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THE CENTRAL AFRICA REPORT



Detailed Report Focusing on Security, Domestic News and
Developments that Impact the Central African Region

*Angola – Cameroon – Central African Republic – Chad- Republic of Congo –
Democratic Republic of the Congo – Equatorial Guinea – Gabon – São Tomé and
Príncipe*

24 MARCH – 6 APRIL, 2014

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The Central Africa Report ~ Summary

24 March – 6 April, 2014



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Cameroon

On the Ground Reporting

- **6 April 2014** – On Sunday, Cameroon's security forces swept the remote northern region of the country where two Italian priests and a Canadian nun were kidnapped by suspected Boko Haram gunmen.
- **5 April 2014** – Italy's foreign ministry and media reports indicated Saturday that two Italian priests and a Canadian nun have been kidnapped by gunmen in northern Cameroon.
- **1 April 2014** – Shortly after holding a strategist meeting in Yaounde, the governments of Cameroon and Chad indicated that they have tightened their border security in a bid to halt the illegal flow of diamonds, which are said to be sponsoring armed groups in neighbouring Central African Republic (CAR).

Domestic News

- **31 March 2014** – A court official in Cameroon announced Monday that the country's secondary education minister Louis Bapes Bapes was arrested and remanded in custody on suspected embezzlement of public funds.

Central African Republic

On the Ground Reporting

- **1 April 2014** – On Tuesday, the European Union (EU) officially launched its delayed military mission to the CAR, which will seek to bolster French and African forces who have failed to end months of Christian-Muslim violence.
 - Meanwhile, the CAR's interim president Catherine Samba Panza has launched a probe into the deaths of at least 24 people over the weekend in Bangui by Chadian peacekeepers.
- **30 March 2014** – On Sunday, the African peacekeeping force in the CAR, MISCA, reported that Chadian soldiers, who were deployed to the country to repatriate their compatriots, had killed at least eight civilians on Saturday after they opened fire on crowds in the capital, Bangui.
- **28 March 2014** – At least twenty people died when extremists threw hand grenades at a crowd of mourners during a funeral service in the CAR's capital Bangui.
- **26 March 2014** – The head of African peacekeepers in the CAR indicated Wednesday that vigilante groups, known as "anti-balaka," will be considered and treated as "enemies" from now on.
- **25 March 2014** – According to officials and residents, at least eighteen people have been killed in the CAR's capital Bangui since Saturday as a result of clashes that involved armed groups and foreign peacekeepers.
- **24 March 2014** – Christian and Muslim leaders from the CAR indicated Monday that they have appealed to United Nations Chief Ban Ki-moon to rapidly deploy peacekeepers to stop the country's "descent into hell."
 - Meanwhile the regional peacekeeping mission in the CAR has indicated that two of its soldiers were wounded in fighting that had taken place over the past weekend.

Domestic News

- **4 April 2014** – The CAR's Foreign Minister Toussaint Kongo-Doudou stated Friday that his country "regrets" a decision by Chad to withdraw from the peacekeeping force that is trying to quell sectarian violence in the country.
- **2 April 2014** – The CAR's Prime Minister indicated Wednesday that soldiers from Chad who killed 24 people when they fired on a crowd in Bangui over the weekend were responding to a grenade attack.

Regional Reporting

- **3 April 2014** – In protest at claims that they aided rebel groups in the Central African Republic (CAR), officials in Chad announced Thursday that the country will pull its peacekeepers from an African Union mission in the CAR.

International Developments

- **4 April 2014** – A United Nations probe showed Friday that Chadian soldiers killed at least thirty Central Africans and wounded at least 300 others in an unprovoked attack on a packed market in Bangui last weekend.
- **2 April 2014** – African and EU leaders are set to hold crisis talks on the spiralling sectarian unrest in the CAR at a two-day summit in Brussels.
- **1 April 2014** – The United Nations refugee agency announced Tuesday that it was prepared to help evacuate some 19,000 Muslims who are at risk of being attacked from the mainly Christian militias in the conflict-torn CAR.
- **29 March 2014** – On Saturday, after obtaining additional backing for the mission, the European Union (EU) signaled that it was ready to deploy its delayed peacekeeping force to the CAR in a bid to help put down the escalating crisis.
- **28 March 2014** – After recently concluding an official visit to the CAR, Volker Turk, a senior official from the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), has indicated that the scale of communal hatred throughout the country was shocking.
- **27 March 2014** – On Thursday, the European Union's (EU) foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton sounded the alarm over the escalation of violence in recent days in the capital city of the CAR, stating that she was "...alarmed by the deteriorating situation in Bangui and the escalation of violence there since March 22
- to constitutional rule after a one-year transitional period.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Regional Reporting

- **25 March 2014** – South Africa's President Jacob Zuma on Tuesday prolonged the mandate of over 1,300 soldiers as part of UN peacekeeping force deployed in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

International Developments

- **4 April 2014** – The United Nations has stated that more than half a million people have now been displaced by violence in south eastern Congo.
- **2 April 2014** – On Wednesday, the United Nations peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) announced that it was preparing a gradual withdrawal from the country despite the continued presence of dozens of armed groups.

Central Africa Report ~ Security Summary

Angola – MS Risk advises against all but essential travel to certain regions of Angola. Specifically, we advise against all but essential travel to the provinces of Cabinda, Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul. There is currently a low threat from terrorism.

Cameroon – MS Risk advises against all travel to the North and Far North Regions of Cameroon.

Central African Republic – MS Risk advises against all travel to the Central African Republic

Chad - MS Risk advises against all travel to the following areas: areas within 30 kilometers (18 miles) of the border with Libya, Nigeria, Niger and the Central African Republic; areas bordering Lake Chad, including the regions of Kanem and Lac to the west of the towns of Mao and Bol; areas within 30 kilometers (18 miles) of Cameroon from Lake Chad as far as Léré; the regions of Sila, Wadi Fira, Ennedi and Tibesti; the region of Ouaddaï except the town of Abéché; the region of Borkou except within 30km of the town of Faya Largeau. MS Risk also advises against all but essential travel to all remaining parts of the country, including the towns of Faya Largeau in Borkou region and Abéché in Ouaddaï region. Currently, MS Risk does not have any travel advisory for the capital city, N'Djamena.

Republic of Congo - MS Risk currently advises against all travel to the Likouala province. This is due to a large influx of displaced people coming in from neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The UNHCR currently estimates that there are around 110,000 refugees in Likouala province. MS Risk also advises against all but essential travel to the Pool region. There is currently a low level of terrorism in the Republic of the Congo.

