



**MS | RISK**

## **West Africa Report**

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

**March 17 - 30, 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.  
More information is found at [www.msrisk.com](http://www.msrisk.com)

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## Summary

March 17 - 30, 2014



### Burkina Faso

- **17 March 2014** – According to a statement released by the presidential office, Burkina Faso's President Blaise Compaore is currently in France on a private visit that will last from March 16 – 22.

### Ghana

#### *On the Ground Reporting*

- **20 March 2014** – Ghana's opposition leader Nana Akufo-Addo, who narrowly lost two presidential polls, announced Thursday that he would again seek his party's nomination for the 2016 general election.

### *Domestic News*

- **29 March 2014** - On Saturday, the Ivory Coast's leader Alassane Ouattara announced that Ghanaian President John Dramani Mahama has been elected the new head of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

## **Guinea**

### *On the Ground Reporting*

- **27 March 2014** – An Ebola epidemic, which has so far killed dozens of people in Guinea's southern forests, has now spread to the capital Conakry, with health sources confirming four new cases on Thursday.
- **26 March 2014** – On Wednesday, Guinea continued its battle to contain an Ebola epidemic threatening neighboring countries as fears and confusion gripped communities under siege from one of the deadliest viruses known to mankind.
- **24 March 2014** – Aid workers and public health officials on Monday attempted to contain West Africa's first outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus as tests on suspected cases in Conakry allayed fears that it had spread to the capital city.
- **23 March 2014** – According to the United Nations Children's Fund, an Ebola epidemic, which has already killed dozens of people in Guinea's southern forests, has now spread to the capital Conakry.
- **22 March 2014** – On Saturday, as the death toll rose to fifty-nine, officials in Guinea identified the Ebola virus as the source of a highly contagious epidemic affecting the southern regions of the country.
- **20 March 2014** – A mysterious illness in southern Guinea has killed at least twenty-three people over the past six weeks, however according to the health ministry, the disease has yet to be positively identified.

### *Regional Reporting*

- **28 March 2014** – The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), a grouping of fifteen countries, has indicated that Guinea's outbreak of Ebola is now "a serious threat to regional security."

### *International Developments*

- **28 March 2014** – On Friday, the European Union (EU) announced that 500,000 euros (US \$690,000) in aid will be sent "to help to contain the propagation of the virus, which can kill up to 90 percent of affected people, in Guinea and neighboring countries."
- **24 March 2014** – Health officials in Canada have indicated that a man is in hospital with symptoms of a hemorrhagic fever that resembles the Ebola virus.

## Guinea - Bissau

- **26 March 2014** – Campaigning is now underway in Guinea-Bissau ahead of the 13 April presidential and parliamentary elections which are aimed at moving the country from two years of political crisis following an April 2012 military coup.

## Ivory Coast

### *On the Ground Reporting*

- **24 March 2014** – The transfer of former Ivorian strongman Laurent Gbagbo's onetime "street General" to The Hague to face charges of crimes against humanity has divided his West African nation.

### *Domestic News*

- **22 March 2014** – The Ivory Coast's government confirmed Saturday that Charles Ble Goude, the former right-hand man of Ivorian ex-president Laurent Gbagbo, is on his way to The Hague to be tried for crimes against humanity.
- **20 March 2014** – An official in the Ivory Coast announced Thursday that the country will transfer Charles Ble Goude, the jailed right-hand man of former president Laurent Gbagbo, to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

### *International Developments*

- **27 March 2014** – Charles Ble Goude, an ally of Ivory Coast ex-President Laurent Gbagbo made his first appearance Thursday at the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague.

## Liberia

- **24 March 2014** - Neighboring Liberia has reported its first suspected victims of the Ebola virus. Sources have indicated that Africa's biggest Ebola outbreak in seven years has probably spread from Guinea to neighboring Liberia and also threatens Sierra Leone. In Uganda, the Republic of Congo and Gabon, the disease had never before been detected in people in West Africa.
- **18 March 2014** – The Nyaaken Border in River Gee County with the Ivory Coast is said to be vulnerable, with just three Immigration-BIN personnel and no Liberia National Police (LNP) seen in the area. According to several local residents, Nyaaken, which is the last town between River Gee and Maryland, and borders Liberia close to the Ivory

## Mali

### *On the Ground Reporting*

- **25 March 2014** – The leader of an armed group in Mali's troubled north has stated that the central government in Bamako could face another uprising from the Tuareg people if it resists pressure to launch the long-delayed talks on the region's future.
- **24 March 2014** – In the wake of an outbreak of hemorrhagic fever Ebola in the Forest Region of Guinea, the Government of Mali has quickly taken stock of the situation, informing the public that practical steps are being taken in order to prevent the introduction and spread of this disease in Mali.
- **20 March 2014** – According to legal and military sources, the leader of a military coup, which plunged Mali into chaos two years ago, effectively enabling Islamist militants to seize control of the northern desert, has begun a hunger strike to protest against the conditions of his detention.
- **18 March 2014** – On Tuesday, officials in Mali confirmed that they had summoned the Russian ambassador to Bamako in order to explain why Moscow had agreed to meet with members of an armed separatist group from the West African nation.
- **17 March 2014** – Malian authorities announced Monday that they are currently holding one of the country's most wanted Islamist fighters after he surrendered to French troops.

