



MS | RISK

West Africa Report

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

February 17 – March 2, 2014



About MS Risk

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MS Risk is always mindful and compliant to legislation and guidelines on the use of private security services including, but not limited to the US FCPA (1977), UK Bribery Act (2010), Canadian Bill C-48 (2007), ASX 8 Corporate Governance Principles, and the World Bank/IFC Voluntary Principles on the Use of Government and Private Security Forces. MS Risk is a signatory of the Swiss government's International Code of Conduct. It is transparent and compliant to market expectations on legal and ethical conduct in the performance of services.

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

References are always available.
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Summary

February 17 – March 2, 2014



Guinea

- **27 February 2014** – Riots continued in Guinea's capital city and in a mining town located further north over the deaths of two teenagers in separate incidents.
- **18 February 2014** – At least two people were killed and thirty others injured in Guinea's capital city Conakry on Tuesday when protests against frequent power cuts turned violent and the offices of a Brazilian construction firm were attacked.

Guinea-Bissau

Domestic News

- **26 February 2014** – On Wednesday, the United Nations Security Council urged Guinea-Bissau's transitional government to abide to the announced election plans, warning that sanctions would be imposed on those who oppose a return to constitutional order.
- **21 February 2014** – On Friday, Guinea-Bissau announced that presidential and parliamentary elections, to end a period of political instability, which began with a coup two years ago, will be held on 13 April 2014.

Ivory Coast

- **23 February 2014** – At least four Ivorian soldiers and several attackers were killed when suspected gunmen from Liberia raided a border town in the western region of the country.

Mali

On the Ground Reporting

- **26 February 2014** – Military sources have indicated that at least two people were injured on Wednesday when a United Nations vehicle hit a mine in the restive north of Mali.
- **24 February 2014** – Mali's top prosecutor indicated on Monday that five bodies were discovered in two graves near a military barracks outside the capital city.
- **18 February 2014** – According to sources who attended the on going UN-led preliminary talks in Mali's capital city, Mali's rebels have agreed to confine members of their armed groups to barracks.

Regional Reporting

- **18 February 2014** – On Tuesday, Morocco's King Mohammed VI arrived in Mali for a five-day tour to support the country's peace process.

International Developments

- **21 February 2014** – According to the Czech Defence Ministry's state secretary Daniel Kostoval, Czech soldiers may join the UN peace mission in Mali.
- **19 February 2014** – According to a statement released Wednesday, France and Germany will send parts of a joint military brigade to Mali in its first deployment to Africa.

Nigeria

On the Ground Reporting

- **1 March 2014** – Suspected militants have shot dead at least thirty-nine people in an attack on a village in northeastern Nigeria.
 - Meanwhile in Maiduguri, at least thirty-five people have been killed following two explosions in a crowded neighborhood.

- **27 February 2014** – Witnesses reported Thursday that scores of suspected Boko Haram militants, armed with grenade launchers and explosives, razed a town in Nigeria's northeastern region, killing two people, including a child.
- **25 February 2014** - Suspected Boko Haram militants carried out an attack on a school in northern Nigeria.
- **23 February 2014** – On Sunday, suspected Boko Haram gunmen returned to a village in northeastern Nigeria, where 106 people were killed last week, and torch homes and to shoot and set off explosives.
- **20 February 2014** – Gunmen have killed thirteen people, including nine children, in a raid on a village in central Nigeria.
- **19 February 2014** – Suspected Boko Haram militants armed with explosives attacked a town in Nigeria's northeastern region on Wednesday, sparking a battle with soldiers that killed a large number of insurgents.
 - Meanwhile, in a new video released on Wednesday, the leader of Boko Haram, Abubakar Shekau, has threatened to carry out attacks in Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta.

Domestic News

- **18 February 2014** – On Tuesday, a presidential spokesman indicated that Nigeria is winning the war against Boko Haram militants in the restive northeast, dismissing suggestions that the insurgents were having the upper hand.

International Developments

- **27 February 2014** – On Thursday, French President Francois Hollande stated that France stand should-to-shoulder with Nigeria in its battle against Boko Haram, vowing to support its fight against Islamist militancy as it has done in Mali.

Security Summaries for West African States

Benin

Although there is currently no travel advisory for Benin, MS Risk advises all travellers to the country to remain vigilant. There is currently a low threat from terrorism. There have been incidents of mugging, personal assault and carjacking in Cotonou. Armed robberies have also been reported in other areas, most notably in those regions that border Nigeria.

