



The West Africa Report

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

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 - Risk assessments and intelligence reporting
 - Planning and management
 - Due diligence and investigations.
- Project Management
 - Interim Security
 - Training
 - Special Assignments
- Crisis Response
 - Crisis Response
 - 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.

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The West Africa Report ~ SUMMARY

20 January – 2 February, 2014



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West Africa – Regional Reporting

- **22 January 2014** – United States President Barack Obama will invite forty-seven leaders to a landmark US-Africa summit that is set to occur in August of this year.

Burkina Faso

- **25 January 2014** – In what is the latest sign of growing opposition to the president's rule, former allies of Burkina Faso's long-time president have created their own political party.
- **23 January 2014** – The communication of the Burkinabe presidency reported Thursday that President Blaise Compaore has received an audience of top Gambian envoys sent by President Yahya Jammeh as part of on going consultations between the two leaders.

Central African Republic

On the Ground Analysis

- **31 January 2014** – Red Cross officials announced Friday that an "unprecedented level of violence" in the CAR's capital has left thirty dead in three days.
 - Meanwhile French troops have converged on a rebel-held town in the northern region of the country.

- **30 January 2014** – On Thursday, fighters from the Seleka rebel group violently seized control of a town north of the capital Bangui, resulting in hundreds of civilians fleeing the area.
- **22 January 2014** – On the eve of new interim leader Catherine Samba Panza's inauguration, witnessed reported that at least ten people were killed in fresh clashes Wednesday in the CAR's capital city.

Domestic News

- **27 January 2014** – On Monday, the CAR's prime minister appointed a new government, which comprises of twenty ministers, seven of them women, and includes several members of the administration of former president Michel Djotodia.
- **26 January 2014** – The CAR's new prime minister indicated on Sunday that his priority will be to stop the massacres and other atrocities that have shaken the country.
- **25 January 2014** – The CAR's interim government has chosen a regional banking official to serve as prime minister.
- **24 January 2014** – On Friday, the CAR's new president set to work in order to choose members of a government capable of ending inter-religious violence and bringing order to the country.
- **23 January 2014** – The CAR's new interim president, Catherine Samba Panza, will be sworn in on Thursday, with a mission to end the atrocious sectarian violence and to tackle an unprecedented humanitarian crisis.
 - Meanwhile prior to the inauguration ceremony, Ms Samba Panza warned that there were not enough international troops in order to restore peace in her country.
- **21 January 2014** – On Tuesday, the CAR's new interim leader pledged to form a government that was based on skills rather than religion.
- **20 January 2014** – On Monday, amidst continuing violence despite the resignation of Seleka rebel leader Michel Djotodia, the Central African Republic's (CAR) interim parliament elected a new president.

International Developments

- **28 January 2014** – On Tuesday, the United Nations is expected to adopt a resolution to impose sanctions against those who foment violence in the CAR.
 - Meanwhile French Major General Philippe Ponties has been named head of the European Union military operation in the CAR.
- **22 January 2014** – UN envoys urged African states on Wednesday to reinforce a military mission that is struggling to contain strife, with some officials warning the situation in the CAR could become genocide.
- **20 January 2014** – Meanwhile diplomatic sources have indicated that European Union (EU) foreign ministers agreed, during a meeting in Brussels on Monday, to deploy troops to the CAR in order to bolster African and French forces already on the ground.

Gabon

- **24 January 2014** – Following municipal and regional elections, Gabon's president Ali Bongo Ondimba on Friday named a new prime minister.

Ghana

- **22 January 2014** – Ivorian refugees, who fled their homeland in the bloody aftermath of the 2010 presidential elections, announced on Wednesday that they wanted a written guarantee of their safety prior to returning home.

Guinea

- **27 January 2014** – On Monday, the European Union (EU) announced the release of 140 million euros (US \$192 million) in aid to Guinea, its first development package to the West African nation after a five-year suspension.
- **21 January 2014** – Late on Monday, Guinea's President Alpha Conde issued a decree forming a new government that will keep in place his prime minister and over half of the cabinet members, excluding opposition figures.

Guinea-Bissau

- **30 January 2014** – Guinea-Bissau's ex-prime minister, Carlos Gomes Junior, has requested UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon that he guarantee his security upon returning to the country to participate in the forthcoming general elections, which are set for 16 March 2014.

Mali

On the Ground Reporting

- **24 January 2014** - Military sources connected close to an on-going French military operation in northern Mali have confirmed that the counter-terrorism offensive concluded on Friday, with eleven Islamist militants killed and one French soldier wounded.
 - Meanwhile a Malian military spokesman has indicated that the northern town of Kidal has come under attack from two rockets.
- **21 January 2014** – Five members of the UN mission in Mali were injured when their vehicle ran over a landmine near the north-eastern town of Kidal.
- **20 January 2014** – Malian soldiers and international forces paraded through the capital Bamako on Monday during a public holiday marking the 53rd anniversary of the founding of Mali's army.

Domestic News

- **22 January 2014** – On Wednesday a high-ranking ruling party lawmaker, and relative of Mali's current president, became Mali's second most powerful politician after he was elected to lead the country's new parliament.

International Developments

- **23 January 2014** – On Thursday, the United Nations Security Council pressed Mali's new government to speed up its efforts in beginning reconciliation talks with Tuareg and Arab groups in a bid to end the country's conflict.

Mauritania

- **30 January 2014** – Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz took over as African Union (AU) chairman on Thursday, replacing Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, in the one-year post.

Nigeria

On the Ground Reporting

- **31 January 2014** – Eight people were killed in religious violence on Friday, including a Christian family of seven, while a roadside bomb killed seven others in an area known for Boko Haram activity.
- **27 January 2014** - Police and state authorities announced on Monday that more than seventy people were killed in two separate attacks in north-eastern Nigeria, with suspicions falling on the Boko Haram.
- **21 January 2014** – On Tuesday, police and residents reported that suspected Boko Haram militants shot dead a teacher in a north-eastern Nigerian village located on the border with Chad.

Domestic News

- **29 January 2014** – In what appears to be a new blow to President Goodluck Jonathan, on Wednesday, eleven lawmakers from Nigeria's ruling party gave their formal notice of their intentions to defect to the main opposition.
- **27 January 2014** – Nigeria's State Security Service (SSS) arrested the deputy head of the main opposition coalition on Monday over comment he is reported to have made warning of electoral violence in presidential polls which are scheduled for February 2015.
- **24 January 2014** – Nigeria's electoral agency announced Friday that the country will hold its next presidential election on 14 February 2015, with incumbent head of state Goodluck Jonathan expected to seek a second term.
 - Meanwhile Nigeria's main opposition party announced that it will block the passage of this year's budget until what it described as lawlessness, is ended in politically volatile Rivers state in the southern oil region.
- **20 January 2014** – On Monday, Nigeria's ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) choose a new chairman, just days after his predecessor was forced out following months of bitter in-fighting.
 - Meanwhile Nigeria's top military officer called for a swift end to the Islamist insurgency.

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

Cameroon

Central African Republic

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

Gambia – There is no travel advisory for Gambia, however MS Risk advises all travellers to avoid travel by road from The Gambia to the Casamance, in the southern region of Senegal. The Casamance region of south western Senegal remains affected by incidents involving presumed separatist groups and by incidents of banditry. There is an underlying threat from terrorism. Due to the French military intervention in Mali, coupled with the Gambia's stated commitment to participate in the intervention, there is a possibility that retaliatory attacks against Western interests in the region may be carried out. Travellers to the country are warned to remain vigilant as attacks can take place at anytime and anywhere.

Ghana

Guinea

Guinea-Bissau

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

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

Mauritania

Niger

Nigeria

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.

