



The West Africa Report

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

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MS Risk has a dedicated team of researchers, a 24/7 hotline service and a pool of trained and experienced consultants to support client needs.

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

- Security Consulting
 - Risk assessments and intelligence reporting
 - Planning and management
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- 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.

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The West Africa Report ~ SUMMARY

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Follow us on Twitter @ MS Risk_Security for regular updates on topical security events and issues.

Benin

- **11 January 2014** – On Saturday, former Central African Republic (CAR) president Michel Djotodia arrived in Benin, just one day after resigning under pressure for his failure to tackle the bloody religious violence that has occurred in his homeland.

Burkina Faso

- **18 January 2014** – At least 10,000 people marched in Burkina Faso's capital on Saturday, protesting against President Blaise Compaore's plans that could enable him to extend his mandate by another five years.
- **6 January 2014** – On Monday, Burkina Faso's opposition leader called for protests to be held later this month against plans by President Blaise Compaore to extend his mandate by another five years.
 - Meanwhile dozens of prominent figures in Burkina Faso's ruling party have resigned, showing deep political divisions created by fears that President Blaise Compaore may push through changes to the constitution in a bid to stay in power.

Cameroon

- **17 January 2014** – Border villages located along Cameroon's northern region have been deserted following heavy fighting between the Nigerian army and Boko Haram militants in neighbouring Banki, Borno State Nigeria.
- **8 January 2014** – Authorities in Cameroon's capital have confirmed that tighter border controls in the Far North have been set up in order to prevent infiltration by Boko Haram militants from neighbouring Nigeria as civilians flee insurgent attacks and an on-going Nigerian military offensive.
- **7 January 2014** – Refugees from the Central African Republic have released two United Nations workers, who were taken hostage to protest a lack of needed aid, in Cameroon.

Central African Republic

On the Ground Analysis

- **16 January 2014** – According to a compiled toll from the Red Cross on Thursday, at least seven people were killed in overnight clashes in the CAR's capital Bangui.
- **13 January 2014** – On Monday, officials at the Red Cross warned that new sectarian violence has erupted in the CAR, stating that at least 127 people had been killed in the past three days despite the new interim president telling fighters that “the party is over.”
- **11 January 2014** – Despite the resignation of the CAR's president, deadly violence broke out overnight in Bangui.
- **10 January 2014** – The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has indicated that following appeals from neighbouring countries, on Saturday it will start to airlift thousands of people out of the CAR.

Domestic News

- **15 January 2014** – In Bangui, the country's transitional parliament concluded its session Wednesday without finalizing the rules for its upcoming vote on a new interim president that will replace Mr Djotodia, who stepped down Friday under international pressure over his failure to rein in his ex-rebels and to stem the escalating violence.
- **10 January 2014** – The Central African Republic's President Michel Djotodia has resigned at a regional summit that is aimed at ending the violence that has engulfed the country.

Regional Reporting

- **16 January 2014** – In what is to be the second such operation in support of the African Union's efforts to stem on going violence in the CAR, a US official announced on Wednesday that the US military will soon begin flying Rwandan troops into the CAR, with the mission possibly beginning as soon as Thursday.
- **15 January 2014** – The African Union (AU) has called for more troops in order to help stabilize the CAR, which remains tense as its transitional parliament prepares to elect a new interim president.

International Developments

- **10 January 2014** – European Union (EU) nations have agreed on a plan to launch a joint military operation in Central Africa that is aimed at helping restore security there amidst fears of civilian massacres.
- **8 January 2014** – On Wednesday, Rwanda announced that it will send some 800 troops to the CAR next week, as part of an African Union (AU) force to help restore security.
- **7 January 2014** – French Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian indicated on Tuesday that there is currently no need to send reinforcement to the CAR, where France already has 1,600 troops deployed to help defuse the sectarian violence.

Equatorial Guinea

- **8 January 2014** – Authorities in Equatorial Guinea have denied reports that its borders with Cameroon and Gabon were officially closed on 1 January however local residents have reported that the border was last open on 31 December 2013.
- **6 January 2014** – Hundreds of Cameroonians have been forcefully expelled from Equatorial Guinea for being in the country illegally.

Gambia

- **14 January 2014** – A newspaper editor in Gambia has confirmed that two of its journalists have been arrested after reporting that nineteen supporters of President Yayha Jammeh's ruling party had defected to the opposition.

Ghana

Domestic News

- **7 January 2014** – Ghana's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration has confirmed that Ghana will be contributing troops for peacekeeping operations in South Sudan.

International Developments

- **8 January 2014** – On Wednesday, China's Foreign Minister indicated that Beijing is tackling illegal gold mining in Ghana, after hundreds of his compatriots were arrested and sent home for extracting the mineral without permission.

Guinea

- **15 January 2014** – On Wednesday, Guinea's Prime Minister stepped down and handed in the resignation of his cabinet as part of a transition to a new government after the recent held elections.

Ivory Coast

Domestic News

- **6 January 2014** – On Monday, Ivory Coast President Alassane Ouattara asked a group of traditional hunters, who have been blamed by the United Nations for summary executions and human rights abuses, to put an end to their paramilitary activities.

International Developments

- **10 January 2014** – On Friday, Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe arrived in Abidjan on the first stop of his Africa tour that aims to boost ties and business relations on a continent that has developed into a key trading partner with China.

Mali

On the Ground Reporting

- **17 January 2014** – Leaders of a Tuareg rebel group in northern Mali have withdrawn from negotiations with Mali's government scheduled to take place in Algeria after faulting the terms of the talks.
- **11 January 2014** – A spokesman for the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali has indicated that three peacekeepers have been wounded while pursuing suspects in an attack near a military camp in the country's northern region.
- **10 January 2014** – On Friday, thirty-two Malian soldiers, who were arrested with ex-junta chief Amadou Sanogo, were freed six weeks after their arrest.
- **6 January 2014** – On Monday, officials in Bamako and Dakar confirmed that both Mali and Senegal have repatriated hundreds of their nationals fleeing sectarian violence in the Central African Republic.

International Developments

- **16 January 2014** – A unit of Chinese soldiers arrived in Mali on Thursday in order to strengthen the United Nations peacekeeping force in the West African nation.
- **10 January 2014** – International Monetary Fund (IMF) chief Christine Lagarde indicated on Friday that there was "great hope" for Mali's future, predicting a healthy GDP growth of 6.6 percent and praising the country's management of its economy.
- **8 January 2014** – French President Francois Hollande announced on Wednesday that France will cut its troops in Mali to 1,600 by the middle of next month from the current level of 2,500.

Mauritania

- **10 January 2014** – Riots took place in Mauritania's second largest city of Nouadhibou late Friday following reports of the extradition of a man to France after he was accused of offending Islam's prophet Muhammad.

Nigeria

On the Ground Reporting

- **30 December 2013** – Police and health officials in the northeastern state of Borno indicated on Monday that twelve people have died in a suspected Boko Haram attack on a wedding party.
 - Elsewhere, four people were reportedly killed in the village of Kwajaffa, also located in Borno, on Sunday, raising fears of fresh attacks in the majority Christian community and others nearby.
- **27 December 2013** – In a video released on Friday, Boko Haram's leader, Abubakar Shekau, has claimed responsibility for a daring December 20 attack on a military barracks in the restive northeast.
- **24 December 2013** – Witnesses reported on Tuesday that a military offensive in northeastern Nigeria, which killed more than 50 Islamist militants, has destroyed four villages and left corpses scattered in bushes, with some civilians among the dead.
- **23 December 2013** – According to police and witness accounts, gunmen have kidnapped a Lebanese businessman in the northern Nigerian city of Kano after militants stormed his factory.
 - Meanwhile a spokesman for the Nigerian army indicated on Monday that Nigeria's troops have killed over fifty Islamists and destroyed more than 20 vehicles during a massive hunt for fleeing Boko Haram insurgents who attacked an army barracks in a town in the northeastern region of the country.

Domestic News

- **16 January 2014** – Nigeria's President Goodluck Jonathan has fired his military high command.
 - Meanwhile a close ally of President Goodluck Jonathan, Bamanga Tukur, has resigned as chairman of the governing People's Democratic Party (PDP).
- **9 January 2014** – Sources have indicated that Nigeria's president has requested that central bank chief Lamido Sanusi resign over a leaked letter pertaining to missing oil funds.

Regional Reporting

- **6 January 2014** – Nigeria has repatriated over 1,600 citizens who have sought refuge in its embassy in Bangui after fleeing violence in the CAR.

International Developments

- **9 January 2014** – The United Kingdom and Nigeria have signed an agreement that will allow the transfer of prisoners between the two countries.

Senegal

- **6 January 2014** – On Monday, officials in Bamako and Dakar confirmed that both Mali and Senegal have repatriated hundreds of their nationals fleeing sectarian violence in the Central African Republic.
- **10 January 2014** – On Friday, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi vowed that his country would "always be a champion" of African causes as he began a two-day trip to Senegal.
- **9 January 2014** – On Thursday, Russia demanded the immediate release of a trawler and its crew which were seized by Senegal for alleged illegal fishing off the country's coast.

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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.

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

Ivory Coast – Page 27

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.