Burkina Faso – Page 10

Gambia

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

Ghana

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.

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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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Mauritania – Page 23

Niger

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.

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Senegal

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

Sierra Leone

There is currently no travel advisory for Sierra Leone. Violent incidents have taken place under cover of crowds in the streets of Freetown. There are also occasional small riots between rival groups of youths in the central and eastern areas of Freetown. If you encounter such an incident, you should leave the area immediately. There is a low threat from terrorism. There is a possibility that retaliatory attacks may be carried out in Sierra Leone. This is due to the country's participation in the intervention in Mali. During the rainy season, May to October, roads can become extremely difficult,

even for off-road vehicles. On 9 August a bridge in the capital city of Freetown collapse due to a landslide caused by heavy rain. At least six people were killed in the accident. MS Risk therefore advises all travellers in the country to exercise due caution when travelling by road throughout the season.

Togo

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

Burkina Faso

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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

Security Summary



Any body traveling to, or residing in, Burkina Faso is urged to maintain a high level of security awareness at all times. While the political situation remains generally stable, since February 2011, there have been an increasing number of demonstrations.

Threats and Concerns

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

Kidnapping Threats

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

Guinea

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



Security Summary

At least two deaths, several injuries and destruction of property were reported during riots that broke out in the eastern suburbs of Conakry on 18 February 2014. Since then, riots have continued throughout the capital city and in nearby towns. The riots and protests are a result of frequent power cuts. Further such violence is likely to continue over the coming weeks. Violence has broken out in Kankan, in the “Upper Guinea” region in the east of the country. At least three deaths have been reported since 14 December as well as a number of injuries and destruction of property. MS Risk advises all travellers to avoid this region of the country as further instability is likely to continue. The results of the 28 September legislative elections have been released, with the final results being confirmed on 15 November. So far, there have been reports of one death and several injuries as a result of riots that occurred in Conakry over the weekend of 16 and 17 November. Further riots and spontaneous demonstrations are possible, consequently MS Risk advises to remain vigilant, to monitor local media and to avoid large gatherings. There is currently a low threat from terrorism. Nearly 100 people were reported to have been killed in July in an outbreak of ethnic violence in the “Guinea Forestiere” region in the far south-east of Guinea. A large number of injuries were also reported and properties destroyed. Areas of Guinea that border Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, the Ivory coast, Liberia and Sierra Leone are often tense and have an increased military presence. Therefore, MS Risk advises against all travel to the regions bordering the countries listed above. There have been regular reports of robberies on the routes Mamou, Faranah, Kissidougou, Guekedou, Macent and Nzerekore. MS Risk advises all travellers on these routes to remain vigilant and to avoid travel after dark. Official and unofficial checkpoints may be set up along these routes. Vehicles and passengers are submitted to checks on documentation and baggage. It is advised that you approach such checkpoints with caution, as corruption and extortion are common at roadblocks. Occasionally, checkpoints can be a pretext for armed robbery. Road travel is hazardous during the rainy season, which occurs from May to October. Torrential rains can cause floods and landslides. MS Risk advises you to monitor the local weather reports and expect difficulties when travelling to affected areas during this season.

On the Ground Reporting

- **27 February 2014** – Riots continued in Guinea’s capital city and in a mining town located further north over the deaths of two teenagers in separate incidents. A police officer in Fria, located around 150 kilometers (93 miles) north of the capital, indicated that hundreds of youths “armed with sticks, clubs

and even knives looted, ransacked and set fire to the police station” and two local government buildings on Wednesday. He further indicated that they were protesting against the killing by police of a teenager accused of possessing drugs. Witnesses also reported that the crowd ransacked the mayor’s office and managed to break open the gates of the town’s prison, allowing at least twenty inmates to escape. Military and police reinforcements were deployed to the streets overnight to prevent any further rioting and violence from occurring. Meanwhile in Guinea’s capital city, secondary school students took to the streets on Wednesday, accusing doctors of “negligence after one of their classmates died in hospital. Moussa Mara was hospitalized on Tuesday after being kicked in the stomach during a football match in his neighborhood. According to one of the protesters, the doctors demanded 300 euros (US \$410) from his family in order to treat the boy. However the family was unable to pay. Although his classmates raised enough money, the student died on the operating table. Shortly after his death, the students began throwing stones at the hospital, breaking windows and damaging cars, wounding several people including three doctors. They gathered again on Thursday to demonstrate on the main roads of Conakry however they were dispersed by riot police using tear gas and batons. Health Minister Remy Lamah has expressed regret over the boy’s death but has condemned the violence.