West Africa – Regional Reporting

- **22 January 2014** – United States President Barack Obama will invite forty-seven leaders to a landmark US-Africa summit that is set to occur in August of this year. Officials in the US are currently seeking to widen US trade, development and security ties with an increasingly dynamic continent. President Obama will send out invites to all African nations that are currently in good standing with the US, or are not suspended from the African Union (AU). Both Egypt and Zimbabwe will not attain an invitation to the summit. Egypt is not eligible to attend as it is currently suspended from the AU while the US maintains sanctions against the Zimbabwean government of Robert Mugabe and key officials over suppression of democracy and what Washington sees as politically motivated violence. Other notable absentees on the invite list include Sudan, Madagascar and Guinea-Bissau. Washington have concerns over the subversion of democracy in both of the latter countries. Sudan's president, Omar al-Bashir, has been indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC). One notable inclusion is Kenya, where President Uhuru Kenyatta is currently awaiting a delayed trial at the ICC on charges related to violence after an election in 2007 left 1,000 people dead. The talks are scheduled to occur on 5 – 6 August, and will seek to cement progress from his trip to Africa last year. A White House statement has indicated that the trip would 'advance the administration's focus on trade and investment in Africa, and highlight America's commitment to Africa's security, its democratic development, and its people.' The idea for the summit, which takes place with Washington increasingly aware of China's attempt to enhance its own diplomatic profile in Africa, was first announced by Mr Obama during a speech in Cape Town in June. Amidst much talk of a US against China power grab in Africa, following billions of dollars of trade and investment by Beijing in the continent, Mr Obama cautioned against the idea that a new proxy Cold War could play out in Africa, noting that "this is not a zero-sum game. This is not the Cold War. You've got one global market, and if countries that are now entering into middle-income status see Africa as a big opportunity for them, that can potentially help Africa." At the same time, however, he cautioned that nations that simply saw Africa as a source of raw materials would not serve Africans well. The summit, together with Obama's trip to Africa last year, and a promised future visit before he leaves office, might go some way to assuaging disappointment that he did not pay the continent more attention during his first term in office. During last year's visit, the president visited Senegal, South Africa and Tanzania, unveiling a series of agricultural, power generation and development initiatives. In 2010, he also held a summit of young African leaders, designed to groom the next generation of the continent's politicians. In 2009, the president also paid a short visit to Ghana, which marked the only visit to sub-Saharan Africa during his trip to the continent last year, Mr Obama pledged to help build "Africa for Africans" and argued that the region's growing economic potential could help it shake off its reputation as simply a recipient of foreign aid. The Obama administration has also been increasing its indirect engagement in regional conflicts in Africa. Last week, the US military started transporting the first elements of Rwandan battalions to the CAR, where they will join the African Union's mission. Last month, US forces also rescued Americans fleeing violence in South Sudan. In 2011, Obama deployed a small detachment of military trainers to Uganda to aid forces hunting down the Lords Resistance army and its leader Joseph Kony. More recently, Washington has increasingly been concerned about al-Qaeda franchises throughout the continent. In October 2013, US Navy SEALs raided a hideout of al-Shabaab leader on the Somali coast but withdrew after a fight. Saharan Africa of his first term.

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. While the political situation remains generally stable, since February 2011, there have been an increasing number of demonstrations.

Threats and Concerns

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



Kidnapping Threats

There is a heightened risk that terrorist groups, including al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA), may cross the northern borders from Mali and Niger into Burkina Faso in order to carry out kidnaps. MS Risk therefore advises against all travel to the areas of Burkina Faso north of the town of Boulsa, which is 25 km north of the capital of Ouagadougou. We particularly advise against all travel to the regions that border Mali and Niger. Since

2008, over 25 Westerners have been kidnapped in the Sahel region, and a number of these hostages continue to be held. AQIM operates directly or through criminal gangs who carry out kidnappings on their behalf or pass on their kidnap victims in return for payment.

There is also a high risk of armed groups stopping vehicles (including public buses to rob them. Such incidents have occurred in various parts of the country, particularly at night. Therefore, all travel between towns by road at night is to be avoided, especially from Ouagadougou to Po where there is a heightened risk. This is especially

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

MS RISK Guidance to Organisations in Burkina Faso:

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

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

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

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

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

Domestic News

- **25 January 2014** – In what is the latest sign of growing opposition to the president's rule, former allies of Burkina Faso's long-time president have created their own political party. The move comes just weeks after the ruling party suffered an unprecedented crisis when dozens of its members deserted the party. The deserted members have now indicated that they were siding with opposition leaders to stop any attempt to amend the constitution and set up a senate, which many see as a chamber that will facilitate President Blaise Compaore's contest for another term in 2015. The president has been in power since 1987. The new party, which was unveiled Saturday, will officially be known as the Movement for the People and Progress, or MPP. Its leader is a former parliamentary speaker.

- **23 January 2014** – The communication of the Burkinabe presidency reported Thursday that President Blaise Compaore has received an audience of top Gambian envoys sent by President Yahya Jammeh as part of on going consultations between the two leaders. Dr Abubacarr Senghor, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Kebba Touray, Minister of Finance, met with President Compaore in the Ouagadougou, where the Gambian delegation delivered a special message from President Yahya Jammeh. Speaking to reporters shortly after his audience with President Compaore, Dr Senghor stated, “The Gambia and Burkina Faso have a common destiny because we are all members of the same sub-regional and African organization. And it is quite normal that we can consult each other regularly on issues of interest to the West African sub-region and the African continent.” According to Dr Senghor, the relationship between Burkina Faso and The Gambia are excellent because in addition to geography, the two countries share the same ethnic groups, with many extra links.



Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

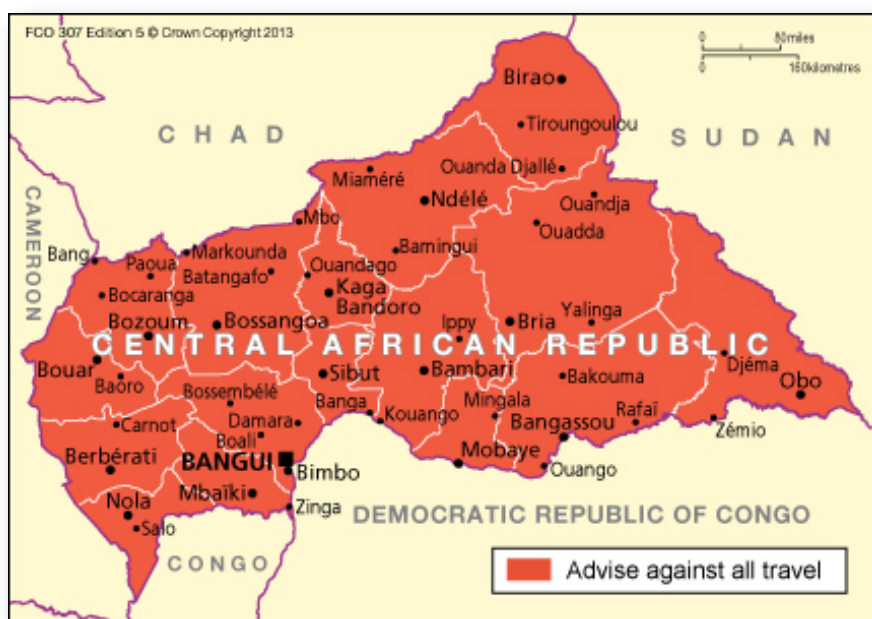
Avoid all but essential travel to part(s) of the country