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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

- **6 January 2014** – One year after dozens were killed in a hostage attack on a gas plant in Algeria, officials there have increased security along the borders and at energy facilities throughout the country as concerns over the safety at the In Amenas gas plant continue to linger. On 16 January 2013, heavily armed Islamist militants stormed the isolated Tiguentourine complex, which lies in the remote Sahara desert. Thirty-eight hostages were killed in a four-day siege, which was followed by an army rescue operation. All but one of those who were killed were foreigners. The North African country is greatly dependent on its energy sector, with hydrocarbons accounting for more than ninety-seven per cent of export earnings. In response to last year's attack, the energy-rich North African country has dramatically increased security at its oil and gas installations and along the vast porous borders that it shares with Mali and Libya. Military sources have indicated that as of recently, 20,000 troops have been deployed along the country's eastern and southern frontiers, with another 1,500 combing the region day and night, assisted by continuous air cover. According to a source, "military command has sent the majority of its aircraft to Ouargla and Tamanrasset (in southern Algeria) as the main bases for intervention." In turn, helicopters and Seeker II drones equipped with hi-tech reconnaissance equipment are able to carry out surveillance missions and precision air strikes. While there are indications that Algeria's heightened security arrangements are paying off, with several Islamist convoys having been destroyed between Tamanrasset in the far south and Illizi in the south east, along with the seizure of a large weapons cache near the Libyan border, 200 km (125 miles) from In Amenas in October, al-Qaeda-linked militants continue to be a serious security threat throughout the Sahara region. This threat has become a concern to some of the foreign firms, which Algeria relies on in order to maintain production of its oil and gas fields. While it has been a year since the In Amenas attack, a top US general warned last week that Mokhtar Belmokhtar, a veteran jihadist responsible for the hostage raid, continued to have the capabilities to stage "another attack like in Amenas." Days after the attack last year, Belmokhtar's Signatories in Blood, a breakaway group from al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), claimed responsibility for the attack, stating that it was in retaliation for France's military intervention against Islamist militants in northern Mali. With France continuing to have a military presence on the African continent, as its troops are still deployed in Mali and have recently been sent to the Central African Republic, the threat of further retaliatory attacks on French and Western interests remains heightened. In turn, the impact of the attack on In Amenas continues to be felt a year after the incident. Norwegian firm Statoil, which jointly operates the plant along with Britain's BP and Algeria's Sonatrach, has returned to the country however not to the site, where one of three production trains damaged in the attack remains out of action. Statoil lost five employees, and only one of the twelve survivors is prepared to go back to In Amenas. BP and Japanese engineering firm JGC, which alone lost ten employees, are still waiting to return to In Amenas, where an inspection is planned in the coming days in order to assess the site's security and to give a possible go-ahead to return to production. To better protect expatriates working at the complex, which lies 1,300 km (800 miles) southeast of Algiers, a landing strip is being constructed in order to provide a safer passage to and from the site. Statoil has barred its employees from spending the night there until the new security measures are in place. In issue however in creating security measures around energy facilities such as In Amenas is the fact that Algeria refuses to allow foreign companies to organize their own security arrangements at sites where they operate. Instead, that task is entrusted to the Algerian military, which was heavily criticized at the time of the attack for its handling of what was one of the worst hostage incidents in years. In September, Statoil experts had concluded in a published report that security at In Amenas had relied too heavily on the Algerian army. The report stated "neither Statoil nor the joint venture could have prevented the attack, but there is reason to question the extent of their reliance on Algerian military protection."

- **12 January 2014** – On Sunday, the leaders of Mali and Mauritania signed an accord that will effectively boost military cooperation and information sharing between the two states in their battle against “armed groups or terrorists” that are plaguing the West African neighbours. Malian President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, who was elected in August 2013, signed the deal while on a state visit to Nouakchott. According to a joint statement released on Sunday, President Keita and his Mauritanian counterpart, Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, “agreed not to tolerate the presence of any armed or terrorist group that could potentially destabilize” either country. They also agreed to boost cooperation between their armed forces with “periodic meetings, the regular exchange of information and close consultations.” In turn, the two leaders have also called for “greater cooperation between al Sahel-Saharan countries to coordinate operations in the fight against armed terrorists, drug traffickers and illicit smuggling.” The two Sahel nations are both threatened by armed groups, including al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), which has been involved in a number of kidnappings for ransom, arms and drug trafficking and attacks. AQIM was one of the groups involved in the nine-month takeover of northern Mali in 2012. While the Islamists militants were later driven out by a French-led military intervention that was launched last January, AQIM militants, along with al-Qaeda-linked groups, continue to have a presence in the northern desert and the capabilities of launching sporadic but deadly attacks on Malian troops and United Nations peacekeepers. Meanwhile Mauritania’s President Aziz has in the past actively fought AQIM’s presence in the region, with his troops launching raids on their bases in Mali in 2010 and 2011.
 - Meanwhile an alarming travel advisory issued by the United States against Nigeria warns that the country’s Islamic uprising could expand out of the northern regions. The advisory further counsels against travel to sixteen of the West African nations thirty-six states, indicating that American have suffered violent crimes that include kidnappings and rape to home invasions. The advisory indicates that nine foreign nationals, including Americans, died last year in kidnappings in southwest Nigeria, with three of them being killed by their captors during military-led rescue raids. The advisory tells citizens to expect minimal help from law enforcers adding that US missionaries in northern Nigeria have received “night letters,” which are covertly distributed specific written threats to their safety.



No travel restrictions

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.

Domestic News

- 11 January 2014** – On Saturday, former Central African Republic (CAR) president Michel Djotodia arrived in Benin, just one day after resigning under pressure for his failure to tackle the bloody religious violence that has occurred in his homeland. Sources at Cotonou's airport have indicated that the former rebel leader stepped off an official Chadian jet at 5:05PM local time (1605 GMT) after a flight from N'Djamena. He was met off the plane by Benin's Foreign Minister, Nassirou Bako Arifari, who had earlier confirmed that Mr Djotodia was heading to Benin at the request of central African states. Shortly after meeting with Benin's Foreign Minister, Mr Djotodia made no comments to waiting journalists. In turn, there have been no remarks from Foreign Minister Arifari's department about Mr Djotodia's movements. Earlier in the day, airport sources in Chad indicated that Mr Djotodia had left N'Djamena at around midday bound for Benin. Sources in the CAR have also indicated that Mr Djotodia's family is already in Benin and has visited on a number of occasions. The ex-leader also has a number of links to Benin, where he was exiled and imprisoned at the request of the man he deposed in March last year, Francois Bozize. Mr Djotodia, along with his Prime Minister Nicolas Tiangaye, resigned on Friday at an extraordinary meeting of central African states in N'Djamena. Shortly after his resignation, Arifari indicated that Benin's government had accepted a request from member states of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) for Mr Djotodia to fly to Benin. Mr. Arifari has called Benin's acceptance "our contribution to the search for peace in central Africa."

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. MS Risk recommends particular vigilance around 18 January 2014, as opposition groups have called for a national “day of protest.” Protests may turn violent at any moment. Consequently, MS Risk recommends that you follow news reports and be alert to any developments that may trigger unrest.

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.

On the Ground Analysis

- **18 January 2014** – At least 10,000 people marched in Burkina Faso's capital on Saturday, protesting against President Blaise Compaore's plans that could enable him to extend his mandate by another five years. Local reports have indicated that the protests in Ouagadougou were called

on by the opposition party over a planned change to the constitution which currently limits the president to two five-year terms. President Compaore will reach that limit next year. Opposition leader Zephirin Diabre has called Saturday's protest an "historic day," with protests also being reported in other cities around the West African country. President Compaore seized power in a 1987 coup and has in the past backed constitutional change in order to extend his rule. He first served two seven-year terms (1991 – 1998 and 1998 – 2005) as president. A later change to the constitution allowed him to serve two five year mandates.

Domestic News

- **6 January 2014** – On Monday, Burkina Faso's opposition leader called for protests to be held later this month against plans by President Blaise Compaore to extend his mandate by another five years. According to a statement released by the opposition, the protest, which will be held on January 18, will target the planned amendment of article 37 of the Constitution, which limits presidential mandates to two, and government policy. Last month, opposition figures accused President Compaore of preparing a "constitutional coup" after he mentioned plans for a referendum on changes to article 37. Compaore, who will turn 63 next month, seized power in a 1987 coup and served two seven-year terms (1991 – 98 and 1998 – 2005) before a change to the constitution allowed him to serve two five-year terms (2005 – 2010 and 2010 – present).
 - Meanwhile dozens of prominent figures in Burkina Faso's ruling party have resigned, showing deep political divisions created by fears that President Blaise Compaore may push through changes to the constitution in a bid to stay in power. On Monday, state newspaper Sidwaya published a list of seventy-five members of the Congress of Democracy and Progress (CDP), including the party's former leader and an ex-president of the National Assembly, who resigned from the ruling party, accusing the president of crushing internal dissent. Compaore, who has been in power since 1987, secured a strong majority in parliamentary elections late last year. He has so far not ruled out seeking re-election in the 2015 presidential vote.



Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

Security Summary

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

The killing of a Cameroonian police officer on 19 August has prompted officials in Cameroon to close its border with the Central African Republic (CAR). The death of the officer occurred after a number of Seleka fighters crossed over the border into Cameroon, where they were stopped by officers patrolling the border region.

Despite being escorted over the border, the fighters returned and attacked the police. It is currently not known how long the border will be closed. Consequently MS Risk advises against all travel to the border regions with the CAR as it is



highly likely that militant groups and pro-Seleka fighters may be patrolling the areas and may at times attempt to cross into Cameroon.