- **18 February 2014** – At least two people were killed and thirty others injured in Guinea’s capital city Conakry on Tuesday when protests against frequent power cuts turned violent and the offices of a Brazilian construction firm were attacked. According to residents, security forces around the Lansanayah neighborhood fired tear gas and beat protesters with batons. One eyewitness reported, “a youth died after being hit by a vehicle belonging to the security forces.” Sources have also indicated that some in the crowds attacked the local offices of Brazilian firm OAS, a privately owned engineering and infrastructure development company which is involved in a number of public works projects. It is not clear however why the company was targeted. Guinea government spokesman Damatang Albert Camara confirmed that two people, including a gendarme officer, were killed, however he provided no further details. He did however add that Guinea’s Prime Minister would address the nation later on Tuesday. The recent protests reflect Guineans’ growing frustration with their government over the lack of development in the West African state, which despite its wealth in minerals remains mired in poverty after decades of misrule. The power cuts in a number of Conakry’s neighborhoods have angered residents in recent weeks. The government’s plan to improve electricity production has been undermined by trouble connecting an extra 100 megawatts of capacity recently installed at a plant in Tombo to the Guinean power grid. As a result, the government has had to hire an additional 50 MW of power supply from British firm Asggreko at a cost of US \$10 million every six months.

Guinea-Bissau

No travel restrictions

Security Summary

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



Domestic News

- **26 February 2014** – On Wednesday, the United Nations Security Council urged Guinea-Bissau's transitional government to abide to the announced election plans, warning that sanctions would be imposed on those who oppose a return to constitutional order. The statement released by the Council comes at a time when, after several delays, Guinea-Bissau's transitional government announced that presidential and parliamentary elections would be held on 13 April 2014 to end the period of political instability, which began with a coup two years ago. After hearing a report from the UN special representative in the country, Jose Ramos-Horta, the fifteen UN Security council members expressed their "concern and continued delays in the electoral process," adding that "it is imperative to hold presidential and legislative elections without further delay." The Security Council members also expressed their "readiness to consider further measures as necessary, including targeted sanctions against civilian and military individuals who undermine efforts to restore the constitutional order." They especially warned military officials against getting directly involved in the electoral process or ignoring the vote results. While the vote was originally due to take place within a year of the overthrow of Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Junior's regime, it has been postponed a number of times. Most recently, the elections were postponed from 16 March 2014 to 13 April 2014.
- **21 February 2014** – On Friday, Guinea-Bissau announced that presidential and parliamentary elections, to end a period of political instability, which began with a coup two years ago, will be held on 13 April 2014. Although the date had already been announced by military chiefs from the ECOWAS bloc of West African nations at a meeting in Guinea-Bissau on Wednesday, the presidential decree released on Friday is the first official confirmation. On Wednesday, Soumaila Bakayoko, chairman of the ECOWAS Committee of Chiefs of Defence Staff, told media that the bloc would deploy extra troops

to bolster its current deployment of 750 “to ensure security for all during the elections to be held on April 13.” The vote was originally due to take place within a year of prime minister Carlos Gomes Junior’s regime begin overthrown however they have been postponed several times. The transitional government, which was installed after a coup in April 2012, had decreed that presidential and legislative elections would take place on 16 March 2013.

Ivory Coast

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



Security Summary

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 Reporting

- 23 February 2014** – At least four Ivorian soldiers and several attackers were killed when suspected gunmen from Liberia raided a border town in the western region of the country. Ivory Coast defense minister Paul Koffi Koffi confirmed the attack, indicating that it took place early on Sunday in the small town of Grabo, however the



situation is now under control. According to Mr. Koffi Koffi, “they attacked a border post. We had to pull back. UN troops intervened to support us....What is clear is that the situation is now under control.” Although he indicated that several attackers had been killed in the raid, with local authorities reporting that at least four Ivory Coast soldiers were killed and three gunmen were arrested, an exact death toll has not been released. In recent years, gunmen from Liberia have carried out several assaults on towns near the border, which both the government and officials from the United Nations have blamed on allies of former president Laurent Gbagbo.