Security Summary

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

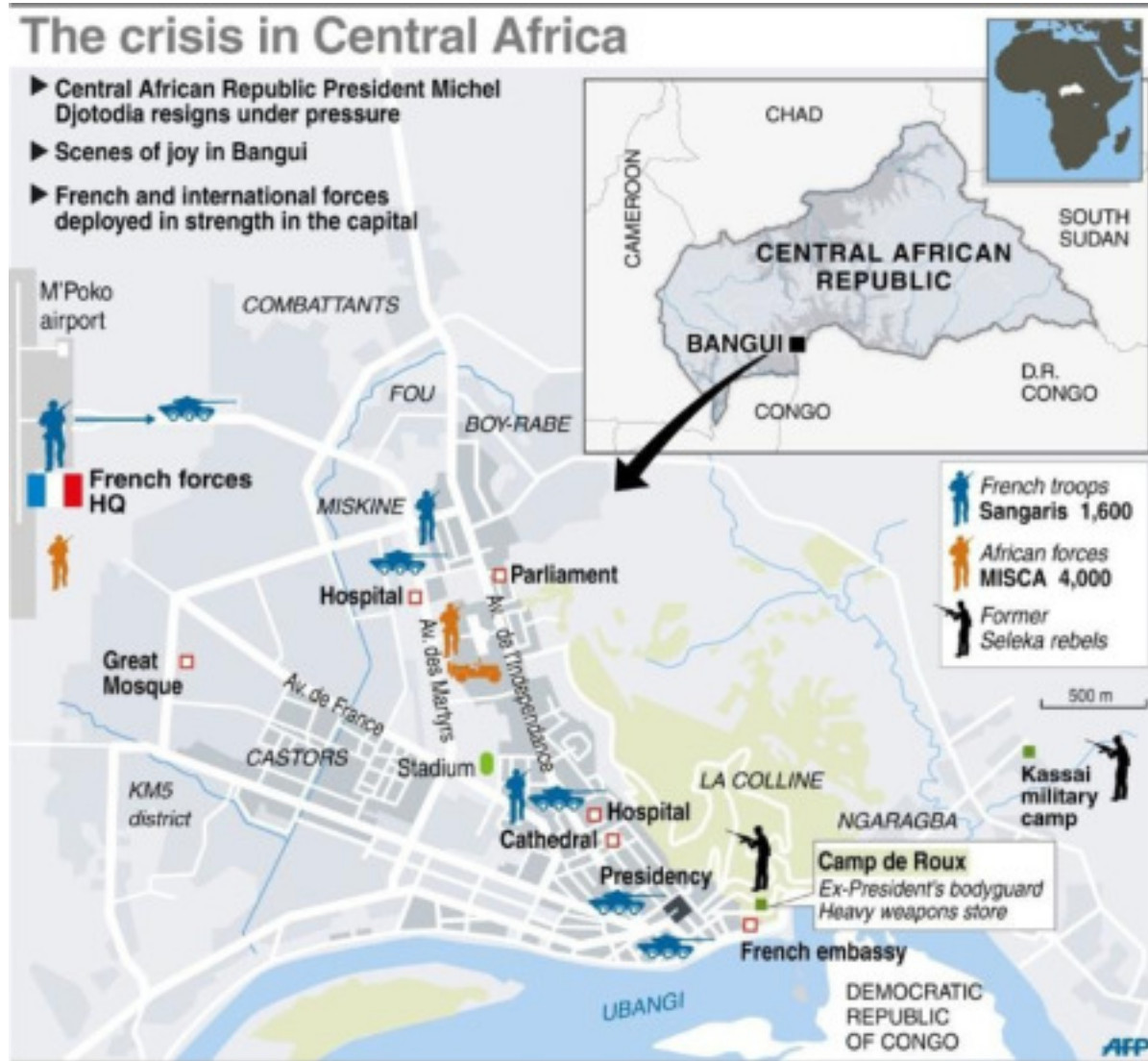
The armed rebel coalition Seleka has renewed its offensive against President Francois Bozize's government and has taken control of the capital, Bangui. With Michel Djotodia officially sworn into office on August 18, security throughout the country has continued to deteriorate. Reports of rebel activity, banditry and hostage-taking have occurred across the region. In the capital, Bangui, the security situation also remains fragile with reports of continued looting and gunfire. On 22 November 2013, the CAR's interim government announced a curfew from 10PM to 5AM. It is therefore advised that you should avoid being on the streets during this period. At other times, MS Risk advises that you should take extreme caution and travel in groups whenever possible. There are armed patrols at night in Bangui and roadblocks - both official and unofficial - that are likely to be manned by armed personnel and particular care should be taken when approaching these. Despite the French military intervention, Operation Sangaris, being launched in early December, security throughout the CAR remains unstable.

Any individuals in the country are advised to leave now. Anyone who remains should take all necessary precautions and stay in a safe place with sufficient stocks of food and water. If the situation deteriorates further, leaving the country by commercial means will likely become increasingly difficult. Currently regional country



flights have been suspended. We advise anyone remaining in the country to keep up to date with local political developments and to avoid all political rallies, demonstrations and large public gatherings.

The Peacekeeping Operation in Central African Republic



On the Ground Reporting

- **31 January 2014** – Red Cross officials announced Friday that an “unprecedented level of violence” in the CAR’s capital has left thirty dead in three days. Despite the installation of a new government, tensions throughout the capital have remained high, where Red Cross officials indicated they had collected thirty bodies in the past three days after fighting, which also left sixty people wounded. The head of the International Committee of the Red Cross delegation, Georgios Georgantas, indicated that he was very concerned by an “unprecedented level of violence.” Mr Georgantas has urged authorities, and some of the 7,000 French and African troops based near Bangui Airport, to “take up their responsibilities” and keep the peace in a city that has already been abandoned by thousands of residents. Foreign soldiers have been patrolling districts of the

capital, where French troops earlier this week warned looters that they would fire if they failed to disperse.

- Meanwhile French troops have converged on a rebel-held town in the northern region of the country. French military aircraft hovered over the strategic town of Sibut, which is located 180 kilometres (110 miles) north of the capital Bangui. The town was seized by ex-Seleka rebels on Thursday, prompting African troops, and hundreds of frightened residents, to flee. A French communication officer has indicated that “a military operation is happening in Sibut,” while the presence of the aircraft has been confirmed by defence officials in Paris. Newly installed interim president, Catherine Samba Panza has criticized the rebel efforts, stating that they were aiming to “destabilize her mandate,” adding that “at the time when the government is calling for togetherness, tolerance and national reconciliation, some of our countrymen are taking upon themselves the heavy responsibility of dividing the country.” The latest increase of violence, coupled with the taking over of Sibut, has indicated that the installation of a new government has failed to stem inter-religious violence between the mostly Muslim Seleka and Christian militia groups.
- **30 January 2014** – On Thursday, fighters from the Seleka rebel group violently seized control of a town north of the capital Bangui, resulting in hundreds of civilians fleeing the area. A paramilitary police source has indicated that a convoy of about fifty vehicles loaded with Seleka fighters surrounded the town of Sibut on Wednesday night. They later committed atrocities against the population of the town, which is located 180 kilometres (110 miles) north of Bangui. The mostly Muslim fighters, reported to have been speaking only in Arabic, took full control of the town on Thursday. A diplomatic source has indicated that the fighters are believed to be “regrouping” in the town. It currently remains unclear where the Seleka fighters have come from, however sources indicate that it is unlikely they travelled from Bangui, where the presence of the convoy would have been detected along the main road by French and African troops who are stationed there. While France has a 1,600-strong peacekeeping force in the CAR, none of its troops are stationed in Sibut, with sources indicating that a contingent of Gabonese troops from the African Union-led peacekeeping mission has withdrawn from the town.
- **22 January 2014** – On the eve of new interim leader Catherine Samba Panza’s inauguration, witnessed reported that at least ten people were killed in fresh clashes Wednesday in the CAR’s capital city. Sources have indicated that violence pitting civilians and Christian militiamen against ex-Seleka fighters of the Muslim minority broke out overnight in central Bangui, near a prison and a military barracks housing the former rebels. Ms Samba Panza, who is to be sworn in on Thursday, lives just 100 metres from the prison. A Western diplomat has indicated that “four ex-Seleka from the prison were killed by anti-balaka” rebels. Meanwhile gunfire could be heard in the area around the Seleka camp, with tensions remaining high on Wednesday afternoon even after African and French peacekeepers intervened. Soldiers were also forced to intervene in order to stop looting in the north of Bangui. The latest unrest in the capital comes just forty-eight hours after Ms Samba Panza’s election as interim president.