Democratic Republic of the Congo - MS Risk advises against all travel to eastern and north-eastern DRC, including Goma. The only exception to this is the town of Bukavu, to which MS Risk advises against all but essential travel. MS Risk currently advises against all but essential travel to the remainder of the DRC. There is currently a low threat from terrorism.

Equatorial Guinea - There are currently no travel advisories for Equatorial Guinea

Gabon - There are currently no travel advisories for Gabon.

São Tomé and Príncipe - There are currently no travel advisories for Sao Tome and Principe. However due to the current political situation, coupled with fears of a possible military coup, MS Risk advises all travellers to the country to remain vigilant and to monitor reporting on the political situation.

Angola

Security Summary ~ MS Risk advises against all but essential travel to certain regions of Angola. Specifically, we advise against all but essential travel to the provinces of Cabinda, Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul. There is currently a low threat from terrorism. We advise that all international companies and organizations operating throughout Angola have strict security rules and regulations for their staff.

Luanda

There is a high level of crime in Luanda. Muggings, particularly to steal mobile telephones and other valuables, as well as armed robberies can occur in any area at any time during the day and night. It is advised that you avoid wearing jewelry or watches in public places. Do not change or withdraw large sums of money in busy public areas. Areas that are popular with foreigners are particularly targeted. You should avoid walking around Luanda, especially after dark.

Theft from slow-moving or stationary cars is common, especially in central Luanda. It is advised to keep valuables out of sight and do not use mobiles or laptops while in traffic. When driving, we wary if another car signals you to pull over. Thieves use the pretext of a minor traffic incident to get you out of your car in order to either steal the vehicle or rob you. A high proportion of the civilian population is armed.



If you choose to travel outside Luanda, and the provincial capitals, it is advised that you do so in the company of persons or organizations experience in local conditions as conditions can be difficult. There is a widespread of poverty, social exclusion and disease.

Cabinda Province

MS Risk advises against all but essential travel to Cabinda Province. There are regular violent incidents, including rape, murder and kidnappings that involve foreigners and Angolans. Groups claiming responsibility for these attacks have declared their intention to continue attacks against foreigners.

Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul

MS Risk advises against all but essential travel to the provinces of Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul. Angolan authorities are sensitive to the presence of foreigners in the diamond producing areas. Consequently all travellers to the region may be subjected to movement restrictions or detention by security forces.

The presence of diamonds also increases the threat of crime and banditry, particularly on roads that lead to and from these areas. Armed hold-ups do occur from time to time.

Cameroon

Executive Summary ~ With the kidnapping of two Italian priests and one Canadian nun during the early morning hours of 5 April 2014, 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 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. MS RISK advises against all travel to the Bakassi Peninsula as well as within 20km of the border with Nigeria in the Ndian 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 Maroula 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

- **6 April 2014** – On Sunday, Cameroon’s security forces swept the remote northern region of the country where two Italian priests and a Canadian nun were kidnapped by suspected Boko Haram gunmen. The kidnapping occurred overnight Friday in the small town of Tchere, which is located in the northern region of Cameroon, across the border from an area of north-eastern Nigeria that serves as a base for the Islamist Boko Haram militant group. On Saturday, Cameroon’s Defence Minister Edgard Alain Mebe Ngo’o travelled to the area in order to personally take control of the search operation. It currently remains unknown whether the priests, named in media reports as Giampaolo Marta and Gianantonio Allegri from the northern Italian city of Vecenza, and Canadian nun Gilberte Bussier, are still in Cameroon or whether they have been taken across the border into Nigeria. Cameroon security forces have however blamed the attack on Boko Haram, which has been implicated in a number of kidnappings in the past year. Kidnappings of Westerners have become common in the remote, insurgency-wracked corner of West Africa, where borders are difficult to control. In November 2013, French Catholic Priest Georges Vandenbeusch was seized by heavily armed men who burst into his parish at night. They later reportedly took him to neighbouring Nigeria in an attack that was claimed by the Islamist group. Earlier in the year, a Frenchman employed by gas group Suez was kidnaped in the same area together with his wife, their children and his brother, while they were visiting a national park. Despite Abuja sealing a portion of its border with Cameroon, in a bid to block the movement of insurgents and other criminal groups, it is clear that Boko Haram militants continue to move across the border areas fairly easily.
- **5 April 2014** – Italy’s foreign ministry and media reports indicated Saturday that two Italian priests and a Canadian nun have been kidnapped by gunmen in northern Cameroon. According to sources, the attack occurred overnight in the northern region of the West African country, near the border with Nigeria. Around 2:00 am (0100 GMT), armed gunmen reportedly pulled up to the buildings where the priests and nun were staying and ransacked them before taking the hostages. Reports have indicated that the victims were staying in the northern Maroua region, which border the part of northern Nigeria, that is a stronghold of Boko Haram. Italy’s foreign ministry confirmed that two priests from Italy’s northern Vicenza region had been seized however no further details have been released. One of the two priests kidnapped had been in Cameroon for more than six years while the second had arrived around a year ago. Over the past year, the threat of kidnap in northern Cameroon has been high, as the region is known to be operated by Boko Haram militants who seek shelter in neighbouring Cameroon during military operations in neighbouring Nigeria and after they have carried out an attack. The attack comes three months after the release of French

priest Georges Vandenbeusch, who was kidnapped in the same region in mid-November 2013 and then held in neighbouring Nigeria by Boko Haram.

- **1 April 2014** – Shortly after holding a strategist meeting in Yaounde, the governments of Cameroon and Chad indicated that they have tightened their border security in a bid to halt the illegal flow of diamonds, which are said to be sponsoring armed groups in neighbouring Central African Republic (CAR). Speaking to reporters shortly after the meeting, Cameroon's Mining Minister Emmanuel Mbonde indicated that fifteen months of escalating violence in the CAR has raised suspicions that the country's diamonds were being used to purchase weapons, adding that his government has taken measures to address the growing problem, which includes deploying more border staff, to identify all diamonds and to assure their traceability as only certified diamonds are authorized to be exported. Last November, the CAR was officially suspended from global diamond trade by the Kimberly Process Certification Scheme (KPCS), which is an international government, industry and civil society initiative that aims to stem the flow of conflict diamonds. Jaff Napoleon, a member of the civil society, has since indicated that if Cameroon's admittance in the KPCS last year allows the conflict diamonds to transit through its territory, it also may be suspended. According to Mr Napoleon, "if it is established that diamonds are actually leaving Central Africa Republic, entering the commercial circuit through Cameroon, Cameroon will be suspended just like the Central African Republic. This is why there is a need for sub-regional consultations. How do we make sure that diamonds do not really contribute to fuel conflicts." Conflict, or blood diamonds, are rough diamonds that are used by rebel movements to finance wars against legitimate governments.