On 14 May 2013, the Government of Nigeria declared a state of emergency in the states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. Both Adamawa and Borno border Cameroon's far North, North and Adamaoua provinces. It is possible that military operations there might have an impact across the border in Cameroon. MS RISK advises against all travel to the Bakassi Peninsula as well as within 20km of the border with Nigeria in the Ndiabou Division of the South West Province. We also advise against all travel to within 40km of the border with Chad in the North and Far North Provinces. This is due to a heightened risk of banditry and armed poachers in Bouba Ndjidda National Park in the North Province. There is currently a travel advisory north of Maroua in the Far North Province resulting from the heightened threat of armed banditry and other threats associated with the borders of Chad and Nigeria. The Government of Cameroon is expected to cut fuel subsidies in the near future, which may cause strikes and civil unrest throughout the country. Finally, there have been attacks on commercial shipping vessels in the Gulf of Guinea, including the coastline of Cameroon around the port of Douala. Vessels travelling throughout this area have been advised to exercise extreme caution.

On the Ground Reporting

- **17 January 2014** – Border villages located along Cameroon's northern region have been deserted following heavy fighting between the Nigerian army and Boko Haram militants in neighbouring Banki, Borno State Nigeria. On the ground reports have indicated that around thirty Cameroonians and Nigerians have been wounded in the attacks, while five are feared dead. The heavy fighting between the Nigerian army and Boko Haram militants created a panic in neighbouring Cameroon, especially in the village of Amchide where residents have reported that Nigerian troops fired heavily and indiscriminately at fleeing militants. Local residents have reported that a number of locals have fled the area, with the atmosphere remaining tense.
- **8 January 2014** – Authorities in Cameroon's capital have confirmed that tighter border controls in the Far North have been set up in order to prevent infiltration by Boko Haram militants from neighbouring Nigeria as civilians flee insurgent attacks and an on-going Nigerian military offensive. A rapid response military unit has also been deployed in the northern regions, with some tourist hotels now having armed guards present. Bob-Iga Emmanuel, the head of police division at the governor's office in the Far North stated, "we have revised our security strategy. We have registered all expatriates and established police posts in areas where they work. There are security control posts along the border to reduce illegal entry." Despite the increased security measures at the border, Cameroonian authorities have admitted that it is impossible to completely secure Cameroon's longest border, adding that there are also similar ethnic communities in the Far North and north-eastern Nigeria who have family on either side of the border, speak the same language and share common culture, making undetected cross-border movement easy. Insecurity has stifled the movement of people and trade between Cameroon's Far North region and north eastern Nigeria, which is a Boko Haram stronghold. Consequently Northern Cameroon traders have been forced to seek markets in neighbouring Chad or other regions of the country in order to gain an income. The heightened security in the Far North comes weeks after Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan urged Cameroon to help in combating Boko Haram militants, who have been pushed out of the main cities in north-eastern Nigeria and into neighbouring states. In turn, it is believed that the militants take detours through Cameroonian territory in order to move from one Nigerian state to another. The two countries have since agreed to conduct separate but coordinated border patrols. Officials have also indicated that there has been a rise in arms trafficking from Chad into northern Nigeria, with "many people having been arrested with guns." The abduction of French nationals in Cameroon underscored the widening threat of gunmen linked to Boko Haram in Nigeria. The kidnapping of a French priest in November 2013 is thought to have benefited from collusion by some local individuals.

- 7 January 2014** – Refugees from the Central African Republic have released two United Nations workers, who were taken hostage to protest a lack of needed aid, in Cameroon. Reports have indicated that the refugees involved appear to be rebels, further highlighting the growing crisis not only within the CAR, but for the country’s neighbours. The UNHCR workers, identified as Mamady Fata Kourouma and his colleague Amada were taken hostage on January 4 in Bertoua, the provincial capital of Cameroon’s Eastern Region. Eastern regional Governor Ivaha Diboua Samuel Dieudonne confirmed that the two UN workers were released Monday after negotiation, adding that the UN workers were targeted due to frustration by CAR refugees who have accused the UN of not doing enough in order to provide for basic needs.

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

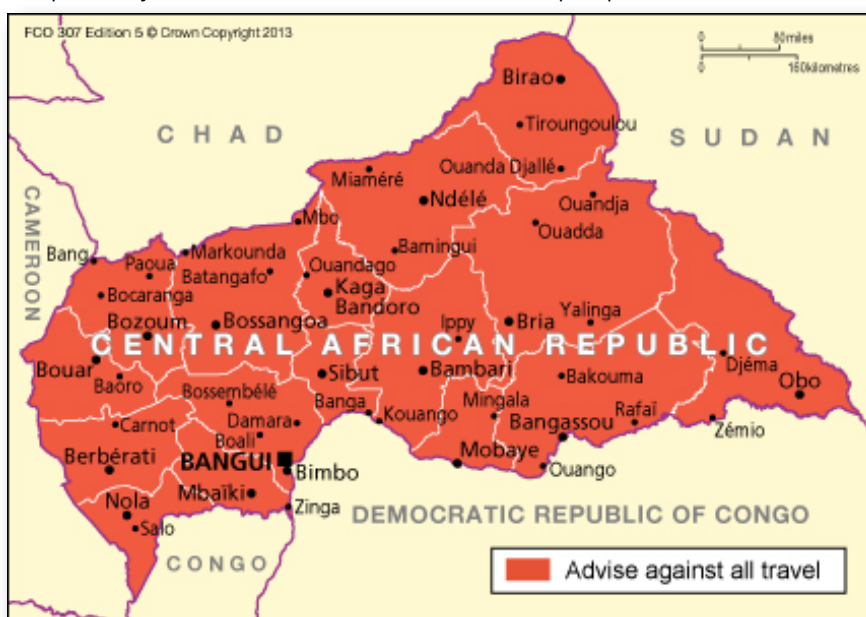
Avoid all but essential travel to part(s) of the country



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.

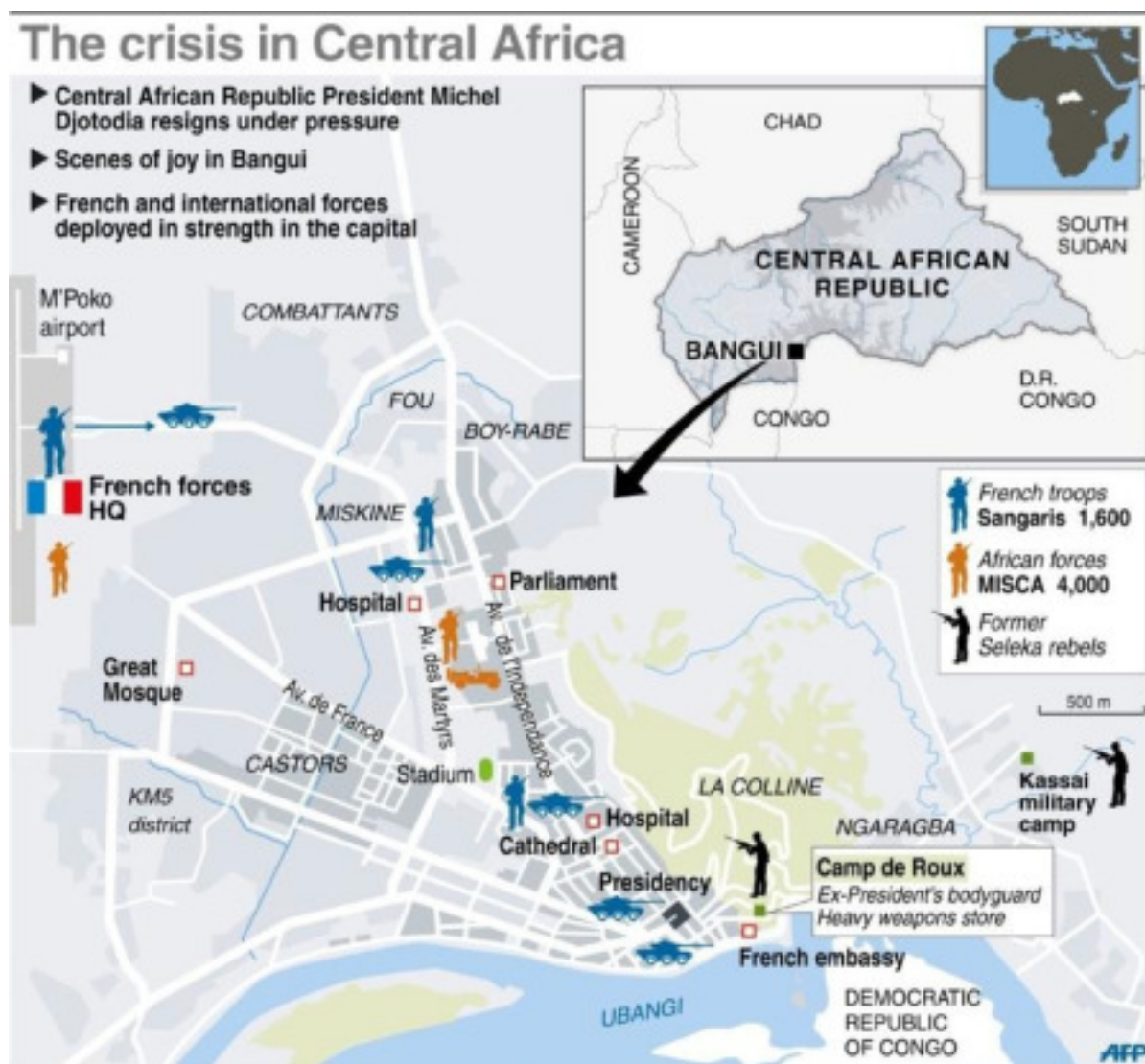
The armed rebel coalition Seleka has renewed its offensive against President Francois Bozize’s government and has taken control of the capital, Bangui. With Michel Djotodia officially sworn into office on August 18, security throughout the country has continued to deteriorate. Reports of rebel activity, 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