Domestic News

- **27 January 2014** – On Monday, the CAR’s prime minister appointed a new government, which comprises of twenty ministers, seven of them women, and includes several members of the administration of former president Michel Djotodia. The prime minister, who was appointed to the post on Saturday, made the announcement as hundreds of former Seleka fighters left the capital Bangui under military escort after days of clashes between Christian and Muslim civilians.
- **26 January 2014** – The CAR’s new prime minister indicated on Sunday that his priority will be to stop the massacres and other atrocities that have shaken the country. Speaking one day after he was named premier by interim president Catherine Samba Panza, herself only in office since Thursday, former banking official Andre Nzapayeke stated that ending the violence between Christians and Muslims was the key to restoring security and a functioning state. During an

interview, Mr Nzapayeke indicated that he is "...going to be speaking with the different groups so that we immediately stop certain...atrocities being carried out in this country. We have to put a stop to all that quickly," adding that he planned to "put a team in place that's going to deal with the question of national reconciliation." After that, the newly elected prime minister indicated that the next still will be to help the one million people, who have fled the violence, to return home, adding that "there's a certain number of very clear actions the government is going to tackle starting this week." Mr Nzapayeke, a former secretary general of the African Development Bank and vice president of the Development Bank of Central African States, also indicated that he would seek help from the CAR's "friend's in the international community" to end the crisis.

- **25 January 2014** – The CAR's interim government has chosen a regional banking official to serve as prime minister. On Saturday, the presidency announced the selection of Andre Nzapayeke, who has held several positions with the Central African States' Development Bank, (BDEAC). While following the departure of coup leader Michel Djotodia on 10 January 2013 a new interim government has been formed, critics have already begun to question how much power the transitional government can wield, as thousands of African and French peacekeepers have been unable to stop continued attacks between Christian and Muslim militias and civilians.
- **24 January 2014** – On Friday, the CAR's new president set to work in order to choose members of a government capable of ending inter-religious violence and bringing order to the country. A day after being sworn in before the Constitutional Court, Catherine Samba Panza took up residence in the presidential palace in the capital city, which saw more looting overnight and which has continued to be patrolled by foreign troops. Ms Samba Panza was due to formally take over from the speaker of the transitional parliament, Alexandre-Ferdinand Nguendet, who came acting head of state after coup leader Michel Djotodia was forced to stand down under intense international pressure on January 10 of this year. After the short ceremony at the provisional parliament, the country's first female leader was set to hold a series of meetings "with different strata of society." According to political and diplomatic sources have indicated that the new interim leader plans to hold talks with representatives of political parties and civil society before naming a prime minister by the end of the week.
- **23 January 2014** – The CAR's new interim president, Catherine Samba Panza, will be sworn in on Thursday, with a mission to end the atrocious sectarian violence and to tackle an unprecedented humanitarian crisis. Officials in the CAR have indicated that she will be sworn in at a ceremony due to begin at 2:00PM (1300 GMT). France's foreign minister, Laurent Fabius, will be amongst the dignitaries present at the ceremony. Ms Samba Panza, the first woman to take charge of the landlocked nation, is expected to quickly appoint a new prime minister, probably by Friday night, in the hopes of forming a government by early next week. Despite the election of a new Christian interim leader, violence continued in the CAR's capital, with clashes erupting two days after her election and claiming at least ten lives. However by Thursday morning, life in the capital had a semblance of normality, with French and African peacekeeping troops patrolling the city. Furthermore, all the elements that have plunged the country into chaos continue to persist. In turn, about 400,000 people, or half of Bangui's population, are still displaced while a quarter of them subsist in a sprawling refugee camp located near the airport and the bases of the foreign troops. Most of the interior of the CAR remains under the sway of warlords. The administration and facilities provided by the state have virtually ceased to exist, partially due to the strife and also because government workers have not been paid for months. The state coffers are empty and the new government will be totally reliant on promised foreign aid. The new leader has indicated that her priorities will be to "...return to security," and to put "...people to work" as quickly as possible, adding that "we have thousands of armed youths, both with the Seleka and the anti-balaka. If we release them onto the street, we will not have solved the problem." In the longer term, Ms Samba Panza is due to oversee a political transition that will lead to general elections in February 2015, where she will be banned from standing again for office.
 - Meanwhile prior to the inauguration ceremony, Ms Samba Panza warned that there were not enough international troops in order to restore peace in her country. In comments published

in Thursday's Le Parisian newspaper in France, Ms Samba Panza stated that "the present number of troops is not sufficient to regain order in Bangui." While applauding the military involvement of former colonial power France, she indicated that she hoped other European countries would "follow France's example" Her comments came the day after UN officials urged African nations to reinforce the military mission or risk a descent into genocide.

- **21 January 2014** – On Tuesday, the CAR's new interim leader pledged to form a government that was based on skills rather than religion. During an interview, Ms Samba Panza, who has yet to be sworn in before the provisional Constitutional Court, indicated that she wanted a government of technocrats free of corruption and that she would appoint people regardless of their religious affiliation. She added that an interim prime minister "will be named within two or three days..., Wednesday or Thursday." One day after Bangui's mayor Catherine Samba Panza was elected as transitional president by the interim parliament, residents in the capital stated that the city was unusually calm, apart from isolated acts of looting by gangs and youths, however the city remained under nightly curfew and was patrolled by French and African soldiers. After ten months of spiraling violence between Muslim former rebels and Christian vigilantes, which has displaced a million people in the population of 4.6 million, the public and politicians alike have hailed the choice of the first woman to lead the CAR. Residents have welcomed the "resounding appeal" by "Madame Catherine" for both the Christian self-defence militias and the Muslim fighters to lay down their arms and "show your support for my nomination." A representative of the Christian militias, Levi Yakete, has indicated that he has "passed on the ceasefire appeal to our fighters and it is being heeded up until now."
- **20 January 2014** - On Monday, amidst continuing violence despite the resignation of Seleka rebel leader Michel Djotodia, the Central African Republic's (CAR) interim parliament elected a new president. Bangui mayor Catherine Samba Panza has been elected the interim president of the CAR, effectively making her the first woman to hold the post. During a second round of voting by the interim parliament, she defeated her rival, Desire Kolingba, winning seventy-five votes against fifty-three. The election went to a second round after Ms Samba Panza failed to secure an outright majority in the first round. Ms Samba Panza, a Christian, will succeed the CAR's first Muslim leader, Michel Djotodia, who resigned on 10 January 2014 as a result of mounting pressure from regional leaders and former colonial power France over his failure to curb the on going violence. In all, eight candidates were in the running during Monday's elections. Amongst them were two sons of former presidents, Sylvain Patasse and Desire Kolingba, respectively the sons of former president Ange-Felix Patasse (in power from 1993 – 2003) and Andre Kolingba (in power from 1981 – 1993). Another locally familiar name is that of Emile Gros Raymond Nakombo, a banker close to Kolingba who in 2011 ran for the presidency against incumbent Francois Bozize, who took power in a 2003 coup and was toppled by the 2013 Seleka coup. About 129 members of the National Transitional Council (CNT), which serves as acting parliament with 135 members in all, took part in today's vote by secret ballot. Prior to voting, each presidential candidate was given ten minutes in order to make a "statement of intent" to the CNT members who were then tasked with electing a new transitional leader by secret ballot in a single round. The newly elected president will be tasked with restoring peace in the CAR. In March 2013, the CAR collapsed after Seleka rebels overthrew the government and installed Mr Djotodia to power. He however proved to be powerless in controlling his Seleka coalition, with many responsible for the deaths of hundreds of people, mainly from the CAR's Christian majority. While some Christian communities responded by forming "anti-balaka" (anti-machete) self defence militias, which were charged with attacking the CAR's Muslim population, both sides have now been accused of major abuses, with officials at the United Nations warning of a potential inter-religious "genocide."