Mali

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 country, as such this incident in the west has caused great concern. MS Risk forecasts that there will be an increased and sustained kidnap threat across Mali and in certain border-regions for some time to come. Incidents of kidnap are likely to occur for three primary reasons:

- For Ransom - insurgents will raise finances for future operations. With the impending ECOWAS operation, this is accelerating as a concern.

- Human Shields - Insurgents will kidnap persons in order to deter/reduce the risk of direct action by governmental forces against them.
- Ideological - Kidnappings will occur for political purposes.

Since the coup in March 2012, and due to the ongoing political unrest, MS RISK judges that there is a continued heightened threat of kidnap for ransom in Mali and as such further attacks and kidnappings are highly likely to occur. Furthermore, although it is difficult to forecast how severe this threat will emerge, all affected organizations are recommended to review their current operations and contingencies which is in line to the previous advice which has been given. MS RISK currently advises against all travel to Mali.

Local Travel

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

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

MS RISK Guidance to Organizations in Mali:

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

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

On the Ground Reporting

- **26 February 2014** – Military sources have indicated that at least two people were injured on Wednesday when a United Nations vehicle hit a mine in the restive north of Mali. According to the African military source, “the car belonged to Medecins du Monde – Belgium. It hit a mine next to the airfield at Kidal. There were at least two injured, both Malians,” adding that the local military “...searched the area to see if any mines had been placed on the airfield.” The incident was also confirmed by a local police official. Despite French troops deployed in Mali for more than a year, Kidal continues to be a security threat in the country.
- **24 February 2014** – Mali’s top prosecutor indicated on Monday that five bodies were discovered in two graves near a military barracks outside the capital city. According to Daniel Tessougue, the bodies were found Sunday at the Kati military barracks, with the victims wearing military clothing. Their identities however have not yet been confirmed. The Kati military barracks served as the fief of General Amadou Haya Sanogo after he came to power a March 2012 military coup. In December of last year, a mass grave containing twenty-one skulls was discovered at a location near the Kati barracks that matched where witnesses had reported that around twenty elite Red Beret paratroopers were shot and killed by troops loyal to Sanogo in May 2012. The Red Berets had attempted a counter-coup in April 2012. Sanogo was arrested in November 2012 and charged with complicity in kidnapping his fellow soldiers.
- **18 February 2014** – According to sources who attended the on going UN-led preliminary talks in Mali’s capital city, Mali’s rebels have agreed to confine members of their armed groups to barracks. During the UN-led talks in Bamako, armed groups and the Malian government have signed an initial plan to create nearly forty barracks around Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal. While Ambeiri Ag Rhssa of the Tuareg National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad indicated that his was the beginning of a solution, officials from the UN have indicated that they will continue to lead talks in order to create a more lasting peace between the Malian government and the Tuaregs. The long-delayed meeting in Bamako is a step in a series of negotiations designed to bring an end to recurrent Tuareg revolts in the West African country’s desert north.

Regional Reporting

- **18 February 2014** – On Tuesday, Morocco’s King Mohammed VI arrived in Mali for a five-day tour to support the country’s peace process. The King was welcomed by President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita at the airport as he began his first visit since attending the Malian leader’s inauguration in September 2013. The visit comes at a time when preliminary meetings are under way in Bamako ahead of peace negotiations between the government and armed insurgents in the north, which include the ethnic Tuareg separatist National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA). In 2012, Mali was thrown into chaos after the MNLA launched an offensive in the northern desert helped by Islamist militants linked to al-Qaeda who later took over the region themselves. Although after nine months the militants were driven out by a French-led military intervention, which was launched in January 2013, they continue to regroup in the desert and remain an ever-present threat to security within the country and the region. The operation was supported by Morocco, which, despite having no border with Mali, counts Islamist militants throughout Africa’s Sahel and Maghreb regions as a high priority security

threat. Although Algiers was the preferred location for various peace agreements in the 1990's and early 2000s between the Malian government and the Tuaregs, who are spread across several countries in the region, including Algeria, Morocco, which is a major trading partner with Mali, has been challenging Algeria's traditional position as mediator between the government and in Bamako and the Tuaregs.