- **16 January 2014** – According to a compiled toll from the Red Cross on Thursday, at least seven people were killed in overnight clashes in the CAR’s capital Bangui. The renewed violence comes as the country’s transitional parliament was meeting to elect a new interim president after Michel Djotodia resigned last week under intense regional pressure. Some residents of the northern district of the capital, where the bloodshed took place, have accused French soldiers of shooting people during a search. However while the French army has acknowledged that there has been a clash, it has denied any links with the deaths. A military source has stated, “at the end of yesterday afternoon we were challenged by unidentified armed elements. We fired back but there is no confirmation of the toll. The three dead have nothing to do with the clash. Tensions remain high in the capital city, where French troops are patrolling in a bid to quell unrest that has continued to increase between Muslim former rebels and the Christian majority.
- **13 January 2014** – On Monday, officials at the Red Cross warned that new sectarian violence has erupted in the CAR, stating that at least 127 people had been killed in the past three days despite the new interim president telling fighters that “the party is over.” Even as interim leader Alexandre-Ferdinand Nguendet vowed to end the “anarchy” that has gripped the country since his predecessor seized power last March, the local Red Cross has reported that Christian-Muslim fighting has continued, resulting the deaths of scores of civilians. The head of the Central African Red Cross, Antoine Mbaobogo indicated on Monday that clashes had broken out in various towns after residents took to the streets to celebrate the resignation of coup-leader Michel Djotodia. According to Mr. Mbaobogo, the latest violence occurred in the northwestern town of Bozoum, where 97 people were killed and 107 wounded. He added that the victims had died during fighting between Christian militia groups, known as “anti-balaka” and ex-members of banned rebel coalition Seleka. He further indicated that at least 912 houses had been burnt in Bozoum and that 14,000 people had fled their homes. In turn, Mr Mbaobogo indicated that 25 bodies have been collected in the capital, Bangui, and five in M’Bata, in the southwest, where celebrations after Djotodia’s resignation later descended into clashes between Christians and Muslims.
- **11 January 2014** – Despite the resignation of the CAR’s president, deadly violence broke out overnight in Bangui. According to the head of the Central African Red Cross, Antoine Mbaobogo, sporadic gunfire erupted in the capital, killing at least three people, a Christian vigilante, an ex-Seleka rebel and a civilian. Reports have also indicated that there has been widespread looting in the city, with crowds breaking down the doors of shops, many of them belonging to Muslims, effectively reflecting the sectarian strife that continues in the CAR.
- **10 January 2014** - The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has indicated that following appeals from neighboring countries, on Saturday it will start to airlift thousands of people out of the CAR. A statement issued by the IOM has indicated that more than 60,000 people from other African nations have requested help at their embassies in the CAR, adding that requests had come from Chad, Niger, Mali, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Francois Goemans, head of the IOM team in the CAR indicated that the first evacuation flight was expected to take off after 18:00 local time (17:00 GMT) and would be carrying 320 mostly Chadian nationals, adding that they are among some 2,500 Chadians sheltering in a makeshift camp next to Bangui airport, “living in terrible conditions at the overcrowded and insanitary site.” Thousands of Chadians have already fled the country in recent weeks as they have faced violence in the CAR as some have accused them of backing anti-government rebels.

Domestic News

- **15 January 2014** – In Bangui, the country’s transitional parliament concluded its session Wednesday without finalizing the rules for its upcoming vote on a new interim president that will replace Mr Djotodia, who stepped down Friday under international pressure over his failure to rein

in his ex-rebels and to stem the escalating violence. Speaking shortly after the end of the session, Lea Kouyassoum Doumt, the transitional ruling body's vice president, stated that a lack of finalizing the rules "...risks delaying the timeline," adding that "the election could be held Sunday or Monday." One of the rules that is under consideration would bar anyone from running who has been in a rebel group or militia in the past twenty years. According to one lawmaker, this would mean that a lot of people in the CAR would not be eligible to run for president as the country has had a long history of coups and rebellions since gaining independence from France in 1960. However the main stumbling block for the 135 lawmakers appears to be whether to acquiesce to international pressure to abstain from standing as candidates themselves. Recently, Noel Essongo, representative for a committee on the crisis that represents France, the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), told lawmakers to step aside, stating, "the international community calls on the National Transitional Council not to act as judge and jury in an essential election for the strategic continuation of one transition." Essongo further noted "we invite the National Transitional Council to contribute to peaceful and transparent elections by adopting consensual criteria and excluding all its members from running." In response to these requests, one member of the transitional parliament stated, "international donors and ECCAS are making demands. They give us "opinions," but we have the impression they are twisting our arms." In turn, although current interim leader Alexandre-Ferdinand Nguendet, the speaker of parliament, had seemed to be in campaign mode in recent days, on Wednesday he confirmed that he would not run for interim president. Parliamentary sources have indicated that an agreement should be reached during a public plenary session on Thursday and that once the details were settled, the CNT could consider potential candidates and then elect a new leader either at the end of this week or by next Monday.

- **10 January 2014** – The Central African Republic's President Michel Djotodia has resigned at a regional summit that is aimed at ending the violence that has engulfed the country. Prime Minister Nicolas Tiengaye has also announced his resignation. The announcement, which was released in a statement by the ten-nation Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), was met with jubilant scenes throughout the CAR's capital city Bangui. Shortly after the announcement was made, French Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian called for a replacement for Mr. Djotodia "as soon as possible." On the ground in the CAR, French tanks have been deployed around the presidential palace in Bangui in order to prevent protests. Sources have indicated that on Friday, just before 0300 GMT, the regional leaders suspended their talks and requested that the CAR interim parliament draft a deal for President Djotodia and Prime Minister Nicolas Tiengaye to step down. Over the past few weeks, Djotodia has come under fire for failing to stem the spiralling violence between mainly Muslim former rebels who brought him to power last year and militias formed by the Christian majority. Although he is due to step down when a transition period expires in a year's time, his inability to rein in chaos across the country has prompted calls for a swifter change in leadership. Over the past few days, regional leaders, and the CAR's entire parliament, gathered in neighbouring Chad in a bid to end sectarian violence that has engulfed the country. Chadian President Idriss Deby, who had stark words, seen by many as a push to remove Djotodia, or at least to curb his powers, opened the summit. During his opening statement on Thursday, Chad's president indicated that "the CAR is suffering from the actions of its own sons, who are dragging their country down into a war that jeopardises its future." President Deby called for "concrete and decisive action" to halt the violence that has pitted Muslims against Christian self-defence militias and which has resulted in the death of more than 1,000 people in the past month. On Thursday, ECCAS secretary general Allami Ahmat, a former Chadian foreign minister, stated "the solution must come from the Central Africans themselves," adding that "neither ECCAS nor the international community have come to change the regime....It is up to those responsible (in the CAR) to decide the fate of their country." All 135 lawmakers from the CAR flew to Chad on Thursday, where they were ordered by African leaders at the summit to draw up a proposal on their president Michel Djotodia's future. As the high-stake talks took place in N'djamena, thousands of residents in the Central African capital Bangui took to the streets, demanding that

Djotodia resign. Regional leaders are anxious to stem the crisis as there are fears that the unrest extends beyond the CAR's borders. Officials at the United Nations have warned that both ex-Seleka rebels and CAR former soldiers have crossed into the volatile Democratic Republic of Congo, causing local residents to flee. Mr Djotodia, the CAR's first Muslim leader, seized power in March of last year. Since then, twenty per cent of the population have fled their homes amidst intense fighting between Christian and Muslim militias. Since December 2013, and the arrival of more region peacekeepers and French troops, around 1,000 people have died in sectarian clashes. Many villages are now deserted and over the past month, the number of those who have fled the home has doubled, including almost half of those living in the capital Bangui. Furthermore, while mass slaughters have mostly ceased in Bangui itself, amidst frequent patrols carried out by peacekeepers, sporadic killings carry on almost every night. Officials at the United Nations have warned of an impending humanitarian disaster. Some 100,000 people have set up camp in one tent city near Bangui airport, close to the peacekeepers base. UNICEF has warned of a potential disaster in overcrowded camps in and around the capital city, where there have already been several cases of measles, which could be deadly. European Union nation states are considering whether to join in the French and African peacekeeping operations in the country, with a meeting on the issue scheduled for Friday.

Regional Reporting

- **16 January 2014** – In what is to be the second such operation in support of the African Union's efforts to stem on going violence in the CAR, a US official announced on Wednesday that the US military will soon begin flying Rwandan troops into the CAR, with the mission possibly beginning as soon as Thursday. According to the US official, the airlift operation could last just over a month and would involve two US military C-17 aircraft. The airlift mission would be similar to the one carried out by the US when it flew forces from Burundi into the CAR late last year. The US aircraft will likely fly out of Uganda and into Rwanda's capital Kigali, where they will load before proceeding onto Bangui in the CAR. The announcement of the US mission follows a report by Rwanda's foreign minister who indicated that the country would send around 800 troops to the CAR.
- **15 January 2014** – The African Union (AU) has called for more troops in order to help stabilize the CAR, which remains tense as its transitional parliament prepares to elect a new interim president. As lawmakers have struggled to reach agreement on the rules ahead of this Saturday's vote, raising the prospects of a delay, an AU official has stated to leaders from the continent's Great Lakes region that the AU-backed MISCA force requires more troops. Speaking during a summit in Angola, AU special representative for the Great Lakes, Boubacar Diarra, stated "the AU calls on your authority to provide the means for MISCA...to comfortably pursue its mandate," urging the leaders present at the summit to help "definitely stabilize the situation" in the CAR. The force, which currently has 4,400 soldiers but which is meant to have upwards of 6,000 troops, is struggling to contain the country's sectarian violence. However despite the call for more troops, the leaders concluded their meeting without reaching a firm decision on deploying additional soldiers. Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos, whose country is currently head of the 12-nation International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), indicated that emphasis should be on the strengthening of state institutions adding, "Angola...will focus its assistance on the humanitarian side to support the peace process and transition to democracy."

