twenty-four hour restriction of movement in and out of Anambra was also put in place at 6:00PM on Friday. On Friday, police indicated that they had arrested more than 200 people who had been preparing to enter Anambra, suspected of "criminal motives" aimed at disrupting the elections. According to Kayode Idowu, a spokesman for the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the election "...is going fine for now but not without isolated challenges" such as the delivery of election material to some polling stations. Anambra's last election, which was held in 2010, was judged by US observers as "credible," however there were criticisms of poor organisation at some polling stations. Results of the elections are not expected to be released before Sunday. Update (18 November) - Officials on Monday indicated that irregularities in a Nigerian state poll have forced a re-run in some areas. According to officials, polls in the southeastern state of Anambra exposed bitter divisions within President Goodluck Jonathan's People's Democratic Party, and have effectively marked an early test for a new opposition coalition that has vowed to secure the presidency in 2015. While officials results have not yet been released, preliminary results have put Willie Obiano, of the small All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) party, in the lead.

International Developments

- **13 November 2013** - According to the United Nations, more than 37,000 people have fled violence in northern Nigeria, crossing over into neighbouring Niger. According to the latest report put together by the UN Office for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), "37,332 people fleeing clashes in the states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa in the north of Nigeria have been registered in Diffa, southeast Niger." The report further noted that nearly 29,000 of the escapees were Niger nationals living in Nigeria while the rest were Nigerians. Since June 2013, the number of refugees fleeing to Niger has increased sixfold, with most fleeing from the three northeastern states which all lie along the border with Niger. This influx of refugees has resulted in a strain on resources in Niger, a country that regularly struggles with both droughts and flooding, and where a million people are currently facing food shortages. Although aid groups working in the area have been organising food and water provisions, officials at the OCHA have stated that refugee's are "more and more in need of international protection." The OCHA has also urged Nigeria's neighbours to "keep their border's open."