Domestic News

- **31 March 2014** – A court official in Cameroon announced Monday that the country's secondary education minister Louis Bapes Bapes was arrested and remanded in custody on suspected embezzlement of public funds. Mr Bapes Bapes is the first sitting minister to be arrested under President Paul Biya, who is one of Africa's longest serving heads of state. Biya, who came to power in 1982, launched "Operation Sparrow Hawk" in 2006 in a bid to combat corruption. Since then, the drive has seen several of his former aides, ministers and top government officials brought to court, with critics stated that the campaign has been used to target opponents. In 2012, President Biya created the Special Criminal Tribunal to try officials suspected of embezzling sums equal or above 50 million CFA francs (US \$105,100). Mr Bapes Bapes, who as education minister managed one of the largest ministerial budgets in the country, was taken to the Special Criminal Tribunal in the capital city on Monday. According to a court official, "the judge notified him of his immediate remanding in custody at the Yaounde central prison for suspected embezzlement of public funds." Officials have not indicated how much the minister was accused of embezzling. **Update (1 April 2014)** – A government spokesman has confirmed that Minister for Secondary Education Louis Bapes Bapes has been released from jail just one day after he was arrested and remanded in custody on suspected embezzlement of public funds. Mr Bapes Bapes was arrested Monday on instructions from a judge of the country's Special Criminal Tribunal.

Central African Republic

Security Summary ~ MS Risk advises against all travel to the Central African Republic (CAR). Despite French troops deploying into CAR in early December, the situation throughout the country has continued to deteriorate. There have been reports of rebel activity, banditry and hostage-taking across the country. The situation in the capital, Bangui, remains fragile with reports of continued isolated killings, looting and gunfire.

There is also an underlying threat from terrorism. Attacks can be indiscriminate, including in places that are visited by foreigners. The official curfew in the CAR is from 8PM to 5AM.

Despite the French military intervention, Operation Sangaris, being launched in early December, security throughout the CAR remains unstable. MS

Risk strongly advises you not to travel around Bangui after dark. At other times, it is advised that you take extreme care, and travel in groups if possible. There are armed patrols at night in Bangui and you may encounter several roadblocks, both official and unofficial, that are likely to be manned by armed personnel. We advise that you take particular care when approaching these.

Crime

Incidents of theft and robbery occur regularly. Armed gangs are known to operate in the outlying areas of Bangui. You are advised to take personal security precautions and be vigilant in public places at all times. Avoid carrying valuables or wearing jewelry in public. Do not walk alone at night and avoid any isolated or poorer areas.



On the Ground Reporting

- **1 April 2014** – On Tuesday, the European Union (EU) officially launched its delayed military mission to the CAR, which will seek to bolster French and African forces who have failed to end months of Christian-Muslim violence. According to a statement released by EU officials, the 1,000-strong force, known as EUFOR RCA, will work to restore security to the capital Bangui during a six-month mission, with a view handing over the operation to a United Nations peacekeeping operation or African troops. EU foreign police chief Catherin Ashton has stated that the operation is meant to address the “huge challenges” facing the CAR, whose crisis began a year ago. She added, “it is vital that there is a return to public order as soon as possible, so that the political transition process can be put back on track.” EUFOR RCA, which was originally due to deploy in late March but was delayed by insufficient troop and aircraft commitments from the EU’s 28 members states, will operate in Bangui and its airport. It will cost an estimated 25.9 million euros (US \$40.6 million).
 - Meanwhile, the CAR’s interim president Catherine Samba Panza has launched a probe into the deaths of at least 24 people over the weekend in Bangui by Chadian peacekeepers. Speaking Saturday during an official trip to Paris, France, Ms Samba Panza stated that “we have requested an investigation be launched to establish exactly what happened,” adding “as soon as we have those facts, we will see who was responsible for these incidents.” Chadian troops had entered Bangui to repatriate compatriots who wanted to flee the chaos in the capital however they opened fire in circumstances that remain unclear. According to local officials and eyewitnesses, Chadian troops fired rockets at civilian homes during a flare-up that left at least twenty-four dead and around 100 wounded. Although the MISCA force indicated on Saturday that Chadian troops opened fire in response to a grenade attack, local residents and members of the “anti-balaka” groups have denied this. The attack was the worst known incident involving foreign troops since French and African peacekeepers deployed to the CAR late last year. In the wake of the incident, Chad, which is a major power broker in neighbouring CAR, and its peacekeepers have been accused of bypassing the African peacekeeping force MISCA chain of command and protecting ex-Seleka fighters. The incident has enraged Christians and has prompted hundreds of Bangui residents to flee amidst fears of a wave of retaliatory violence. Speaking to reporters on Tuesday, Cecile Pouilly, spokeswoman for the UN Human Rights office indicated, “it appears that Chadian soldiers fired indiscriminately at a crowd following an incident,” adding that her office was “still trying to confirm the exact affiliation of these soldiers.”
- **30 March 2014** – On Sunday, the African peacekeeping force in the CAR, MISCA, reported that Chadian soldiers, who were deployed to the country to repatriate their compatriots, had killed at least eight civilians on Saturday after they opened fire on crowds in the capital, Bangui. According to an officer with the MISCA force, “we don’t know at present what led to the firing on the residents...but we are trying to gather information to find out what exactly happened.” He stated that the incident had occurred in a mainly Christian district in the northern area of Bangui, adding that the casualty toll could rise. Several residents reported Sunday that Chadian soldiers “were firing in all directions,” causing panic as people tried to flee the area. Over the past week, a new surge in bloodshed has killed some forty people in the capital city

alone. **Update (31 March 2014)** - Local officials in the CAR have reported that Chadian troops have killed at least twenty-four people in the country's capital, Bangui. Dozens of people were also seriously injured in the incident. According to local sources, the soldiers reportedly opened fire on residents of mainly Christian neighborhoods in northern Bangui, with one resident reporting that the Chadians had been attacked by a Christian militia. Chadian forces are not part of the official African Union (AU) peacekeeping force and are in the country in order to help Chadian nationals leave the country however a number of Chadian troops have been accused of supporting the rebels, who are mostly Muslim.