International Developments

- **10 January 2014** – European Union (EU) nations have agreed on a plan to launch a joint military operation in Central Africa that is aimed at helping restore security there amidst fears of civilian massacres. Ambassadors from the twenty-eight-member states gave preliminary approval to plans for the rapid deployment of hundreds of troops to help African and French peacekeepers already on the ground restore "a safe and secure environment" in the CAR. A spokesman for EU

foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton noted, “member states agreed that the EU should contribute to the restoration of security,” adding “there will be further talks next week.” A final decision on the matter is expected to be taken by the bloc’s foreign ministers at talks that will be held in Brussels on January 20. With the CAR’s institutions in disarray, the plan favoured by EU states would see troops from Europe take on policing duties in the capital while protecting refugees and aid workers, and possibly safeguarding the airport. The intervention however would be limited in time and would be subject to approval by the United Nations. EU officials have suggested dispatching “rapidly” a force numbering around 1,000 troops.

- **8 January 2014** – On Wednesday, Rwanda announced that it will send some 800 troops to the CAR next week, as part of an African Union (AU) force to help restore security. The announcement was confirmed by Foreign Minister Louise Mushikiwabo who stated “our troops will arrive in CAR in about ten days. AU asked us for a battalion which is about 800 soldiers.” The confirmation of deployment comes after officials in Rwanda announced last month that it would send troops but had not specified how many would be deployed or when. Foreign Minister Mushikiwabo acknowledged that the problems in the CAR were “very complex” but stressed that Kigali’s stated policy was to “contribute to global peacekeeping.” The minister added that the troops are being briefed about the terrain and the conflict and the non-French speakers are receiving language training. The AU force in the CAR is due to be 6,000 strong at full strength, and is currently working alongside some 1,600 French troops. By late December 2013, more than 4,000 troops were already deployed, with 850 Burundians, 800 Cameroonians, 850 from Congo Republic, 850 from the Democratic Republic of Congo, 500 from Gabon, 200 from Equatorial Guinea and 850 Chadian. European Union nations are considering a joint military operation in the CAR to help the African and French troops who are already deployed.
- **7 January 2014** – French Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian indicated on Tuesday that there is currently no need to send reinforcement to the CAR, where France already has 1,600 troops deployed to help defuse the sectarian violence. Speaking to reporters while visiting an airbase in southern France, Le Drian stated “given the current state of things, there are no particular reasons to send reinforcements” to Bangui. He further noted that the situation regarding troops needs would become clearer when the African force gets up to full strength next month.



No travel restrictions

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.

Domestic News

- 8 January 2014** – Authorities in Equatorial Guinea have denied reports that its borders with Cameroon and Gabon were officially closed on 1 January however local residents have reported that the border was last open on 31 December 2013. Reports have also indicated that hundreds of Cameroonians are waiting to cross the border post at Kye-Ossi. Furthermore, a government spokesman has indicated that the country is not ready to implement a deal on the free movement of citizens in the regional bloc. Frederico Abaga Ondo has stated that it had been agreed that before the free movement deal came into force, regional passports were to be introduced and immigration officers trained, adding, “none of these have been done.” The six-nation Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) agreed to abolish visas from 2014. Officials from Equatorial Guinea have previously said that the free movement of CEMAC citizens would undermine efforts to provide employment for its own citizens.
- 6 January 2014** – Hundreds of Cameroonians have been forcefully expelled from Equatorial Guinea for being in the country illegally. They have indicated that their properties have been seized and that valid transit documents have not been recognized. However reports have indicated that part of this issue appears to be related to the refugees fleeing the violence in the CAR. The border town of Campo, located in south western Cameroon, has seen hundreds of Cameroonians returning from Equatorial Guinea in recent weeks after they were forcefully expelled. Despite a number of Cameroonians in Equatorial Guinea having acquired a Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) passports, reports have indicated that officials in Equatorial Guinea have not recognized this as an official document. Last year, CEMAC heads of state agreed to cancel visa requirements and to begin issuing CEMAC biometric passports in August in order to promote better regional economic integration between Cameroon, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, the Central African Republic, Gabon, and Congo Brazzaville. Cameroonian officials have confirmed the issue of CEMAC passports not being recognized in Equatorial Guinea, stating that this is an on going problem.

No travel restrictions



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.

On the Ground Analysis

- 14 January 2014** – A newspaper editor in Gambia has confirmed that two of its journalists have been arrested after reporting that nineteen supporters of President Yayha Jammeh's ruling party had defected to the opposition. Madou Joof, the managing editor of The Voice newspaper, indicated on Tuesday that its reporter and publisher Musa Sherrif and freelance journalist Sainey Marenah were arrested Monday in connection with the story which was published last month. A statement released by the International Federation of Journalists further indicated that Mr Sheriff was arrested at his office, while Mr Marenah turned himself in. The statement also noted that officers had indicated that they "received a directive" from president Jammeh indicating not to grant the journalists bail. On 1 January 2014, President Jammeh lifted bans that his government had imposed on The Standard newspaper and a community radio station, however media groups indicate that his administration continues to routinely restrict press freedom.



No travel restrictions

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

- **7 January 2014** – Ghana's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration has confirmed that Ghana will be contributing troops for peacekeeping operations in South Sudan. Hana Tetteh, who spoke at a forum in Accra as part of activities marking the first anniversary of President John Dramani Mahama's government, indicated that Ghana was committed to the maintenance of peace in Africa. The deployment of the Ghana battalion follows a request from the United Nations Secretary-General to Ghana for help in keeping the peace and to assist with the humanitarian efforts.

International Developments

- **8 January 2014** – On Wednesday, China's Foreign Minister indicated that Beijing is tackling illegal gold mining in Ghana, after hundreds of his compatriots were arrested and sent home for extracting the mineral without permission. Wang Yi, who is currently on a four-nation tour of Africa, told reporters after meeting his Ghanaian counterpart Hannah Tetteh in Accra, that China took the issue "very seriously." However he urged both countries to work more closely together in order to take further stern measures on the problem. While improvements had already been made, Mr Yi called for increased cooperation to make the sector "more standardised, orderly and sustainable," adding, "the Chinese government will encourage reputable and equitable finance companies to

come to Ghana to be involved in the resource sector and we hope the government of Ghana will provide the support and facilitation to these companies.” Mr Yi began his Africa tour this week in Ethiopia and Djibouti. After Ghana, he is due to visit Senegal. Illegal mining in Ghana, particularly of gold, has become a major issue and has also raised concerns about water pollution and environmental damage. Last year, hundreds of people, most of them from China, were detained as the government began enforcing a law barring foreign nationals from engaging in small-scale mining operations. Ghana is Africa’s second-largest gold producer after South Africa, and Chinese nationals have in particular flocked to the country in search of the yellow metal and their fortune. Some Chinese, many of them from Shanglin County, in Guangxi province, which also has a tradition of gold mining, have agreed to voluntarily leave however others have been repatriated. China is currently looking for new markets, particularly in Africa, to fund and fuel its growing economy, with oil and natural resources high on its list. China has indicated that its exports to Ghana in 2012 stood at US 4.79 billion, up from US \$3.11 billion in the previous twelve months, while imports nearly doubled in the same period from US \$363.2 million to US \$643.6 million.

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

- 19 January 2014** – On Saturday, Guinea's President Alpha Conde announced that he had reinstated his Prime Minister, just three days after accepting his resignation to make way for a new administration following parliamentary elections. On Wednesday, Mohamed Said Fofana was quoted in a presidential statement as announcing that he and his government were stepping down. However in a decree broadcast on Saturday, President Conde indicated that Fofana would be reassuming his post. No further details have been provided.
- 15 January 2014** – On Wednesday, Guinea's Prime Minister stepped down and handed in the resignation of his cabinet as part of a transition to a new government after the recent held elections. While the resignation was confirmed by the office of President Alpha Conde, Guineans had been expecting this move after the president had referred to the formation of a new government in his New Year speech. The resignation comes two days after Guinea's new intake of lawmakers entered parliament for its first session following widely-contested elections in September, with former banker Claude Kory Koundiano elected president of the chamber. The 28 September polls gave Conde's Rally of the Guinean People party, and its junior partners, an absolute majority in the 114-member parliament however the ballot came under heavy criticism

from opposition parties. The opposition coalition has alleged “massive fraud,” and has claimed that the elections were marred by irregularities including ballot stuffing, voter intimidation and minors casting votes. The opposition coalition’s criticism was similar to feedback provided by international observers who at the time noted that serious flaws had affected the credibility of the vote. Anti-government demonstrators have staged a number of protests in Guinea’s capital Conakry over a Supreme Court ruling in November that confirmed the results of the elections.