International Developments

- **28 January 2014** - On Tuesday, the United Nations is expected to adopt a resolution to impose sanctions against those who foment violence in the CAR. According to French foreign ministry

spokesman Roman Nadal, the UN measure will target “individuals who harm peace and stability and hinder the process of political transition in the Central African Republic by fueling violence” and violating human rights. The draft resolution, which is sponsored by France, was announced after further clashes occurred in the CAR’s capital on Sunday, despite last week’s election of interim President Catherine Samba Panza. On Sunday, US Secretary of State John Kerry announced that Washington was also weighing “targeted” CAR sanctions against “those who further destabilize the situation or pursue their own selfish ends by abetting or encouraging the violence. Repeated President Barack Obama’s call for peace in the CAR, the top US diplomat indicated that “the United States stands with Transitional President Samba Panza” in her reconciliation efforts and bid to hold elections by February 2015.

- Meanwhile French Major General Philippe Ponties has been named head of the European Union military operation in the CAR. According to reports, he will begin operational planning for EUFOR RCA after the UN Security Council earlier on Tuesday backed a resolution effectively allowing an EU contingent to “use all necessary force” to protect civilians caught up in the sectarian violence. On 20 January, EU foreign ministers agreed to deploy up to 1,000 soldiers to help stabilize the CAR. This will be the EU’s first major military operation in six years and will contribute, for up to six months, to ensure a safe and secure environment in the area of the capital Bangui. The force will back French and African peacekeepers with a view to handing over the operation to the African Union.
- **22 January 2014** – UN envoys urged African states on Wednesday to reinforce a military mission that is struggling to contain strife, with some officials warning the situation in the CAR could become genocide. So far, only 4,000 troops, of a promised 6,000 African force, have been deployed to the CAR, while France now has 1,600 soldiers in the country who are mainly stationed in the capital city. However on a day in which at least ten people were killed in lynching’s and other sectarian attacks in the capital, despite the election of a new interim leader, UN envoys on genocide prevention, human rights, children and sexual violence in conflict all called on the UN Security Council to order tougher action. Adama Dieng, the UN adviser on the prevention of genocide, indicated that the size of the African force, official known as MISCA, means it cannot cope with the chaos. During a Security Council meeting on the conflict, Dieng stated that “there is an urgent need for the full deployment of MISCA peacekeepers as soon as possible.” Dieng further indicated that on a visit to the country in December, he had been shocked by the “level of hatred” that has built up between the Muslim and Christian populations as the government has lost control, noting that there was a “high risk both of crimes against humanity and of genocide.” Meanwhile Leila Zerrougui, UN envoy on children in conflict, estimated that there are up to 6,000 child soldiers in the various militias battling for control of the country. She also stated that there were some 500,000 children amongst the more than 900,000 people who have fled their homes because of the strife. In turn, according to Zainab Bangura, the UN special representative on sexual violence in conflict, between January and November 2013, more than 4,500 cases of sexual violence by fighters in the Seleka coalition of rebels were recorded. Noting that there had been “unprecedented levels of brutality” in attacks on children and others, adding that “We need to send a stronger signal to perpetrators of these atrocious crimes that they will be held to account.” Meanwhile UN leader Ban Ki-moon has named Bernard Acho Muna, a Cameroonian Supreme Court lawyer and former deputy chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) for Rwanda, to lead a commission of inquiry for the CAR, which has been ordered by the Security Council. Ex-Mexican foreign secretary Jorge Castaneda and Fatima M’Baye, a lawyer and leading Mauritanian human rights activist, will also serve on the commission that has a mandate to identify perpetrators of rights crimes.
- **20 January 2014** - Meanwhile diplomatic sources have indicated that European Union (EU) foreign ministers agreed, during a meeting in Brussels on Monday, to deploy troops to the CAR in order to bolster African and French forces already on the ground. The EU “crisis management concept” is the first step towards sending a force. According to an official statement released shortly after the meeting, EU ministers indicated that the operation would provide “temporary support, for a period

of up to six months, to establish a secure environment in the Bangui region, with a view to handing over to the African Union (AU).” The statement further noted that the plan is to turn the current AU deployment in the CAR into a UN peacekeeping operation, with the aim of stabilizing the situation so that urgently needed humanitarian aid can reach suffering civilians. While the EU is expected to dispatch 400 – 600 European soldiers to Bangui, correspondents have indicated that an EU force of up to 1,000 troops is likely. They will be tasked with backing the 1,600 French troops of Operation Sangaris, who have been deployed in the CAR since 5 December 2013 under a UN mandate, along with the 4,400 African troops from the African Union’s (AU) MISCA peacekeeping force. During this week, the EU will seek a mandate at the United Nations for such an operation, with EU experts later travelling to the CAR’s capital city in order to assess the cost. An EU diplomat has indicated that at the moment, “it is unclear what exactly will be needed,” adding that Greece has offered to host a mission headquarters while Estonia is prepared to send up to fifty-five troops. Several other countries, including Austria, Finland, Lithuania and Romania, are considering troop contributions. The agreement for deployment comes as violence continues throughout the CAR despite the resignation of Michel Djotodia ten days ago. A month and a half into the French intervention, security in Bangui has gradually improved, however sporadic outbreaks of brutal violence still spread fear. Over this past weekend, the CAR’s capital city, Bangui, was the scene of continued violence as two Muslim men were killed and burnt on Sunday.

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



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

Domestic News

- 24 January 2014** – Following municipal and regional elections, Gabon's president Ali Bongo Ondimba on Friday named a new prime minister. Mr Ondimba's secretary-General Etienne Massard Dabinda Makaga told journalists that "the president of the republic has named by decree Mr Daniel Ona Ondo to the post of prime minister and head of government," adding the "president thanks and congratulates the former prime minister and his team for their dynamic approach and their republican spirit." Mr Ona Ondo, who has been serving as first deputy speaker of parliament, will replace Raymond Ndong Sima as government chief in a change that had been widely expected after the polls. A former minister and economist by academic training, Mr Ona Ondo has indicated that he will form a new government by the end of the week. Mr Ona Ondo served in several ministerial posts under the president's late father and predecessor, Omar Bongo, notably holding the national education and culture portfolios. A lawmaker from the president's ruling Gabonese Democratic Party (PDG), Mr Ona Ondo was elected to his deputy speaker's post in the National Assembly in 2007. The PDG, which is deeply implanted across the country, won substantial majority in the 14 December 2013 elections. According to provisional official results, the party took 1,517 of the 2,404 seats at stake. However in the coastal capital Libreville, which is home to about half of the population, the PDG failed to gain an absolute majority and currently shares power with the opposition Centre of Liberal Reformers (CLR) and independent politicians. The definitive election results have yet to be approved and proclaimed by the Constitutional Court.



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

Although there is currently no travel advisory for Ghana, the country has seen an increase in violent robbery in 2013. In May, an expatriate's vehicle was stopped by an armed individual who forced his way into the car demanding money. On being paid, the individual left the vehicle. In a separate incident, an expatriate was robbed of her wallet while attempting to pay a taxi driver. There have also been reports of two Westerners being shot while driving alone at night. In a separate incident, two westerners were robbed at gunpoint while at a restaurant. Both incidents occurred in the Accra Area however there have been reports of robberies in the Tema area 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.