- **28 March 2014** – At least twenty people died when extremists threw hand grenades at a crowd of mourners during a funeral service in the CAR's capital Bangui. According to Public Security Minister Denis Wangao Kizimale, "around 11:00 PM (Thursday) a group of extremists, well known to the police, threw hand grenades at a crowd that was attending a wake," adding "at least 20 people were killed and 11 others wounded..." Mr Kizimale further noted that "the government condemns this odious act. Already, an inquiry has been opened to determine the circumstances of this crime. Those responsible will be found and brought to justice." The attack resulted in members of the local community holding an angry street protest on Friday, with many blaming the incident on Muslims.
- **26 March 2014** – The head of African peacekeepers in the CAR indicated Wednesday that vigilante groups, known as "anti-balaka," will be considered and treated as "enemies" from now on. Speaking Wednesday, General Mokoko stated "from now on, we consider the anti-balaka as enemies of (the African peacekeeping force) MISCA," adding "...we will treat them as such." The announcement, which was made by Congolese General Jean-Marie Michel Mokoko, followed days of fighting in which around 20 people died and which involved peacekeepers fired on crowds. The General did note that MISCA blames the majority Christian anti-balaka groups for attacks against the peacekeepers, who are working alongside French troops, to disarm both sides.
- **25 March 2014** – According to officials and residents, at least eighteen people have been killed in the CAR's capital Bangui since Saturday as a result of clashes that involved armed groups and foreign peacekeepers. According to a Central African Red Cross official, "at least 15 bodies have been picked up by Red Cross volunteers at the scene of the fighting," which occurred on the outskirts of the commercial PK-5 district. Doctors Without Borders (MSF) later reported three fatalities amongst people who had been wounded and said that the high level of insecurity was hampering medical help and getting victims to hospital. Fighting between Muslim and Christian civilians broke out over the weekend, with both French and African troops opening fire. According to local residents, the troops shot dead eight members of the anti-balaka, including a militia leader. Although on Monday, the first anniversary of the ouster of president Francois Bozize by the mainly Muslim Seleka rebel alliance that went on to rule for 10 months, MISCA and French soldiers were deployed in strength around Bangui, on Tuesday morning, a brief bout of gunfire broke out in PK-5, where soldiers of an African Union (AU) intervention force (MISCA) have been deployed, backed by French troops of Operation Sangaris.
- **24 March 2014** – Christian and Muslim leaders from the CAR indicated Monday that they have appealed to United Nations Chief Ban Ki-moon to rapidly deploy peacekeepers to stop the country's "descent into hell." A multi-faith delegation, composed of an archbishop, an imam and the head of the country's Protestant community, made the appeal during a 10-day visit to Washington and New York, where they also sought help from the United States to end months of Christian-Muslim violence. According to Dieudonne Nzapalainga, the Catholic archbishop of the capital Bangui, the current peacekeeping missions, which include the 6,000-strong African Union (AU) force MISCA and France's 2,000-troop Operation Sangaris, are

facing “enormous logistical problems. They are stretched to the limit, and its time to come and help them.” While the leaders have estimated that the country requires between 15,000 and 18,000 peacekeepers, the have indicated that they fear no new force will be deployed to the country until September. Imam Oumar Kobine Layama also stated that “one of our goals in the US was to explain the humanitarian situation,” adding “its been almost a year since people have been able to work the fields. Seeds for the next crop have been lost as villages burnt, just as the rainy season is approaching.” The religious leaders have stepped in to call for peace after a spate of violence and revenge attacks that have continued to occur between the Muslim minority and Christian majority. Since the March 2013 coup, thousands have been a killed while a quarter of the country’s population has been displaced.

- Meanwhile the regional peacekeeping mission in the CAR has indicated that two of its soldiers were wounded in fighting that had taken place over the past weekend. On Monday, Maj Flavien Mulume, the acting commander of the Congolese contingent, indicated that two Rwandan peacekeepers had been wounded by Christian militiamen. While the acting commander did not provide further details, the incident is likely connected to fighting that erupted in Bangui on Sunday. Clashes erupted during the day between peacekeepers and anti-balaka militiamen.

Domestic News

- *4 April 2014* – The CAR’s Foreign Minister Toussaint Kongo-Doudou stated Friday that his country “regrets” a decision by Chad to withdraw from the peacekeeping force that is trying to quell sectarian violence in the country. The CAR’s Foreign Minister added that Chad was a “brother country that had and continues to have ties of friendship and fraternity with the Central African Republic, which strongly supported us and suffered a heavy toll in this process.” A statement that was released just one day after Chad announced the withdrawal after being accused of siding with a mainly Muslim movement that held power for most of last year, indicated that the CAR’s government “...learnt with a lot of regret of the announcement...of the withdrawal of Chadian troops from MISCA (African-led force) in the Central African Republic.” While Chad is one of the largest contributors to the 6,000-strong MISCA force, with about 850 troops on the ground, its soldiers have been accused of siding with the mainly Muslim Seleka movement, which seized power in March 2013 and held it until January this year, and of showing passivity toward abuses some of them carried out against the population. The Chadian force came particularly under the spotlight last weekend when at least 24 people were killed and another 100 seriously wounded by Chadian soldiers sent to repatriate their compatriots from the mainly Christian CAR. The Chadian government has since announced that it was pulling out from the peacekeeping forces because of “a wanton and malicious campaign” against its troops, one it said was aimed to make them “bear the responsibility” for all the country’s troubles.
- *2 April 2014* – The CAR’s Prime Minister indicated Wednesday that soldiers from Chad who killed 24 people when they fired on a crowd in Bangui over the weekend were responding to a grenade attack. Speaking on national radio, Prime Minister Andre Nzapayake stated that the attack in the capital city on Saturday “was the result of an incident involving a contingent of MISCA, which was responding to grenade attacks.” He further indicated that “the toll was large,” warning that the death toll may still rise given the number of seriously injured and adding that “many dozens were injured or killed, more than a dozen houses were burnt down, and en and women injured by artillery fragments from a rocket thrown by armed men.” According to the Prime Minister, the soldiers, who are form neighbouring Chad, had come to help

their citizens flee from the war-torn CAR. The CAR government has “strongly condemned” the violence, and has called for an inquiry to determine the exact circumstances of what happened “so the perpetrators can be identified, tracked down, and tried.” On Saturday, the fired into a crowd, killing at least 24 and injuring around a hundred people, in the worst-known incident involving foreign troops since French and African peacekeepers deployed late last year. A MISCA officer indicated on Sunday that the soldiers had fired after they were attacked, but locals and members of the local “anti-balaka” militia said the soldiers had deliberately fired on the crowd.