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

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

On the Ground Analysis

- 6 January 2014** – On Monday, Ivory Coast President Alassane Ouattara asked a group of traditional hunters, who have been blamed by the United Nations for summary executions and human rights abuses, to put an end to their paramilitary activities. Speaking to military leaders on Monday, Ouattara indicated that he had asked the defence and interior ministries to reach an agreement with the Dozos to “turn them away from regular armed forces.” The Dozos are traditional hunters linked to the Ivorian regime who have killed and maimed hundreds of people in the Ivory Coast over the past four years. The hunters come from the northern region of the Ivory Coast and fought in the rebellion that brought fellow northern Ouattara to power as president in 2011, just five months after the 2010 contested elections triggered violence that led to the deaths of 3,000 people. UN investigations have found that the Doze hunters killed at least 228 people and used guns and blades to wound another 164 between March 2009 and 2013. The UN has said there may be many more victims it does not know about, and has called for an end to the impunity enjoyed by the Dozos. A report released by the UN also indicated that Ivorian authorities have the duty to carry out investigations into their crimes. There are an estimated 50,000 Dozos in the country, and in some regions they act alongside Ivorian security forces.

Domestic News

- 10 January 2014** – On Friday, Japan’s Prime Minister Shinzo Abe arrived in Abidjan on the first stop of his Africa tour that aims to boost ties and business relations on a continent that has

developed into a key trading partner with China. Upon his arrival, the Ivory Coast's President Alassane Ouattara met Mr Abe at the airport. This is the first African visit by a Japanese head of government in eight years. The Japanese leader, who is accompanied by about fifty executives of major Japanese businesses, has hailed the Ivory Coast a regional economic power, stating that "Japanese businesses have great interest" in west Africa, which is a market of some 300 million people. While this trip by Mr Abe to the African continent will highlight efforts to create greater economic ties, Japan has been engaged in Africa for decades, particularly in financing peacekeeping missions. In June last year, during an international conference in Tokyo on development in Africa, Japan pledged 10.6 billion euros (US \$14.5 billion) in aid to the continent over five years. In 2009, China became Africa's top trading partner at 13.5 per cent, compared with trade at 2.7 per cent with Japan. Mr Abe's tour, which will also include Mozambique and Ethiopia, comes at the same time as a visit by China's foreign minister Wang Yi, who left Monday for Ethiopia, followed by visits in Djibouti, Ghana and Senegal.

Avoid ALL
travel to
part(s) of
country

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



Security Summary

Summary

MS Risk advises against all travel to Bamako. We also advise against all travel to the rest of Mali, especially to the northern regions of the country. Although Bamako is generally calm, the situation throughout the rest of the country is still volatile. Presidential elections were held on July 28 and August 11, and President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita and his new government took office in September 2013.

If you are in Bamako, MS Risk advises you to maintain a high level of vigilance, to keep a low profile and to stay alert to the local political developments. We also advise that you avoid sensitive areas, including military installations and large gatherings of people. Night time checkpoints continue to operate in Bamako, largely controlling access to military and government facilities. Checkpoints are in place from approximately 9PM until dawn.

During the rainy season, which runs from May until October, torrential rains can cause floods and landslides, and may result in houses collapsing. In late August, there were reports of flash flooding that occurred in Bamako. The neighborhoods of Bankoni, Taliko, Lafiabougou, Djicoroni Woyowayanko, Lafiabougou Bougouba and Bougoudani were all hit by floods during the rains storms which lasted most of the day. MS Risk advises anyone in the capital city to monitor the local weather reports and to expect difficulties when travelling to affected areas during this season.



Terrorism

There still remains a high threat from terrorism in Mali. No curfew is currently in place however MS Risk advises those in the country to monitor the local media for reports of any new measures.

Attacks could be indiscriminate, including in places that are frequented by expatriates and foreign travellers. There is also a high threat of kidnapping in Mali by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and by the splinter group, the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA). Although AQIM uses the northern region of Mali as an operating base, it has proven its capability of travelling long distances in order to carry out attacks, some of which have occurred in neighboring countries. As such the kidnap threat cannot be isolated within the northern regional stronghold. In turn, criminal gangs have previously been engaged to carry out kidnappings for terrorist groups in return for financial rewards. Subsequently attacks can take place throughout Mali.

There have been incidents of armed banditry, car-jacking, and kidnap in the northern regions of Mali. Bandits and smugglers are particularly active across the Mali-Algeria, Mali-Burkina Faso, Mali-Mauritania and Mali-Niger borders and pose a threat to travellers, especially after dark. Authorities in Mali have provided the following numbers in case of emergencies:

- 80 00 11 14
- 80 00 11 15
- 20 22 13 35
- 20 23 95 15
- 20 23 95 11

Kidnapping

In the past, a number of Westerners have been kidnapped by terrorists in Mali and in the Sahel region. Since 2008, over 25 Westerners have been kidnapped in the Sahel. Victims have included tourists, NGO workers and diplomats of a variety of nationalities, primarily European. These attacks have on occasion resulted in the murder of the hostages. The recent kidnapping of a French citizen in the western region of the country has come as a shock as the area where he was taken has been perceived as being stable and under governmental control. In the past, kidnap threats have typically emanated from the Azawad region in the north and east part of the county, as such this incident in the west has caused great concern. MS Risk forecasts that there will be an increased and sustained kidnap threat across Mali and in certain border-regions for some time to come. Incidents of kidnap are likely to occur for three primary reasons:

- For Ransom - insurgents will raise finances for future operations. With the impending ECOWAS operation, this is accelerating as a concern.
- Human Shields - Insurgents will kidnap persons in order to deter/reduce the risk of direct action by governmental forces against them.
- Ideological - Kidnappings will occur for political purposes.

Since the coup in March 2012, and due to the ongoing political unrest, MS RISK judges that there is a continued heightened threat of kidnap for ransom in Mali and as such further attacks and kidnappings are highly likely to occur. Furthermore, although it is difficult to forecast how severe this threat will emerge, all affected 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

- **17 January 2014** – Leaders of a Tuareg rebel group in northern Mali have withdrawn from negotiations with Mali's government scheduled to take place in Algeria after faulting the terms of the talks. On Friday, Attaye Ag Mohamed, a spokesman for the National Movement for the Liberation of the Azawad indicated that the organization's representatives had left Algeria shortly after concluding that the talks would emphasize reconciliation before addressing the group's political grievances. Over the past several months, the MNLA has continued to lobby for autonomy despite authorities in Bamako wanting to bolster the government's presence throughout the entire country, including in the disputed northern regions.
- **11 January 2014** – A spokesman for the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali has indicated that three peacekeepers have been wounded while pursuing suspects in an attack near a military camp in the country's northern region. Olivier Salgado indicated Saturday that a rocket attack had taken place on Friday evening in Aguel'hoc and that a battalion of Chadian peacekeepers participating in MINUSMA were put on patrol in order to search for the assailants. The spokesman further noted that the peacekeepers had exchanged fire with the gunmen, resulting in three Chadian peacekeepers being wounded and subsequently being taken to Gao for treatment.
- **10 January 2014** – On Friday, thirty-two Malian soldiers, who were arrested with ex-junta chief Amadou Sanogo, were freed six weeks after their arrest. A military source has confirmed their release, indicated that they were freed "...yesterday at 6:00PM according to a decision by the defence minister." According to one of their lawyers, Tiesolo Konare, the soldiers had been denied visits from friends or family and had been on hunger strike for three days prior to their release. Mr Konare further indicated that the group of Malian soldiers had been appointed by the Malian government to work for Sanogo just two weeks prior to their arrest, adding that they were freed on a decision by Defence Minister Soumeylou Boubeye Maiga. Mr Konare has stated that he has filed a complaint on behalf of the soldiers for kidnap, adding that "the 32 were not even presented before a judge, much less given trials." Sanogo, leader of a 22 March 2012 coup, which overthrew President Amadou Toumani Toure, has been accused of complicity in kidnapping.
- **6 January 2014** – On Monday, officials in Bamako and Dakar confirmed that both Mali and Senegal have repatriated hundreds of their nationals fleeing sectarian violence in the Central African Republic. In the Malian capital Bamako, the minister in charge of expatriating Malians, Abdramane Sylla, along with two other officials, welcomed a group of nearly 270 people who returned in a plane chartered by their government. Mali's ambassador to Gabon, Diadie Yacouba Dagnoko, who travelled with the evacuees from Bangui, put their exact number at 267. Sylla indicated that another flight to repatriate the same number of Malians will take place on Tuesday, adding that more flights could be added as about 3,000 Malians were living the CAR. However so far, only over 500 have signalled that they wanted to return to Mali. Most of those repatriated were women and children, many born in the troubled country to Malian-origin parents who had been living there for a long time.