Domestic News

- 22 January 2014** – Ivorian refugees, who fled their homeland in the bloody aftermath of the 2010 presidential elections, announced on Wednesday that they wanted a written guarantee of their safety prior to returning home. A member of the Coalition of Ivorian Patriots group indicated that they were seeking assurances from President Alassane Ouattara that they would not be arrested or face mob violence if they came back. Speaking to the media, a group member indicated that “when they go back, some of the supporters of Ouattara...they catch, they kill you and nobody will talk about it,” adding “that’s why we are afraid. We want Ouattara to show that he is serious about reconciliation.” The organization has presented its demands to two high-ranking officials from president Laurent Gbagbo’s Ivorian Popular Front (FPI). The announcement comes just days after FPI vice-presidents, Sebastien Dano and Amani N’Guessan Djede, arrived in Ghana earlier this week to speak to refugees about possible repatriation. About 300,000 Ivorian’s fled the West African country in the wake of the presidential election, which saw more than 3,000 people killed following Gbagbo’s refusal to recognize Ouattara’s victory. Gbagbo, who was arrested in April 2011, is currently in custody in The Hague pending trial at the International Criminal Court (ICC) on suspicion of crimes against humanity. According to the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), two-thirds of those who fled have since returned, however about 8,500 refugees remain in Ghana.

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



Violence has broken out in Kankan, in the "Upper Guinea" region in the east of the country. At least three deaths have been reported since 14 December as well as a number of injuries and destruction of property. MS Risk advises all travellers to avoid this region of the country as further instability is likely to continue. The results of the 28 September legislative elections have been released, with the final results being confirmed on 15 November. So far, there have been reports of one death and several injuries as a result of riots that occurred in Conakry over the weekend of 16 and 17 November. Further riots and spontaneous demonstrations are possible, consequently MS Risk advises to remain vigilant, to monitor local media and to avoid large gatherings. There is currently a low threat from terrorism. Nearly 100 people were reported to have been killed in July in an outbreak of ethnic violence in the "Guinea Forestiere" region in the far south-east of Guinea. A large number of injuries were also reported and properties destroyed. Areas of Guinea that border Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, the Ivory coast, Liberia and Sierra Leone are often tense and have an increased military presence. Therefore, MS Risk advises against all travel to the regions bordering the countries listed above. There have been regular reports of robberies on the routes Mamou, Faranah, Kissidougou, Guekedou, Macent and Nzerekore. MS Risk advises all travellers on these routes to remain vigilant and to avoid travel after dark. Official and unofficial checkpoints may be set up along these routes. Vehicles and passengers are submitted to checks on documentation and baggage. It is advised that you approach such checkpoints with caution, as corruption and extortion are common at roadblocks. Occasionally, checkpoints can be a pretext for armed robbery. Road travel is hazardous during the rainy season, which occurs from May to October. Torrential rains can cause floods and landslides. MS Risk advises you to monitor the local weather reports and expect difficulties when travelling to affected areas during this season.

Domestic News

- **21 January 2014** – Late on Monday, Guinea's President Alpha Conde issued a decree forming a new government that will keep in place his prime minister and over half of the cabinet members, excluding opposition figures. The decree has indicated that Prime Minister Mohamed Said Fofana, who was reinstated on Saturday despite resigning just three days earlier, will continue to head the 34-ministrial government. Nineteen ministers will stay on, either in their previous portfolios or swapping to different ones, however another fifteen have been removed and replaced with new ministers. Foreign Minister Francois Lonseny Fall kept his portfolio in the new line-up, which also includes five women. The post of religious affairs minister has been dissolved while there has been no mention of a defence minister. The functions have been carried out by the president since 2010. The decree comes in the wake of the 28 September 2013 polls that gave the President's Rally of the Guinean People (RGP) party, and its junior partners, an absolute majority in parliament, which began sitting last week.

International Developments

- **27 January 2014** – On Monday, the European Union (EU) announced the release of 140 million euros (US \$192 million) in aid to Guinea, its first development package to the West African nation

after a five-year suspension. The EU executive and the European Commission indicated that the funds were released following “inclusive and peaceful elections” in September 2013. The aid will finance development projects, ranging from improving the country’s roads to reforming the state’s financial accountability. The EU’s Development Commissioner, Andris Piebalgs, indicated that the EU “is committed to supporting the Guinean government’s efforts in finding its way back to sustainable and fair growth.” The European Union, Guinea’s main donor, suspended ties with the nation following a military coup in December 2008. After the election of President Alpha Conde in 2010, a parliamentary vote needed to complete the process of a return to civilian rule was repeatedly delayed as opposition parties and the president’s ruling coalition argued over the organization of the poll.



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

Domestic News

- **30 January 2014** – Guinea-Bissau's ex-prime minister, Carlos Gomes Junior, has requested UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon that he guarantee his security upon returning to the country to participate in the forthcoming general elections, which are set for 16 March 2014. In a letter sent to the UN chief, the former prime minister, who is currently living in exile in Portugal, expressed his concern regarding the deteriorating political and socioeconomic environment in Guinea-Bissau. Mr Gomes is the president of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), the biggest political party in the West African nation. While in exile, he has condemned the serious human rights violations and intimidation of those opposed to the transitional government and has accused transitional authorities and the army of obstructing efforts to organize inclusive, free and fair elections. It was alleged that the ex-prime minister will return to Guinea-Bissau between January 31 and February 2 in order to participate in the eight PAIGC congress as well as in the forthcoming presidential elections. The ex-premier was ousted in a coup on 12 April 2012.

Avoid ALL
travel to
part(s) of
country

Avoid all but
essential
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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.

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 country, 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 organizations 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 Organizations in Mali:

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

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

On The Ground Reporting

- **24 January 2014** - Military sources connected close to an on-going French military operation in northern Mali have confirmed that the counter-terrorism offensive concluded on Friday, with eleven Islamist militants killed and one French soldier wounded. An official from France's Operation Serval

has indicated “the French military operation in the Timbuktu region is completed. Eleven terrorists were killed. A French soldier was wounded but his life is not in danger.” A Malian military source has also confirmed the information, stating, “the French have done a good job, because the jihadists, notably from Libya, are reorganizing to occupy the region and dig in permanently.” The source further indicated that military equipment and phones belonging to the militants were seized by French troops during the operation, which took place a few hundred kilometers north of Timbuktu. According to military sources stationed in the capital Bamako, over the past few weeks, the French army has conducted two counter-terrorism operations around Timbuktu and in the far-northern Ifoghas mountains. It is believed that troops are targeting militants belonging to the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), the Signatories in Blood, which is an armed unit founded by former al-Qaeda commander Mokhtar Belmokhtar, as well as fighters loyal to slain warlord Abdelhamid Abou Zeid. Abou Zeid and Belmokhtar, both Algerians, were once leaders of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), which, along with MUJAO and a number of other militant groups, took control of northern Mali in 2012. In late February of last year, Abou Zeid was killed in fighting led by the French army in the Ifoghas mountain range. He is credited with having significantly expanded AQIM’s field of operations into Tunisia and Niger and for carrying out kidnapping activities across the region. Belmokhtar, who split from AQIM last year and launched the Signatories in Blood, which later masterminded the raid on Algeria’s In Amenas gas plant last year, remains at large. The launch of Operation Serval in January of last year resulted in many militants moving further north, particularly into the Ifoghas mountains, seeking shelter from the ground and air military campaign. Despite France beginning to withdraw its troops, on Thursday, French Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian indicated that “not everything is finished, the terrorist risk in this part of Africa remains high,” adding that France “...will keep 1,000 soldiers who are carrying out counter-terrorism missions.” The fact that the terrorist risk in Mali remains high has been demonstrated through attacks that have targeted French and African forces and which have been claimed by Islamist insurgents. While residual groups of fighters are no longer able to carry out coordinated assaults, they continue to have the necessary abilities in order to regularly carry out small-scale attacks. On Friday, flags were flown at half-mast in army barracks across Mali in commemoration of the two-year anniversary of a mass killing by Tuareg separatists, which came to be known as the massacre of Aguelhoc. When the northern town of Aguelhoc was taken on 24 January 2012, more than ninety soldiers and civilians had their throats slit or were shot in summary executions by separatist Tuaregs belonging to the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad. A statement released by the Ministry of Defence indicated that special prayers for the dead were planned in the town of Kati, which is located 15 kilometers northeast of Bamako, as well as religious services, which will be held on Sunday.