Regional Reporting

- **3 April 2014** – In protest at claims that they aided rebel groups in the Central African Republic (CAR), officials in Chad announced Thursday that the country will pull its peacekeepers from an African Union mission in the CAR. A statement from the Chadian foreign ministry indicated the move comes as a result of troops being criticised despite the sacrifices they were making in a bid to stabilize the on-going crisis in the CAR. The statement further indicated that the practical steps of the withdrawal will be tackled in “common agreement” between Chad and the African Union, adding “in the meantime Chad will assume without fail its peace mission in the zones it is responsible for in the CAR.” The Chadian government has indicated that it has informed the president of the CAR, the African Union and the UN Secretary General of its decisions. Although Chadian troops came under the spotlight during the past weekend when at least twenty-four people were killed and another one hundred seriously wounded, by Chadian soldiers who were sent to repatriate their compatriots from the CAR, over the past several months, its forces have been accused of siding with Muslim rebels whose ousting of the CAR government last year was followed by a wave of religious violence. In the wake of Saturday’s incident, which is the worst-known incident involving foreign troops since French and African peacekeepers deployed to the CAR late last year, the CAR’s interim president Catherine Samba Panza announced Tuesday the opening of an investigation into the killing of the twenty four people by Chadian soldiers. Chad has contributed roughly 850 soldiers to a 6,000-strong contingent. **Update (5 April 2014)** – On Saturday Chad dismissed as “defamatory and tendentious,” UN accusations that its troops had carried out an unprovoked attack when they opened fire in a crowded market in the CAR’s capital, killing at least thirty people. A government statement released Saturday indicated that “the government of the Republic of Chad expresses its surprise and indignation faced with the purported investigation published by the United Nations Human Rights Commission.” On Friday, a UN investigation into the attack had found that Chadian troops had “opened fire on the population without any provocation.”

International Developments

- **4 April 2014** – A United Nations probe showed Friday that Chadian soldiers killed at least thirty Central Africans and wounded at least 300 others in an unprovoked attack on a packed market in Bangui last weekend. Rupert Colville, spokesman for the UN’s human rights office, indicated that an investigation on site indicated that the troops had “opened fire on the population without any provocation,” and had continued to shoot at the fleeing crowd in the CAR’s capital city. The small unit of Chadian soldiers, who Mr Colville indicated did not appear to be members of the MISCA African peacekeeping force deployed in the country, arrived at the market on Saturday in pickup trucks. Mr Colville further indicated that they

appeared to have come specially from Chad in order to bring to safety Chadian citizens and other Muslim inhabitants who have faced repeated attacks by mainly Christian militias. Speaking to reports, Mr Colville stated “it appears that the Chadian forces’ action was totally disproportionate, as they were shooting in a crowded market full of unarmed civilians,” adding “according to our preliminary findings, at least 30 people were killed as a result of the shooting and over 300 were seriously injured, including children, people with disabilities, pregnant women and the elderly, as these were the people least able to run for their lives.”

- **2 April 2014** – African and EU leaders are set to hold crisis talks on the spiralling sectarian unrest in the CAR at a two-day summit in Brussels. Trade and immigration will also be high on the agenda during the summit, which ends on Thursday. The meeting is being attended by thirty heads of state and government – fifteen each from Africa and Europe. The UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, who is also attending the summit, has promised to do “everything possible” to improve the international response to the crisis. During a crisis meeting with EU and African leaders, Mr Ban warned that the situation in the CAR could spiral into genocide, adding that people were facing “grave and deplorable atrocities.” The summit will not be attended by Zimbabwe’s President Robert Mugabe, who is boycotting the meeting after the EU refuse to temporarily lift a visa ban on his wife, Grace. President Mugabe has also received support from South African President Jacob Zuma, who chose to boycott the summit in a show of solidarity for his Zimbabwean counterpart. Speaking to journalists, President Zuma stated “I think that time must pass wherein we are looked upon as subjects,” adding “we are told who must come, who must not come. It is wrong and causes this unnecessary unpleasantness.”
- **1 April 2014** – The United Nations refugee agency announced Tuesday that it was prepared to help evacuate some 19,000 Muslims who are at risk of being attacked from the mainly Christian militias in the conflict-torn CAR. Speaking to reporters in Geneva, UNHCR spokeswoman Fatoumata Lejeune-Kaba stated “what we don’t want is to stand by and watch people being slaughtered,” point out that so-called anti-balaka militias controlled major routes to and from Bangui as well as a number of towns and villages in the south-western part of the country. According to Ms Lejeune-Kaba, the Christian militias pose a particular threat to Muslims in the PK12 neighbourhood of Bangui but also in Boda, Carnot and Berberati, which are located to the west and Bossangoa, which is further north, adding that “we fear for the lives of 19,000 Muslims in these locations.” As a result of this, the “UNHCR stands ready to assist with their evacuation to safer areas within or outside of the country, “pointing out that so far “the only thing keeping them from being killed right now is the presence of international troops.” On Tuesday, UN staff were heading to the town of Bemal in the northern region of the country in order to discuss possibly relocating Muslims who are living there, however Ms Lejeune-Kaba has stated that it was difficult since locals feared welcoming evacuees could attract unrest to their area. According to UNCHR statistics, 637,000 people in total are now displaced inside the country, including 207,000 in Bangui, while 82,000 mostly Muslim Central Africans had streamed into neighbouring countries in the past three months. The increase in violence has claimed more than sixty lives in the capital city since March 22, with officials particularly highlighting a grenade attack on a funeral service in Bangui, which claimed at least 20 lives on March 27, and the recent killing of twenty-four people on Saturday by Chadian soldiers. According to Cecile Pouilly, spokeswoman for the UN’s human rights office, “it appears that Chadian soldiers fired indiscriminately at a crowd following an incident,” stressing that her office was “still trying to confirm the exact affiliation of these soldiers.” Ms Pouilly also indicated that she expected a UN team of investigators on the ground in the country to probe allegations that Chadian soldiers supporting the Seleka have been targeting Christians.