International Developments

- **16 January 2014** – A unit of Chinese soldiers arrived in Mali on Thursday in order to strengthen the United Nations peacekeeping force in the West African nation. According to a foreign diplomatic source in Bamako, 245 Chinese troops will join a 150-strong contingent which has been stationed, since December, in Gao. While MINUSMA is made up largely of troops from African states, last May, China offered to support the mission by deploying more than 500 troops in what was to be its largest contribution to UN peacekeeping. UN peacekeepers took over security in July last year from the pan-African AFISMA military mission, which had been supporting French troops who had entered Mali in January. Although France is currently winding down its deployment of troops, from a peak of 5,000 soldiers, it will maintain a force of 1,000 troops in Mali beyond the Spring. UN officials have acknowledged that peacekeepers in Mali continue to face threats of guerrilla attacks and that they will encounter a number of logistical difficulties in northern Mali's harsh environment, where water is scarce and temperature soars above 40 degrees Celsius.
- **10 January 2014** – International Monetary Fund (IMF) chief Christine Lagarde indicated on Friday that there was "great hope" for Mali's future, predicting a healthy GDP growth of 6.6 per cent and praising the country's management of its economy. During her statement, Lagarde noted that the Malian government had demonstrated prudence in managing to maintain economic stability despite being upended by a coup which opened the door for an Islamist incursion and French-led military intervention to restore democracy a year ago. During a news conference in Bamako, Lagarde further noted that she is "...very hopeful given the perseverance and courage of the people of Mali. I trust in the authorities of the country. The IMF has been, is and will remain a committed economic development partner of Mali." Lagarde, who is completing a three-day visit to the West African nation, also stated that the gradual resumption of international aid and business investment was gradually helping Mali back onto its feet, adding that "we expect that real GDP growth will be 6.6 per cent in 2014, thanks to a rebound in agricultural production, recovery in the service sector and the revival of construction projects."
- **8 January 2014** – French President Francois Hollande announced on Wednesday that France will cut its troops in Mali to 1,600 by the middle of next month from the current level of 2,500. Speaking at an airbase in Creil, in northern France, Hollande stated that the "situation is well under control" in Mali, where the "key objectives of the mission have been accomplished." He added, "the troops size will be reduced from about 2,500 at present to 1,600 and then to 1,000 which is the number necessary to fight any threat that might resurface as these terrorist groups are still present in northern Mali." France launched the military Operation Serval in its former colony on 11 January 2013 in a bid to repel an Islamist militant advance following a coup. The intervention has been widely hailed as a success internationally for stopping al-Qaeda-linked militants and Tuareg rebels from descending south of the sprawling country and advancing on the capital Bamako.



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

- **10 January 2014** – Riots took place in Mauritania's second largest city of Nouadhibou late Friday following reports of the extradition of a man to France after he was accused of offending Islam's prophet Muhammad. Mohamed al-Sheikh Ould Mohamed created controversy last month after posting an article, deemed critical of the prophet, on his Facebook page. The article was later republished by a leftist newspaper, provoking anger in a number of the country's political parties and leading to the Mr Mohamed's arrest. Although he was jailed for fifteen days pending an investigation into the allegations, on Friday, reports circulated that the man was extradited to France. This prompted many Mauritians to take to the streets in protest, with some demonstrations turning violent and leaving three cars torched and several shops looted. This is the second demonstration pertaining to the case to occur in a week. Last week, thousands of angry Mauritians attempted to break into a courthouse in Nouadhibou in order to pressure the judges to speed up the trial of the suspect.

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

- **14 January 2014** - A car bomb has exploded in the north eastern Nigerian city of Maiduguri, with fears that the latest attack to target the region has left many casualties. At least seventeen people were killed on Tuesday when an explosion targeted a busy market on the public holiday that marks the birth of the Prophet Mohammed. Police officials have indicated that the explosion occurred at about 1:30 PM (1230 GMT) around the post office area of Maiduguri, which has been hit previously by Boko Haram militants. According to Lawan Tanko, police chief for Borno state, "from our preliminary reports, we have 17 dead and at least five injured from the blast in the post office area," however he warned that the toll could rise as casualties were taken from the bustling market to medical centers for treatment, adding that "these figures are likely to change by the time we get full reports from our men in the field. Initial reports at the scene suggest that the blast was caused by either a car bomb or suicide bomber, however there has not yet been any confirmations from the authorities. Police Chief Tanko has noted that "the bomb was detonated in the midst of a large crowd of traders while a truck carrying firewood was passing by." A witness to the bombing stated that "an explosive device concealed in a sack was abandoned near a butcher's stall by unknown persons around Kasuwar Jagwal." The explosion caused panic in the city, where residents were in the midst of celebrating Eid Milad un Nabi. While the market has since been closed, with police officers carrying out investigations, the rest of the city remains on high alert as possible attacks and suicide bombings may be carried out in the coming days. Over the past several weeks, Maiduguri has witnessed a number of attacks. On 2 December 2013, the northern spiritual home city of Boko Haram was raided by Boko Haram insurgents who burnt aircraft, seized weapons and razed buildings at military bases throughout the city. On Sunday, suspected Boko Haram gunmen killed five at a village market located 22 kilometers from Maiduguri. During the attack, the militants burnt cars, shops and tents storing grain. UPDATE (15 January 2014) – Police in Maiduguri have confirmed that a total of nineteen people were killed in a car bomb attack on a busy market in northeastern Nigeria. Lawan Tanko, police commissioner of Borno state, has indicated "from the latest tally at our disposal, the death toll stands at 19." While some reports have suggested that up to thirty people were killed in the explosion, Mr Tanko has dismissed the claims, adding that there was no precise figure on the number of injured as many people had been taken to different hospitals and private clinics. On Tuesday, Nigeria's military blamed the attack on Boko Haram militants.

- 13 January 2014** – On Monday, witnesses reported that suspected Boko Haram gunmen had attacked a market in restive north eastern Nigeria, killing five and injuring many more. According to local residents, more than thirty attackers armed with guns, explosives and knives, stormed the market in Borno State. The attack occurred on Sunday, little more than a week after an assault on the same village in Borno that left nine people dead. The attackers burned cars, shops and tents storing grain during their rampage through the market which is known as Ladi Kayamuna and which is situated about 22 kilometres (14 miles) from the state capital Maiduguri. The latest incident to hit the north eastern region was confirmed by local army spokesman Mohammed Dole, however no further details have been provided.
- 10 January 2014** – Friday Nigeria’s military confirmed that it was to release 167 people who were detained as part of counter-insurgency operations against Boko Haram militants in three north eastern states. In a statement released Friday, Defence spokesman Chris Olukolade indicated that the suspects were to be freed after a directive from the presidency following their recommendation for release in December 2013. He added that a total of 157 people would be released from military facilities in Borno state, while nine would be released from Yobe and one from Adamawa. The statement further noted that “the suspects will be released to their respective state governments,” however no time frame has been announced. On 4 December 2013, Nigeria announced that 500 of the nearly 1,400 people who were arrested in security operations between July and September should be put on trial for terror offences. However the government at the time also indicated that 167 people should be released and the cases of 614 individuals should be reviewed, following the government’s appointment of a team to look at individual cases. Last May, President Goodluck Jonathan’s government announced that suspects held as part of military operations would be released in phases, starting with women and children.
- 9 January 2014** – Nigeria’s military indicated on Thursday that they had killed as many as thirty-eight Boko Haram fighters during counter-insurgency operations in the country’s northeast. Army spokesman Colonel Muhammad Dole indicated that during the early morning hours, troops on patrol had foiled a planned attack on local residents and a military camp in Damboa, Borno state. The army spokesman indicated, “while the encounter lasted, 38 Boko Haram terrorists were killed and some fled with various degrees of injuries,” adding that three vehicles were also destroyed. According to Mr Dole, one of the vehicles was found to have cylinders and improvised explosive devices. Weapons and ammunition, including machine guns, were also recovered. He added that one soldier was killed and two others were injured in the encounter, noting that “combined ground troops and Nigerian Air Force aircraft are tactically pursuing the fleeing terrorists in the on going operation in the general area od Damboa and surrounding villages.” Damboa is located nearly 90 kilometres (55 miles) southwest of the Borno state capital, Maiduguri.
- 6 January 2014** – On Monday, witnesses and survivors described how gunmen attacked a village in Central Nigeria, burning houses and animals in what is the latest outbreak of violence to hit the West African nation. While it was not immediately clear as to how many people were killed in the incident that took place in Shonong village, in the Riyom area of Plateau state, local residents have reported that at least thirty dies, many of them women and children, while another twenty-five were injured. State police chief Chril Olakpe confirmed the attack, which reportedly began at about 7:00 AM (0600 GMT), adding that investigations were on going. The state police chief however indicated “we have it on record that five people were killed and many houses were burnt in the attack.” Witnesses have reported that more than forty houses were burnt while domestic animals were either killed or taken away by the perpetrators who are suspected to be Hausa-Fulani herdsmen. The states of Plateau and Kaduna lie in Nigeria’s so-called Middle Belt, where the country’s majority Muslim north and predominantly Christian south meet. In December 2013, Human Rights Watch (HRW) indicated that more than 10,000 people had died in the two states as a result of violence that is mainly based on their religious or ethnic identity. The rights monitor added that several thousands of those had lost their lives since 2010. **Update (7 January 2014)** – On Tuesday, Nigerian police officials revised up from five to seventeen the death toll in a raid the that occurred the previous day when gunmen stormed a village in the central Plateau state.

Speaking to journalists, Plateau State police chief Chris Olakpe indicated that five of the victims had been burned beyond recognition while twenty houses were razed. Furthermore, police chief Olakpe denied accusations that security agents had failed to prevent the raid, with police boss and army captain Salisu Ibrahim Mustapha indicated that troops had deployed swiftly to the area in order to repel the attackers.