International Developments

- **21 February 2014** – According to the Czech Defence Ministry's state secretary Daniel Kostoval, Czech soldiers may join the UN peace mission in Mali. Although Czech troops have been operation in Mali, within an EU mission which focuses on training the local troops, their mandate is set to expire in June. However the country's ministry is now indicating that it wants to extend the mission until the end of the year. According to Mr. Kostoval, the ministry wants the mandate to be extended "so that our soldiers can stay there longer and possibly also join the UN MINUSMA mission, which has also been underway in Mali." In September, the Czech parliament is expected to approve the plan of Czech military participation in foreign missions in the years to come.
- **19 February 2014** – According to a statement released Wednesday, France and Germany will send parts of a joint military brigade to Mali in its first deployment to Africa. A joint statement, which was released shortly after a security and defence meeting held in Paris between the two countries, indicated "France and Germany have decided to send elements of the Franco-German Brigade to Mali: the first deployment under the aegis of the EU and in an African location." The statement further noted that the troops will integrate into a European mission in Mali to train soldiers. The mission, which was launched in February 2013, has to date trained nearly 3,000 Malian forces. European Council President Herman Van Rompuy indicated Wednesday that the EU is "preparing to renew" the mandate of the training mission up to 2016. Although the Franco-German statement did not specify the number of troops involved, it did indicate that the two sides called for greater investment in helping reorganize and train troops in the West African nation as well as the police and other security forces. The Franco-German brigade, which was set up on 1989 to increase military cooperation between the World War II-era foes, comprises of some 4,800 troops who are based in both countries. The brigade is highly symbolic in nature as it is difficult for both countries to jointly deploy soldiers to hotspots, given the different rules of engagement that govern each army. Nevertheless, in the past, soldiers from the brigade have been deployed to Afghanistan and Kosovo.

Mauritania

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 14 May 2013, the Government of Nigeria declared a state of emergency in the states of Adamwa, 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.

International Developments

- **27 February 2014** – On Thursday, the United Nations envoy on modern-day slavery confirmed that Mauritania had agreed to adopt a roadmap for eradicating the trade, which campaigners say remains widespread in the West African nation. Gulnara Shahinian, the UN's Special Rapporteur on contemporary slavery, announced as she completed a four-day visit to the country, that Mauritania would adopt a roadmap on 6 March which had been prepared with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. She further indicated that the plan was "an important step in eradicating slavery in the country" and would include "a number of economic projects" aimed at helping victims out of the trade. Ms. Shahinian also added that she was "satisfied with the actin of the government, which has taken important steps towards the eradication of slavery" since her last visit in 2009. In 1981, the country was the last in the world to abolish slavery and since 2012, its practice has been officially designated a crime, however campaigners say the government has failed in the past to acknowledge the extent of the trade, with no official data available. Forced labor is a particularly sensitive issue in Mauritania, where anti-slavery charities are very active, especially SOS Slaves and the Initiative for the Resurgence of the Struggle against slavery (IRSS), which supports victims in court. Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz is in the process of setting up a special tribunal to prosecute suspects accused of involvement in slavery and various social security programmes have helped former slaves in the past. However the beneficiaries were never recognized as such, with schemes officially targeting other disadvantaged groups.

Nigeria

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

- **1 March 2014** – Suspected militants have shot dead at least thirty-nine people in an attack on a village in northeastern Nigeria. The attackers, who are believed to be Boko Haram militants, destroyed the entire village of Mainok, which is located 50 kilometers (30 miles) west of the city of Maiduguri. Local citizens have reported that dozens of attackers, dressed in military uniform, stormed Mainok, firing rocket propelled grenades and Kalashnikovs. The incident occurred late on Saturday, just hours after two bomb blasts killed at least fifty people in Maiduguri.
 - Meanwhile in Maiduguri, at least thirty-five people have been killed following two explosions in a crowded neighborhood. The attack occurred Saturday in the city's Gomari district. Eyewitnesses reported that thick smoke enveloped the sky after the twin explosions, which occurred just two minutes apart. According to one resident, "the first blast happened at 6:15PM and targeted residents....Other residents mobilized to the scene to assist the victims and that was when the second blast happened." Although the current death toll stands at thirty-five, with a number others injured, officials in the area have indicated that the death toll is likely to increase in the coming days. So far no group has claimed responsibility for the incident, however Boko Haram militants are suspected to be responsible as Maiduguri, which is the capital of Borno state, has seen a number of deadly attacks since the militant group launched its insurgency nearly five years ago.
- **27 February 2014** – Witnesses reported Thursday that scores of suspected Boko Haram militants, armed with grenade launchers and explosives, razed a town in Nigeria's northeastern region, killing two people, including a child. Residents in Michika, which is located in Adamawa state, indicated that militants arrived at about 9:30 PM (2030 GMT) on Wednesday, "armed with RPG's and explosives which they hurled indiscriminately at homes and public buildings." Eyewitnesses also reported that people fled to the nearby foothills when the attackers, who were dressed in military uniform, stormed

the town in four-wheeled drive trucks and motorcycles. The attack reportedly lasted for more than four hours. Various residents reported that the attackers razed four banks, hundreds of shops, a police station, government buildings and dozens of homes, with one witness stating that Michika looked like a “war zone” after the raid that destroyed some 90 percent of all businesses. The military in Adamawa has so far declined to comment on the attack.