- *29 March 2014* – On Saturday, after obtaining additional backing for the mission, the EU signaled that it was ready to deploy its delayed peacekeeping force to the CAR in a bid to help put down the escalating crisis. According to a spokeswoman for EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton, following new contributions and additional support from France, the “commander of the operation has recommended the launch of the operation and expects a progressive increase in troops in Bangui.” While the troops were initially due to deploy last week, an insufficient number of soldiers for the mission and not enough aircraft at hand to transport them delayed the deployment. The date of the operation is expected to be announced Wednesday following a meeting of EU members states Tuesday. After French President Francois Hollande appealed for European countries to quickly provide enough troops for the mission during an EU summit last week, diplomats have indicated that Germany’s offer of two Antonov aircrafts to carry the troops along with France’s decision to put more soldiers at the disposal of the mission aided in unblocking the impasse. Some 8,000 foreign troops are already on the ground to disarm Central African rebel groups however peacekeepers from the African force MISCA, along with French troops from Operation Sangaris, have come under attack from majority Christian vigilante groups known as “anti-balaka.”
- *28 March 2014* – After recently concluding an official visit to the CAR, Volker Turk, a senior official from the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), has indicated that the scale of communal hatred throughout the country was shocking. Describing a particular visit to Bodo, which is located southwest of the capital Bangui, Mr Turk stated “you have a Muslim community essentially besieged, with a no-man’s land in between the Muslim quarter and the Christian community.” He added “there would be a massacre were it not for Sangris. Were it not for Sangris, that Muslim community would no longer exist.” According to Mr Turk, “we see a similar situation – and that has deteriorated over the last couple of days – in Bangui itself.” While the mostly Christian anti-balaka militias were first formed as self-defence groups in response to atrocities carried out by the Seleka, they now persistently attack areas where Muslims live and, according to Mr Turk, “the anti-balaka elements are now becoming much more militarised. There is a transformation of violence that is taking place, with especially the Muslim populations inside Bangui but also other parts of the west of the Central African Republic being increasingly threatened.” Entire regions have been abandoned by a minority Muslim population that for decades had lived peacefully alongside Christians.
- *27 March 2014* – On Thursday, the EU’s foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton sounded the alarm over the escalation of violence in recent days in the capital city of the CAR, stating that she was “...alarmed by the deteriorating situation in Bangui and the escalation of violence there since March 22.” In a statement released on Thursday, Ms Ashton indicated that attacks against foreign peacekeepers seeking to stem inter-religious strife were “unacceptable,” adding “the combined action of the African force MISCA and the French operation Sangaris is essential to contain the tension and to restore public order as soon as possible.” She has urged the international community to “act swiftly” in order to prevent further bloodshed and has stated that the EU would take part in efforts to restore stability and security in Bangui and the rest of the country. The statement by the EU’s foreign policy chief comes as the head of the MISCA force indicated this week that members of the majority-Christian vigilante group, known as “anti-balaka,” had crossed a red line by attacking the international troops, further adding that they would now be treated as “enemies.” Since Saturday, around twenty people have died in clashes involving armed groups and foreign peacekeepers in Bangui. Some 8,000 foreign troops are currently working to disarm Central African rebel groups after a year of inter-religious violence, however clashes between the two groups continue. Security throughout the capital city has been tightened ahead of this week’s first anniversary of the toppling of

Francois Bozize by majority-Muslim Seleka rebels, which sparked the current unrest. The so-called “anti-balaka” militias were formed in response to killing and pillaging by Seleka rebels who went rogue after last year’s coup. Since then, thousands have been killed while around a quarter of the country’s 4.6 million people are displaced.

Chad

Executive Summary ~ MS Risk advises against all travel to the following areas: areas within 30 kilometers (18 miles) of the border with Libya, Nigeria, Niger and the Central African Republic; areas bordering Lake Chad, including the regions of Kanem and Lac to the west of the towns of Mao and Bol; areas within 30 kilometers (18 miles) of Cameroon from Lake Chad as far as Léré; the regions of Sila, Wadi Fira, Ennedi and Tibesti; the region of Ouaddaï except the town of Abéché; the region of Borkou except within 30km of the town of Faya Largeau. MS Risk also advises against all but essential travel to all remaining parts of the country, including the towns of Faya Largeau in Borkou region and Abéché in Ouaddaï region. Currently, MS Risk does not have any travel advisory for the capital city, N’Djamena.

MS Risk advises that you should only undertake travel to those parts of the country to which we advise against all but essential travel if:

- You are confident that you have in place adequate security precautions to protect you from violent crime;*



- *The correct Chadian authorities are aware of your journey;*
- *You have in place the right permits if required;*
- *And you hold comprehensive travel insurance.*

There is currently a low threat from terrorism.

Armed robberies, particularly from cars, in residential areas of N'Djamena are common, with foreigners sometimes being targeted. MS Risk advises all travellers to the capital city to remain vigilant and to take care particularly in the capital. Keep doors locked and windows closed at all times. Do not carry any large sums of money, jewelry, or other valuables. Avoid isolated or less developed areas of the city and do not travel alone at night.

There have been a number of kidnappings in eastern Chad involving Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) workers and business people. Further such kidnappings are likely to occur. MS Risk advises all travellers to this region of Chad to be vigilant and take care at all times.

Nearly 350,000 Sudanese and Central African refugees and 100,000 internally displaced persons (IDP) are living in and around camps in eastern Chad. Although the Joint Border Force between Sudan and Chad has partially stabilized the situation, banditry and violent crime in eastern Chad continues to exist. Consequently the border between Chad and Sudan is subject to closures with minimal notice.