- Meanwhile a Malian military spokesman has indicated that the northern town of Kidal has come under attack from two rockets. Cmdr. Daouda Sagara, head of the military stationed in Kidal, stated that on Friday night, his soldiers had heard two large explosions. Cmdr Sagara indicated that he had no information about whether anyone had been wounded or killed in the attack. Despite the French-led military operation, which was launched a year ago, Kidal and Gao have repeatedly come under attack, with security remaining an issue.
- **21 January 2014** – Five members of the UN mission in Mali were injured when their vehicle ran over a landmine near the north-eastern town of Kidal. A statement issued by the mission indicated “this (Monday) morning a MINUSMA vehicle ran over a mine” 30 kilometres (20 miles) from Kidal, adding “five blue helmets were slightly injured.” No additional details about the incident have been released. Security in the northern region of Mali remains tenuous, with al-Qaeda-linked militants remaining active. Earlier this month, three Chadian soldiers were wounded by gunmen in the same region. UN peacekeepers took over security operations in July of last year from the pan-African AFISMA military mission, which at the time was supporting French troops. France is currently winding down its deployment, from a peak of around 5,000 soldiers, to 1,000 troops which will be stationed in Mali beyond spring.

- **20 January 2014** – Malian soldiers and international forces paraded through the capital Bamako on Monday during a public holiday marking the 53rd anniversary of the founding of Mali's army. Malian soldiers were joined in the Boulevard de l'Indépendance by UN peacekeepers, members of the European Union mission training Mali's army and troops from Operation Serval. President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita and French Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, watched the Army Day parade alongside generals from Mali, the United Nations and Serval. On Sunday, the Malian President had paid tribute to the Malian army, announcing in a speech after Le Drian's arrival that a new military planning law was to be adopted, which would strengthen the capabilities of the troops over the next five years. He noted that the parade capped "the distressing events" of the previous two years. Keita further noted that "Mali and France are currently discussing a possible military cooperation agreement...on the initiative of the Malian authorities." The agreement was initially supposed to have been signed during Le Drian's visit but it has been delayed, with neither side offering an explanation

Domestic News

- **22 January 2014** – On Wednesday a high-ranking ruling party lawmaker, and relative of Mali's current president, became Mali's second most powerful politician after he was elected to lead the country's new parliament. Issaka Sidibe, an executive in the Rally for Mali (RPM) party's politburo, was backed by 115 of the chamber's 147 lawmakers, with his only rival, opposition politician Oumar Mariko, attaining just eleven votes. Speaking shortly after his election, Mr Sidibe stated "our people are watching us and ask of us honourable and dignified behaviour....We must serve the public interest and nothing else." He urged members of parliament to "work for the reconciliation" of all Malians "regardless of their political, religious or ethnic allegiances." Mr Sidibe will be accorded significant power, becoming the country's de facto leader when President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita is on holiday or unable to perform his duties for any other reason. A career customs official, Mr Sidibe gained a master's degree in law on the job and rose through the ranks to become a senior inspector before retiring five years ago to enter politics. Father-in-law to the president's son, lawmaker Karim Keita, Mr Sidibe represented his hometown of Koulikoro, which is located 59 kilometres (37 miles) northeast of Bamako, from 2002 to 2007 before losing his seat and then regaining it last year.

International Developments

- **23 January 2014** – On Thursday, the United Nations Security Council pressed Mali's new government to speed up its efforts in beginning reconciliation talks with Tuareg and Arab groups in a bid to end the country's conflict. A statement released by the Council stated "the Security Council reiterates its call for an inclusive and credible negotiation process open to all communities of the north of Mali, with the goal of securing a durable political resolution to the crisis and long-term peace and stability." While commending the government's "initial" efforts to launch national consultations and reforms, the 15-nation Security Council indicated that it "encourages further steps towards consolidating stability, advancing inclusive national dialogue and reconciliation," adding that "the Security Council underscores the need to address the underlying causes of recurrent crisis which have affected Mali, including governance, security, development and humanitarian challenges, and drawing lessons from past peace agreements." Longstanding bitterness between the Tuaregs and Arabs in the northern regions of the country, and the African majority that dominates the government, has been blamed for last year's conflict.



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 have been released, with the ruling party winning a majority of seats.

Terrorism

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

Kidnapping

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

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

On The Ground Reporting

- **30 January 2014** – Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz took over as African Union (AU) chairman on Thursday, replacing Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, in the one-year post. In his opening speech, Mr. Aziz congratulated Mr Desalegn, “for the remarkable work accomplished during his tenure” adding that “he has contributed brilliantly to strengthen the role of Africa on both continental and international levels.” While the two-day talks, which were opened by Mr. Desalegn on Thursday, are officially set to focus on agriculture and food security, the 54 – member bloc will likely spend a portion of the summit trying to resolve conflicts in member states.

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.

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



Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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

Security Summary

Summary

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Kidnapping

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

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

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

Threats and Terrorism

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

On The Ground Reporting

- **31 January 2014** – Eight people were killed in religious violence on Friday, including a Christian family of seven, while a roadside bomb killed seven others in an area known for Boko Haram activity. The two incidents follow deadly violence that erupted last week and which raised new questions about the government's strategy to end the bloodshed amidst a change at the top of the military. In the first attack on Friday, local residents reported that unknown gunmen in cars and on motorbikes had burst into the family's house in Unguwar Kajit, a village located in the mainly Christian part of Kaduna state. A youth leader has indicated that "Christian youth provoked by the attack, which they blamed on Fulani Muslims, mobilized and launched reprisal attacks, burning mosques and houses." Residents have reported that one person in a mosque died as it went up in flames. Kaduna state governor Mukhtar Ramalan Yero has ordered an investigation. In the second incident, police reported that seven people were killed, and three others seriously injured, when their bus ran over a home-made bomb near Kuthra village in the Gwoza area of Borno state. According to Borno state police commissioner Lawan Tanko, "the incident happened around 7:00 AM (0600 GMT)," adding that "the bus was about to pull over to pick some passengers when it rolled over the IED (improvised explosive device) planted by the roadside, causing an explosion." A police bomb disposal unit has been combing the area in search for any other explosives." Gwoza is located 150 kilometres (90 miles) from the Borno state capital Maiduguri. In recent months, Boko haram militants have scaled up deadly attacks in the border area with Cameroon.
- **27 January 2014** - Police and state authorities announced on Monday that more than seventy people were killed in two separate attacks in north-eastern Nigeria, with suspicions falling on the Boko Haram. The attacks on Sunday, with one occurring in a busy market in Borno state, killing forty-five, and the other in neighbouring Adamawa, which left at least twenty-six dead, came just a week after a change of the guard at the top of Nigeria's military. Adamawa state spokesman Ahmad Sajo indicated that "from information from the police authorities, 26 people were killed in the attack, including two policemen, who mistook the attackers for soldiers because they were wearing military uniforms." He further added that "seventeen of the victims were shot dead....At the moment we don't know who the attackers were. We're waiting for that information from the security agencies." An unspecified number of injured were being treated in hospital. Meanwhile in Borno, state police commissioner Lawan Tanko indicated that "so far, we have 45 dead and 26 injured...but the figures could increase as our men are still in the village searching for more casualties." The attack occurred at about 5:00 PM (1600 GMT) on Sunday when gunmen

disguised as traders stormed Kawuri, in the Donduga area of Borno, 37 kilometres (23 miles) from the state capital of Maiduguri. Witnesses reported the gunmen arriving in four-wheel-drive vehicles, opening fire before setting of homemade bombs that destroyed houses and other property. Mr Tanko, who blamed the attack on “the Boko Haram sect,” stated that he could not confirm that explosives were used but a specialist bomb disposal team had been sent in to search for unexploded devices. While new chief of defence Air Marshall Alex Badeh, who comes from Adamawa, has stated that he wants a swift end to the bloody insurgency, which has claimed thousands of lives since 2009, the latest attacks will likely renew calls for a more effective strategy, possibly considering non-military means such as dialogue or wider development schemes to prevent radicalisation in the impoverished north.