Domestic News

- **16 January 2014** – Nigeria’s President Goodluck Jonathan has fired his military high command. The move has been confirmed by his spokesman Reuben Abati, who indicated that Air Marshal Alex Badeh will replace Admiral Ola Ibrahim as the new chief of defence staff, which is the most senior post in the military. Mr Abati further noted that President Jonathan also appointed a new chief of army staff, replacing Lt Gen Azubike Ihejirika with Maj Gen Tobiah Minimah. Rear Admiral Usman Jibrin will take over from Vice Admiral Dele Joseph Ezeoba as chief of naval staff while Air Vice Marshal Adesola Nuanayon Amous will take over from Air Marshall Badeh as chief of air staff. The new appointments will come into effect immediately, adding that the president had briefed the leadership of the National Assembly on the changes “and will, in keeping with the provisions of the law, request the National Assembly to formally confirm the appointments when it reconvenes.” While so far, no reason has been given, the dismissal comes amidst growing concern about the military’s failure to end the Islamist-led insurgency in northern Nigeria. In turn, the dismissals are likely a show of power on the part of the President at a time when his leadership is being increasingly questioned within the governing People’s Democratic Party (PDP) ahead of the 2015 elections. Boko Haram has been waging a four-year insurgency in northern Nigeria. While President Jonathan imposed a state of emergency in three northern states in May 2013, giving the military wide-ranging powers to end the insurgency, Boko Haram militants have continued their violent campaign with incidents that include attacks on two military barracks and an air base last month. On Tuesday, the militant group carried out a car bomb attack in the north eastern city of Maiduguri, killing at least nineteen people. United Nations figures suggest that more than 1,200 people have been killed in Islamist-related violence since the state of emergency began.
 - Meanwhile a close ally of President Goodluck Jonathan, Bamanga Tukur, has resigned as chairman of the governing People’s Democratic Party (PDP). Reports have indicated that Mr Tukur had been under pressure to resign after the defection of several powerful PDP governors to the opposition. The announcement that Mr Tukur was stepping down was first announced by the President during a national executive committee meeting of the PDP on Thursday, where Mr Jonathan indicated that “we have some internal problems that have been agitating the mind of the people...For us to make sure that we rest these issues, the party chairman agreed to step aside.” While president Jonathan has indicated that the resignation should settle the divisions that have been occurring within his own party, many believe that the crisis within the PDP stems from Mr Jonathan’s undeclared intention to contest elections in 2015. In November of last year, the defection of an influential faction of state governors left the PDP with fewer governors than the opposition. Last month, the PDP lost its majority in the lower chamber of parliament after thirty-seven of its MP’s defected to the All Progressives Congress (APC) opposition party.
- **9 January 2014** – Sources have indicated that Nigeria’s president has requested that central bank chief Lamido Sanusi resign over a leaked letter pertaining to missing oil funds. However reports have revealed that Mr. Sanusi has refused to resign from his post, telling President Goodluck Jonathan that others could have leaked his memo about the state oil firm’s failure to account for US \$50 billion (£30 billion). Reports have indicated that Jonathan demanded the bank chief resignation over the phone, requesting that he leave by 31 December 2013. However Mr. Sanusi has refused to leave his post, indicating that about US \$10 billion (£6 billion) was still unaccounted for by the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). He also expressed surprise that those responsible were not being asked to resign instead. The missing funds were first referred to in ex-

President Olusegun Obasanjo's letter last month, where he criticized Jonathan's leadership. Jonathan has accused the Central bank governor of leading the letter to Mr Obasanjo after which the full letter was published in the Nigerian media. However Mr Sanusi has stated that the leak could have come from the presidency or ministry of finance and that the blame could not lie with him. In a rebuttal letter released before Christmas, Jonathan stated that Mr Obasanjo, who is also a member of the governing People's Democratic Party, was threatening "national security" by whipping up opposition to his administration. He dismissed allegations of "high corruption" in government, stating that Mr Sanusi's allegations were "spurious."

Regional Reporting

- **6 January 2014** – Nigeria has repatriated over 1,600 citizens who have sought refuge in its embassy in Bangui after fleeing violence in the CAR. According to a statement released by army spokesman Chris Olukolade, "the Federal Government has...arranged several chartered flights to bring home over 1,620 Nigerians who took refuge at the Nigerian Embassy in Bangui." According to army officials, the evacuation operation began Friday, and half of the Nigerian nationals have already been brought home.

International Developments

- **9 January 2014** – The United Kingdom and Nigeria have signed an agreement that will allow the transfer of prisoners between the two countries. The new agreement effectively means that citizens of one who commit crimes in the other will serve sentences in their homeland. The UK government has indicated that this means that inmates can be "properly prepared for release into the community in which they will live following their release." It is expected that the first prisoner transfers will take place before the end of this year. UK Justice Minister Jeremy Wright has stated "removing foreign national offenders is a key priority for the British government and the prisoner transfer agreement I signed this morning with the Nigerian attorney-general plays a significant role in supporting this," adding that "both the United Kingdom and Nigeria have prisoner transfer arrangements with other countries and it is right that our two countries, which have such strong ties and shared interests, should develop our own arrangements." The UK-Nigeria agreement was one of the objectives outlined by UK Prime Minister David Cameron and Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan following a meeting between the two heads of state in 2011.

No travel restrictions



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.

On the Ground Analysis

- 17 January 2014** – Senegalese soldiers wounded two students at a demonstration in the country's south after they shot in the air in a bid to disperse a crowd that had blocked traffic. In what is a rare altercation between the military and civilians, Witnesses reported that students had gathered in the town of Ziguinchor to push for improvements at their school in nearby Oulampane, calling for the hiring of more teachers and installing Internet at the school. One of the students was wounded in the chest while another was hit in the shoulder when soldiers fired live ammunition. The wounded protesters were later brought to a hospital in the capital, Dakar, for treatment. While Col. Abou Thiam has indicated that the military "regretted the incident," noting that an investigation has been launched, family members of those wounded are said to be planning to file a formal complaint against the soldiers.
- 6 January 2014** – On Monday, officials in Bamako and Dakar confirmed that both Mali and Senegal have repatriated hundreds of their nationals fleeing sectarian violence in the Central African Republic. According to the authorities in Dakar, the country had repatriated nearly 600 of its nationals in less than a week. Senegal's APS news agency has also reported that Dakar also evacuated Guinean, Malian and Gambian nationals trapped by the conflict in the CAR, however no official numbers as to how many were repatriated have been released.

Domestic News

- **10 January 2014** – On Friday, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi vowed that his country would "always be a champion" of African causes as he began a two-day trip to Senegal. Shortly after arriving in Dakar, on the final leg of a four-nation tour aimed at boosting trade links between Beijing and its partners on the continent, Mr Wang hailed the strengthened relationship between Beijing and Africa, noting that "the friendship between China and Africa will continue to deepen over time...in an atmosphere of pragmatism and openness." During a joint news conference with his Senegalese counterpart Mankeur Ndiaye, Mr Wang also indicated, "in its relations with African nations, China will promote justice. China will always be a champion of African nations and defend their interests." Recently, China has increasingly eyed Africa in order to fuel and fund its burgeoning economy, which, according to a government report, is estimated to have grown 7.5 per cent over the last year. Senior ministers and presidents Hu Jintao to Xi Jinping have personally courted African nations, with deals signed in sectors ranging from oil and gas to agriculture and infrastructure. Recent projects have Chinese-funded infrastructure projects such as Senegal's national theatre, which was constructed in 2011. Other China-backed projects in Senegal include a national arena and a 150-kilometre (93 mile) highway that connects Dakar to the central city of Touba. According to the Chinese embassy in Dakar, trade between Senegal and China increased by 20 per cent in the 12 months leading up to August 2013. However Beijing has often been accused of focusing on the potential profits from Africa's vast mineral wealth at the expense of human rights.

International Developments

- **9 January 2014** – On Thursday, Russia demanded the immediate release of a trawler and its crew which were seized by Senegal for alleged illegal fishing off the country's coast. During a meeting with Senegal's acting charge d'affaires, Russian diplomats made "a firm demand to the Senegalese authorities to immediately release the Russian fishing trawler, Oleg Naydenov, and its crew." A spokesman for the Russian government, Alexander Lukashovich, stated that Senegal's charge d'affaires, Mamadou Dieng, assured him that officials in Dakar would "make every possible effort to resolve the situation," adding that Moscow is "counting on a speedy resolution of the incident in the spirit of traditionally friendly Russian and Senegalese relations." On January 4, armed Senegalese naval officers boarded the vessel, which has a crew that is composed of Russian and Guinea-Bissau nationals, off the country's Atlantic coast, accusing it of fishing in Senegalese waters without a permit. On Thursday, a spokesman for Russia's fisheries agency, Alexander Savelyev stated that the Russian-flagged vessel was in Guinea-Bissau's waters when it was seized. On Sunday, Senegal's fisheries ministry indicated that it plans to fine Russia about 600,000 euros (US \$800,000). The vessel is currently being held under armed guard in Dakar and so far, talks between the two sides have not reached a resolution. Senegal has for years been battling to contain unauthorized fishing in its waters by foreign trawlers, blamed for depleting fish stocks, undermining the environment and endangering the livelihoods of local small-scale fishermen. According to Senegal's fisheries minister, Haidar Eli Ali, at least three Russian trawlers have been caught fishing illegally in Senegalese waters in the last few days. **UPDATE (10 January 2014)** – On Friday, Senegal presented Moscow with the case against a Russian vessel seized and accused of illegal fishing in the West African nation's waters. Over the past several days, officials in Moscow have accused Senegal of engaging in "piracy" after naval officers arrested sixty-two of its nationals on the fishing trawler last week. During a joint news conference with his visiting Chinese counterpart Wang Yi, Senegalese Foreign minister Mankeur Ndiaye told reporters that "Russia wanted to have elements of information on the legality of the operation that was conducted. We provided all pieces of information based on video footage and maps." The vessel, the Oleg Naydenov, was detained on January 4 after officials in Senegal accused it of repeatedly fishing in its waters without a permit. The incident has sparked a diplomatic row with Russia, with

officials in Moscow viewing it as discrimination against its nationals. In turn, the trawlers captain has complained of being refused the right to see a doctor while a Moscow delegation in Dakar has accused Senegalese officials of denying them meetings or explanations about the case.