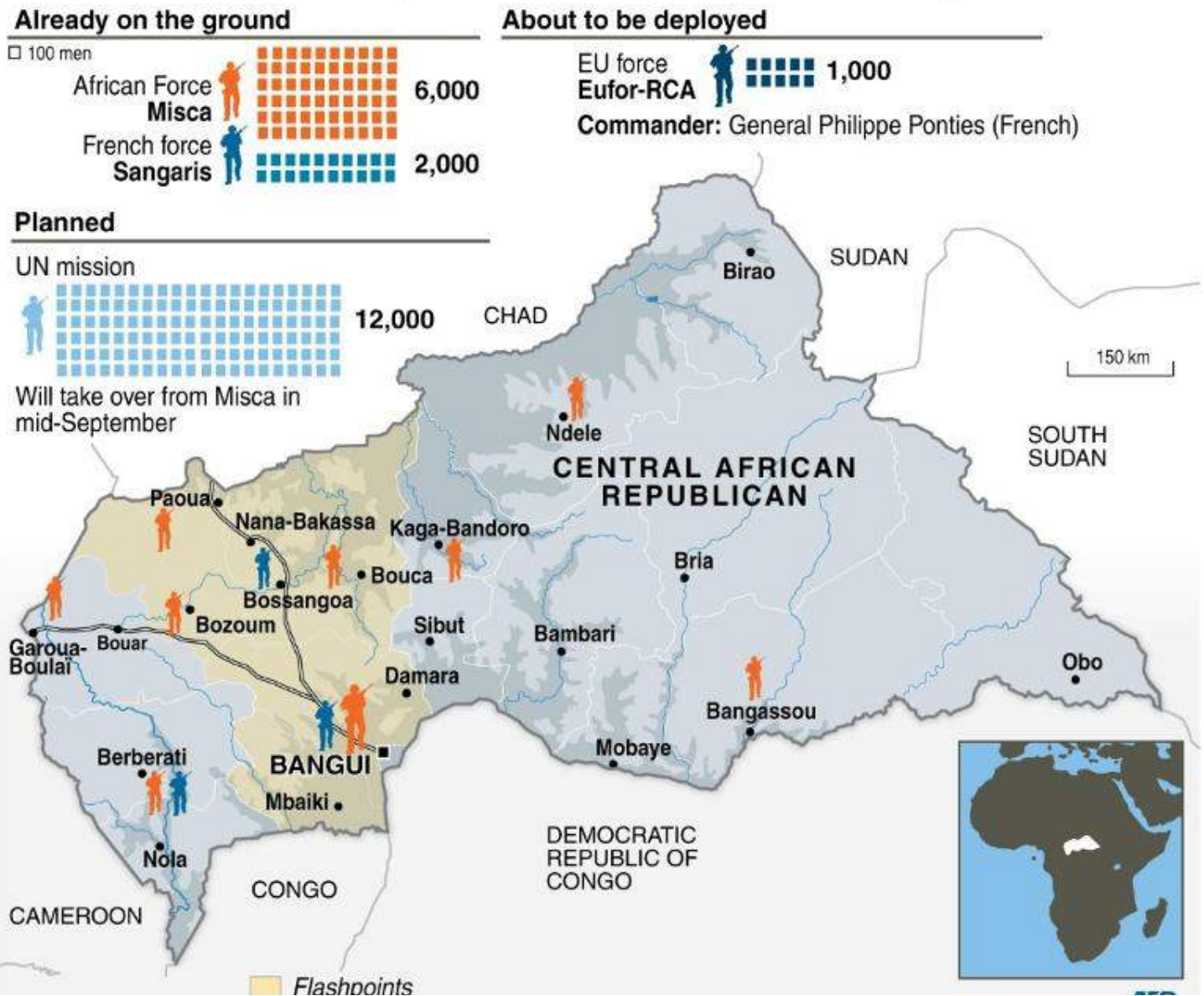
The area bordering Libya is also subject to closure and is heavily land-mined. The northern regions of Borkou, Ennedi and Tibesti continue to be unsafe.

Regional Reporting

- **3 April 2014** – In protest at claims that they aided rebel groups in the Central African Republic (CAR), officials in Chad announced Thursday that the country will pull its peacekeepers from an African Union mission in the CAR. A statement from the Chadian foreign ministry indicated the move comes as a result of troops being criticised despite the sacrifices they were making in a bid to stabilize the on-going crisis in the CAR. The statement further indicated that the practical steps of the withdrawal will be tackled in “common agreement” between Chad and the African Union, adding “in the meantime Chad will assume without fail its peace mission in the zones it is responsible for in the CAR.” The Chadian government has indicated that it has informed the president of the CAR, the African Union and the UN Secretary General of its decision. Although Chadian troops came under the spotlight during the past weekend, when at least twenty-four people were killed and another one hundred seriously wounded by Chadian soldiers who were sent to repatriate their compatriots from the CAR, over the past several months, its forces have been accused of siding with Muslim rebels whose ousting of the CAR government last year was followed by a wave of religious violence. In the wake of Saturday’s incident, which is the worst-known incident involving foreign troops since French and African peacekeepers deployed to the CAR late last year, the CAR’s interim

president Catherine Samba Panza announced Tuesday the opening of an investigation into the killing of the twenty four people by Chadian soldiers. Chad has contributed roughly 850 soldiers to a 6,000-strong contingent. **Update (5 April 2014)** – On Saturday Chad dismissed as “defamatory and tendentious,” UN accusations that its troops had carried out an unprovoked attack when they opened fire in a crowded market in the CAR’s capital, killing at least thirty people. A government statement released Saturday indicated that “the government of the Republic of Chad expresses its surprise and indignation faced with the purported investigation published by the United Nations Human Rights Commission.” On Friday, a Un investigation into the attack had found that Chadian troops had “opened fire on the population without any provocation.”

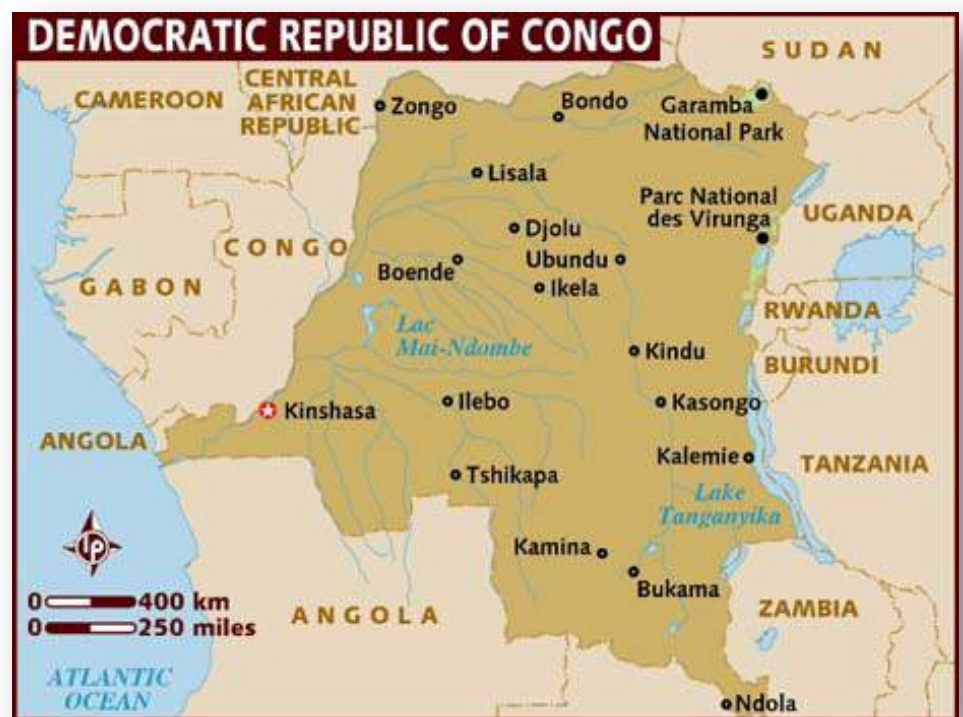
International troops in Central African Republic



Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Executive Summary ~ MS Risk advises against all travel to eastern and north-eastern DRC, including Goma. The only exception to this is the town of Bukavu, to which MS Risk advises against all but essential travel. MS Risk currently advises against all but essential travel to the remainder of the DRC. There is currently a low threat from terrorism.