- **21 January 2014** – On Tuesday, police and residents reported that suspected Boko Haram militants shot dead a teacher in a north-eastern Nigerian village located on the border with Chad. According to local reports, the attackers stormed a house late on Monday, where the head of a primary school lived, killing him and wounding his housemate who was a cook in another school. Borno state police commissioner Lawan Tank confirmed the attack, stating “we received report of an attack in Wulgo village by some gunmen in which one person was killed and another one seriously wounded.”

Domestic News

- **29 January 2014** – In what appears to be a new blow to President Goodluck Jonathan, on Wednesday, eleven lawmakers from Nigeria’s ruling party gave their formal notice of their intentions to defect to the main opposition. The members of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), all of them senators in the upper chamber of parliament, announced their decision in a letter sent to Senate Leader David Mark. The letter stated “we the undersigned Senators of the Federal Republic of Nigeria elected under the platform of the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) wish to notify you that we have severally and jointly joined the All Progressives Congress (APC),” adding that “this action and decision is as a result of the division and factionalization” in the ruling party. APC spokesman Lai Mohammed has stated that the letter, dated January 20, was delivered to Mr Mark on Wednesday afternoon and is due to be read on the floor of the Senate when legislature resumes on Thursday morning. While the letter features the names of sixteen senators in total, it only contains the signatures of eleven. All but two of the eleven senators are Muslim politicians from northern states. The rest included Christians from the oil-producing Rivers state in the south, whose high-profile governor Rotimi Amaechi is locked in a tense stand-off with Jonathan. One of the signatories, Rivers Southeast senator Magnus Abe, has claimed he was shot as police broke up a recent pr-Amaechi rally. Once confirmed, the new configuration will cut the ruling party’s majority in the 109-seat Senate by 26 seats, with the PDP down from 73 to 62 seats and the APC up from 22 to 44. This latest defection follows the one which occurred on 19 December 2013, in which 37 PDP lawmakers in the lower chamber House of Representatives announced that they had joined the APC, a move which effectively stripped the ruling party of its majority.
- **27 January 2014** – Nigeria’s State Security Service (SSS) arrested the deputy head of the main opposition coalition on Monday over comment he is reported to have made warning of electoral violence in presidential polls which are scheduled for February 2015. Nasir el-Rufai was quoted in the daily ThiDay as saying that the election was “likely to be violent and many people are going to die,” as has happened in previous elections in Africa’s most populous country. Mr el-Rufai was also quoted as saying that if the election is rigged “and the alternative is left is to get power by force, that is the reality on the ground.” His arrest was confirmed by SSS spokeswoman Marily Ogar, who indicated that “El-Rufai is with us. We are interrogating him over comments he made published by a newspaper on Thursday.” The SSS has also put out a statement, warning that anyone issuing such “inflammatory” statements could face criminal prosecution.
- **24 January 2014** – Nigeria’s electoral agency announced Friday that the country will hold its next presidential election on 14 February 2015, with incumbent head of state Goodluck Jonathan

expected to seek a second term. A statement released by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) indicated that “the commission has scheduled the presidential and National Assembly elections for 14th February 2015,” adding that governorship and elections for state assemblies will be held on 28 February 2015. It also fixed June 21 and August 9 of this year for the gubernatorial polls in Ekiti and Osun, two states in the country’s south-western region where fresh elections are due at the expiration of the tenure of the incumbents. President Goodluck Jonathan has held office since May 2010, after being elevated from vice-president to take over on the death of his predecessor, Alhaji Umaru Yar’Adua. In 2011, he was elected to a four-year mandate. While he has not publicly declared his ambition to continue, he is widely expected to seek another term in next year’s polls. The success and peaceful outcome of next year’s polls is necessary to the country’s own security as well as regional stability as Nigeria holds significant regional influence. The country, which has had a long history of electoral mal practices and violence, is currently experiencing tensions in its north and is working to end the Boko Haram insurgency. Shortly after the last elections in 2011, more than 800 people were said to have been killed in riots in some parts of the north. A repeat of such events in next year’s elections could prove disastrous for the country. A power-struggle could enable Boko Haram to gain greater authority over the northern regions.

- Meanwhile Nigeria’s main opposition party announced that it will block the passage of this year’s budget until what it described as lawlessness, is ended in politically volatile Rivers state in the southern oil region. The All Progressives Congress (APC), which now holds a majority in the lower house of parliament, also indicated that it would block the confirmation of twelve new ministers and four military chiefs President Goodluck Jonathan appointed earlier this month. A statement released by the APC indicated that “the APC hereby directs its members in the National Assembly to block all legislative proposals, including the 2014 Budge...until the rule of law and constitutionalism is restored in Rivers State.” PDP Spokesman Olisa Metuh responded by accusing the APC of a “devilish plot to undermine the nation’s security system....and cripple the nation’s economy.” Ever since four opposition parties merged last February, creating the APC, politics has become increasingly heated in Nigeria. Since then, five state governors and dozens of lawmakers have defected from the ruling People’s Democratic Party (PDP). Such political tensions are expected to continue until elections next year and could possibly damage Africa’s second largest economy, at a time when oil savings are dwindling and its currency is under pressure.
- **20 January 2014** – On Monday, Nigeria’s ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) choose a new chairman, just days after his predecessor was forced out following months of bitter in-fighting. Members of the party’s national executive council unanimously chose Ahmadu Adamu Mu’azu to replace Bamangar Tukur, who had been widely seen as a place man for President Goodluck Jonathan. Mr Mu’azu was the governor of the northern state of Bauchi from 1999 until 2007. In his acceptance speech, Mr Mu’azu, 58, acknowledged that “all has not been well” with the party but pledged to work to recover the PDP’s “lost glory,” adding that “as I take over as chairman of our great party, I wan to assure you of my determind efforts and total commitment to restore the lost glory of the PDP with your total support.” While he gave no further details, Mr Mu’azu promised “sweeping reforms in the administration of his party.” The election of Mu’azu comes a week after the President told the national executive committee that Mr Tukur had stepped down, in a move interpreted by many as an attempt to calm competing factions and heal divisions. Mr Tukur had been seen as an undemocratically appointed place man for the president, with critics using his presence to bolster their opposition the Jonathan. Late last year, five influential state governors and thirty-seven lawmakers defected to the All Progressives Congress (APC), largely in opposition to Jonathan’s predicted run for re-election in 2015. This resulted in the PDP loosing its parliamentary majority, raising the prospect that it could lose power for the first time since Nigeria returned to civilian rule in 1999.
- Meanwhile Nigeria’s top military officer called for a swift end to the Islamist insurgency. As he was sworn in as the new chief of defence staff, Air Marshall Alex Badeh stated that “the

security situation in the northeast must be brought to a complete stop before April 2014.” Air Marshall Badeh, whose home state Adamawa is one of three in Nigeria’s northeast to have been under emergency rule since last May, set the April deadline to avoid what he said were “constitutional problems.” Speaking shortly after his investiture ceremony in the capital, Abuja, Air Marshall Badeh stated that “we don’t want to go back to the Senate to go and start begging and lobbying for an extension to the emergency rule,” adding “if we do our work cohesively, I can tell you, we will finish the counter-insurgency in no time.” Air Marshall Badeh replaced Admiral Ola Sa’ad Ibrahim, who headed the military from 2012 and who was fired, along with three other heads of the country’s armed forces, last Thursday. While President Goodluck Jonathan has not explained his reasons for replacing the top brass, many suggest that he has been dissatisfied with their performance and the fact that Boko Haram militants continue to attain capabilities to carry out attacks.