- **25 February 2014** - Suspected Boko Haram militants carried out an attack on a school in northern Nigeria. At least twenty-nine students have been killed in Nigeria after suspected Boko Haram militants attacked a boarding school in the north-eastern region of the country. According to on the ground sources, the remote school, which is located in the state of Yobe, was attacked overnight when students were in their dormitories. All the twenty-nine victims were teenage boys while another eleven were seriously injured. Most of the school was also burned to the ground. Although no further information has been released, Nigeria’s military announced on Tuesday that it was pursuing the attackers. A statement released by the military stated “we assure all law-abiding citizens that we will continue to do what is necessary to protect lives and property.” President Goodluck Jonathan has since condemned the killings, calling them “heinous, brutal and mindless.” Over the past year, Islamist militants have attacked dozens of schools in north-eastern Nigeria. Last September, forty students were killed at an agricultural college during a similar raid which was also carried out at night. Although the Nigerian government launched military operations in May last year to end Boko Haram’s four year insurgency, Nigeria’s armed forces are currently facing increasing criticism for their failure to protect civilians and to respond to the raids carried out by militants. **Update** – Officials have no confirmed that the death toll in the attack has risen to forty-three.
- **23 February 2014** – On Sunday, suspected Boko Haram gunmen returned to a village in northeastern Nigeria, where 106 people were killed last week, and torch homes and to shoot and set off explosives. According to local officials, the latest attack in Izghe, Borno state, occurred at about 1:00 AM (0000 GMT) and forced residents, who had returned the village after the February 15 deadly strike, to flee again. Maina Ularamu, the chairman of the Madagali local government area in neighboring Adamawa state, confirmed the attack, stating “nothing remains but burnt ruins.” He added that one person was injured in the attack. There was no immediate comment from the Borno state police or the military. Although Izghe is located in the Gwoza district of Borno states, its residents have closer ties with Madagali, due to its proximity and ethnic allegiances. The 15 February raid on the mostly Christian village saw suspected Boko Haram fighters, who arrived in trucks and wearing military uniform, go door-to-door looking for those hiding in their houses. Since the attack, some 10,000 residents from Izghe, and neighboring villages, fled to Madagali.
- **20 February 2014** – Gunmen have killed thirteen people, including nine children, in a raid on a village in central Nigeria. According to Habila Dung, administrator of the Barkin Ladi local government area in Plateau state, “the attack took place around 1:00 am (0000 GMT) and 13 people were killed their sleep.” He has described the raid as “barbaric,” confirming that nine children were amongst those killed in the attack. Although police spokeswoman Felicia Anslem has indicated that this was an isolated incident and that calm has been restored, adding that police are working to verify the casualty figures, it currently remains unclear who carried out the latest attack in Barkin Ladi. According to US-based Council on Foreign Relations, between 29 May 2011 and 31 January 2012, there were 1,131 seats in Plateau, all related to social, economic or religious grievances. The conflict has been on going since roughly 2001, with occasional eruptions that have forced the Nigerian military to take extraordinary measures in order to restore calm. Several peace processes have also failed to stop the violence.