The security situation in eastern DRC, including Goma, remains unstable. Any foreigners in North Kivu, including Goma, are currently advised to keep their security situation under review. During fighting in the region in recent months, shells landed on Goma, causing a number of civilian deaths and injuries. There was also shelling around the border with Rwanda and explosions in the town of Gisenyi on the Rwandan side of the border. Further shelling may occur. You are therefore advised to avoid travelling alone and at night.



In the Katanga Province, there has been unrest and reports of fighting which occurred on 7 January 2014. The current situation remains tense across the province, particularly around the town of Pweto. MS Risk therefore advises all travellers to the region to exercise a high level of caution.

There were shooting incidents in Kinshasa on 30 December 2013. The incidents occurred around the national TV and radio station RTNC, the airport and the main army barracks and Ministry of Defence at Ngaliema. There were also reports of fighting in Lubumbashi, Katanga Province and in Kindu, Maniema Province. While the situation in Kinshasa now appears to be returning to normal, the situation remains to be fragile and security forces continue to be on alert.

Regional Reporting

- *25 March 2014* – South Africa's President Jacob Zuma on Tuesday prolonged the mandate of over 1,300 soldiers as part of UN peacekeeping force deployed in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo. In a statement issued by Pretoria, on the same day that regional leaders met to discuss the conflict, the President's office indicated that the deployment "has been extended from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015." The President also increased the force by six to 1,345. South African soldiers are in the DR Congo as part of a UN intervention brigade in the conflict-torn region, which has an unprecedented mandate to battle the armed movements long active in eastern Congo. Meanwhile during a mini-summit in Angola, Great Lakes leaders condemned the actions of rebels in the DRC's mineral-rich North Kivu province. According to Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos, "these harmful incidents have to be controlled by the relevant authorities...to prevent them from becoming a threat to regional stability." He urged the neutralisation of "negative forces" from especially two rebel groupings, the ADF-Nalu, a Ugandan Islamist group, and the FDLR, a Rwandan Hutu militia that includes some of the perpetrators of the 1994 genocide.

International Developments

- *4 April 2014* – The United Nations has stated that more than half a million people have now been displaced by violence in south-eastern Congo. According to Yvon Edoumou, the spokesman for the UN humanitarian agency in Congo, the new figure represents an increase of some 100,000 more people from earlier this year. People have fled their homes in the Katanga province following attacks by an armed group known as the Mai Mai Bakata-Katanga. Military operations targeting the fighters have also caused civilians to flee the area. The fighters are seeking independence for Katanga province, which is a miner-rich area of south-eastern Congo that had been more stable than neighbouring provinces in the east.
- *2 April 2014* – On Wednesday, the United Nations peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) announced that it was preparing a gradual withdrawal from the country despite the continued presence of dozens of armed groups. During a press conference in Kinshasa, mission chief Martin Kobler stated that the latest resolution (2147) contains "a new idea...to prepare for the departure of MONUSCO, to prepare for...a strategy of withdrawal." He added "we will not leave tomorrow. Its a gradual process. But its clear that we should define the parameters, the criteria that must be achieved before MONUSCO leaves the country." According to Resolution 2147, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon must present recommendations for the redeployment of peacekeeping forces by the end of the year. The announcement comes after late last month, the UN Security Council renewed the mandate for one more year of its stabilisation mission in the DR Congo (MONUSCO) and its intervention brigade charged with "neutralising" foreign and domestic armed groups. Since late 2013, most of MONUSCO's 20,000 troops have been based in the eastern regions of the country, where armed groups have been particularly prevalent. Despite increasing troop numbers and a broadening mandate since a UN peacekeeping mission was first deployed to the DRC in 1999, the "blue helmets" and the Congolese army have struggled to bring peace to the country. MONUSCO has a budget of US \$1.5 billion (1.1 billion euros) per year, although this has been halved under the latest resolution. UN missions have long faced criticism for failing to protect

civilians in the DRC, although perceptions have improved since an offensive by the Congolese army, supported by the United Nations, defeated the M23 rebel group in November 2013.

Republic of the Congo

Executive Summary ~ MS Risk currently advises against all travel to the Likouala province. This is due to a large influx of displaced people coming in from neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The UNHCR currently estimates that there are around 110,000 refugees in Likouala province. MS Risk also advises against all but essential travel to the Pool region. There is currently a low level of terrorism in the Republic of the Congo.

Although crime levels are low in Brazzaville and Pointe Noire, MS Risk advises all travellers to take sensible precautions in order to safeguard yourself and your belongings. We advise travellers to not walk in the streets after dark or to carry large amounts of money or valuables. The chance of being targeted by criminals is higher in the rural areas of the country. On 16 December 2013, there were reports of fighting and sporadic gunfire in Brazzaville. This is believed to have been an isolated incident as a result of resistance during a military arrest.



MS Risk also advises against all but essential travel to the Pool Region. This is due to sporadic rebel activity and armed banditry in the area. There is a very low risk of rebel attacks in the coastal town of Pointe Noire however travellers in vehicles and trains have been robbed by armed criminal gangs around the Pool region. Road travel in the Pool region requires a permit from the Congolese army.

Equatorial Guinea

Executive Summary ~ There are currently no travel advisories for Equatorial Guinea.

Compared with other countries in the region, the level of violent crime is low; however there are regular reports of petty theft which has affected both visitors and expatriates. MS Risk advises all travellers to avoid walking around Malabo and Bata at night and to avoid travelling by road after dark. Although the political situation has been calm in recent years, you should be aware that political events can lead to an increased presence of police, military or security forces on the streets. Consequently you should avoid any political rallies, demonstrations or large public gatherings. There is a low threat from terrorism; however you should be aware that attacks can occur at any time and place, including those frequented by expatriates and foreign travellers.



Gabon

Executive Summary ~ There is currently no travel advisory for 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.



São Tomé and Príncipe

Executive Summary ~ There are currently no travel advisories for Sao Tome and Principe. However due to the current political situation, coupled with fears of a possible military coup, MS Risk advises all travellers to the country to remain vigilant and to monitor reporting on the political situation.

Crime rates in Sao Tome and Principe are generally low however burglaries and armed robberies do occur. It is advised that you safeguard all valuables and cash.

Although Sao Tome and Principe is generally peaceful, economic difficulties and political rows over the handling of investments in the islands' development occasionally lead to civil unrest. MS Risk advises all travellers to avoid any demonstrations or large gatherings.