- **19 February 2014** – Suspected Boko Haram militants armed with explosives attacked a town in Nigeria’s northeastern region on Wednesday, sparking a battle with soldiers that killed a large number of insurgents. According to Defence spokesman Chris Olukolade, the early morning attack in the town of Bama may have also included multiple suicide blasts. He further noted that “many” of the attackers were killed when troops repelled the raid, however no specific figures or comments on casualties amongst civilians or security forces have been released. According to the defence spokesman, a “cordon and search operation was ongoing in Bama with a view to apprehending fleeing attackers.” A survivor of the attack indicated that assailants numbering dozens drove into the town around 4:00 am (0300 GMT) in heavy trucks. The latest attack in northeastern Nigeria comes as the heads of the army and the air force are currently on a joint visit to the three troubled states in the northeast of the country. The three states, Borno, Adamawa and Yobe, are currently under a state of emergency, which has been in place since May 2013. According to army spokesman Brigadier General Olajide Laleye, “the military chiefs have since yesterday (Tuesday) morning been meeting with the field commanders to see to the deployment of troops and to tell the troops that the fight against the insurgents must be speedily concluded.”
 - Meanwhile, in a new video released on Wednesday, the leader of Boko Haram, Abubakar Shekau, has threatened to carry out attacks in Nigeria’s oil-rich Niger Delta. In the 28-minute video, Shekau warned “you will in coming days see your refinery bombed,” adding “Niger Delta, you are in trouble.” In the video, Shekau, who admitted to killing an Islamic cleric, Adam Albani, about two weeks ago in the northerner Nigerian city of Zaria, also threatened to kill other Muslim and political figures in the country, including the respected Shehu of Borno, who is a prominent Muslim leader, and the Emir of Kano, Ado Bayero, who was attacked by suspected Islamist militants last year. The video was shot in an open field, where Shekau was surrounded by an armored tank, two military vans and about a dozen gun-bearing soldiers. It is unclear however when the video was recorded.

Domestic News

- **18 February 2014** – On Tuesday, a presidential spokesman indicated that Nigeria is winning the war against Boko Haram militants in the restive northeast, dismissing suggestions that the insurgents were having the upper hand. Speaking to reporters in Abuja, Doyin Okupe indicated “we state authoritatively without any fear or equivocation whatsoever that Nigeria is already winning the war against terror and the activities of the insurgents will be terminated within the shortest possible time.” He further added that government troops were “on top of the situation” after launching an offensive to end the four-year-old violence. Stressing that the country’s military was among the best equipped in Africa, the presidential spokesman indicated that insurgents had moved their deadly attacks to remote areas after they were dislodged from urban bases in the northeast near the Nigerian border. He also noted that “the Nigerian military is prevented from pursuing them into these foreign territories by law and international conventions and this obviously gives continuous respite to the insurgents.” This statement by the presidential spokesman contrasts a statement made by Governor Kashim Shettima of Borno state, which is one of the states that currently remains under emergency rule as a result of the insurgency. On Monday, the Governor stated that Boko Haram fighters were having the upper hand in the conflict. The Governor also called for troop reinforcements in the region. The Governor made the statement in the capital Abuja shortly after talks with President Goodluck Jonathan and the security

chiefs following the latest massacre in Borno which left 106 mostly Christian people dead in the village of Izghe on Saturday.

International Developments

- **27 February 2014** – On Thursday, French President Francois Hollande stated that France stand should-to-shoulder with Nigeria in its battle against Boko Haram, vowing to support its fight against Islamist militancy as it has done in Mali. Hours before Hollande’s scheduled arrival in Abuja, hundreds of suspected militant fighters besieged a town in northeastern Adamawa state, destroying homes and businesses with heavy weaponry and explosives. At least two people were killed in the attack late Wednesday, which destroyed four banks, hundreds of shops, a police station and several government buildings. The attack came after forty-three people, mostly students, were killed during a night-time raid carried out by suspected insurgents at a secondary school in Yobe state on Tuesday. Hollande, who is a guest of honor for celebrations that will mark 100 years since Nigeria’s unification, expressed his condolences, calling the Yobe attack “brutal” and “unjustified.” During a security conference, attended by dozens of African heads of state and European Union President Jose Manuel Barroso, the French president told delegates that “Nigeria is today confronted with the terrorism of Boko Haram,” adding that “I assure you that your struggle is also our struggle. We will always stand ready not only to provide our political support but our help every time you need it, because the struggle against terrorism is also the struggle for democracy.” Although Nigeria, which is a former British colony whose northern and southern protectorates were formally merged on 1 January 2914, is not traditionally in France’s sphere of influence, the country is surrounded by French-speaking countries, notably France’s former colonies Chad, Cameroon, and Niger, which have all been flooded with people from Nigeria’s northeast. Hollande is on a two-day visit to Nigeria, and is expected to hold talks on trade and investment with his Nigerian counterpart Goodluck Jonathan. Hollande’s office in Paris also announced separately that the president will travel to the Central African Republic’s capital Bangui on Friday where he will meet French troops, his counterpart Catherine Samba Panza, and religious authorities.



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