### *Domestic News*

- **27 March 2014** – On Thursday, Mali swore in a new high court that will be charged with hearing a case of high treason against former President Amadou Toumani Toure, who was toppled in a coup in 2012.

## Nigeria

### *On the Ground Reporting*

- **30 March 2014** – On Sunday, Nigeria's secret police indicated that there had been an escape attempt by detainees at their headquarters, with unconfirmed reports that Boko Haram militants were involved.
- **26 March 2014** – According to Nigeria's main relief organization, more than 1,000 people have been killed in three states in northeastern Nigeria as a result of Boko Haram violence.
  - Renewed violence between herdsman and farmers in central Nigeria has killed seven people, just days after a previous attack that claimed thirteen lives.
- **25 March 2014** – Two explosions in Nigeria's troubled northeastern city of Maiduguri on Tuesday have killed at least eleven people, including five police officers who were believed to have been the targets.
- **24 March 2014** – In a new video released on Monday, Boko Haram has claimed responsibility for an attack on a key military barracks in the northeastern city of Maiduguri, and warned of further bloodshed, including against civilians.
  - Meanwhile police officials indicated Monday that gunmen have killed thirteen people in an attack on a farming community in central Nigeria.
- **23 March 2014** – At least seventeen people have been killed in an explosion in a village market in northeastern Nigeria.

- **22 March 2014** – Following deadly attacks that have been blamed on Boko Haram militants, public secondary schools in Nigeria’s northeastern Borno state have been closed indefinitely.

### *Domestic News*

- **26 March 2014** – According to Nigeria’s Justice Minister, assets worth US \$458 million, which were stolen by former Nigerian dictator Sani Abacha and frozen by the United States, should ultimately be returned to Nigeria.
- **19 March 2014** – Nigeria’s new broader approach to tackling the Boko Haram insurgency has won plaudits, with the plan now being seen as a recognition that military might alone would not end the continuing bloodshed.
  - Meanwhile as Nigeria’s top brass visited troops in northeastern Nigeria, the country’s military told Boko Haram militants Wednesday that talks remained an option.
- **18 March 2014** – Nigeria on Tuesday unveiled a new “soft power” plan to defeat Boko Haram, hoping to win hearts and minds in the restive northeastern region of the country.
- **17 March 2014** – Nigeria’s President Goodluck Jonathan has opened a national conference, calling on delegates to tackle the country’s burning issues head on in order to build a stronger and more united nation.

### *Regional Reporting*

- **27 March 2014** – Cameroonian authorities confirmed Thursday that they had arrested three suspected arms dealers who are believed to be linked to Nigeria’s militant Islamist group Boko Haram.
- **17 March 2014** – Officials in Cameroon have indicated that Boko Haram militants are suspected of carrying out an attack on one of the country’s markets near Kousseri, which left at least one soldier dead.

### *International Developments*

- **17 March 2014** – A new discriminating phone call revealed on Tuesday indicated that Turkish Airlines allegedly shipped weapons to unknown groups in Nigeria, which has been ravaged by violence between the army and Boko Haram militants.
  - Meanwhile Nigeria’s secret police stated Monday that seven people have been arrested in connect with the death of a Muslim cleric who had criticized the banned Nigerian Islamist group Boko Haram.

### **Senegal**

- **29 March 2014** – As Guinea continued its efforts on Saturday to contain an Ebola epidemic, which has already killed dozens and has spread from the southern forests to the capital Conakry, neighboring Senegal has decided to close its borders.

**Sierra Leone**

- **25 March 2014** - On Tuesday, countries in West Africa were on high alert after Sierra Leone warned that an Ebola outbreak ravaging Guinea may have crossed its border as Liberia was testing five death cases.



# 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 11

## 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.

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## **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.

## Domestic News

- **17 March 2014** – According to a statement released by the presidential office, Burkina Faso's President Blaise Compaore is currently in France on a private visit that will last from March 16 – 22. According to the statement, the President will use the visit to discuss with various individuals the current affairs as well as national and international economic issues. While the statement did not provide any further details, it is likely that Burkina Faso's President will hold talks with French authorities about Burkina Faso's proposed amendment to Article 37 to limit the presidential tenure to two terms, the establishment of a Senate and the organization of a referendum to validate proposed constitutional amendments.

## Ghana

### No Travel Restrictions



### Security Summary

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

### On the Ground Reporting

- **20 March 2014** – Ghana's opposition leader Nana Akufo-Addo, who narrowly lost two presidential polls, announced Thursday that he would again seek his party's nomination for the 2016 general election. Speaking to a crowd of supporters on the grounds of his residence in the capital Accra, Akufo-Addo stated, "with great humility, I can announce that when the party opens nominations sometime this year, I shall be ready. God willing, to contest for the position of NPP presidential candidate for the 2016 election." Before he will be considered the flag bearer, New Patriotic Party (NPP) parliamentarians and party officers must approve his candidacy. Should he secure the NPP nomination, he will almost certainly square off against current President Mahama, a leader who has been praised as charismatic but whose job performance has been criticized, notably over his struggles

to reign in public spending and control deficits. NPP spokesman Perry Okudzeto has indicated that Akufo-Addo was the first person to declare his candidacy for the party's nomination. During the December 2012 elections, Akufo-Addo secured 47.7 percent of the vote. Although most observers judged the elections to be free and fair, Akufo-Addo alleged widespread irregularities at polling stations across the country. He later launched a legal challenge to the results that gave President John Dramani Mahama the win with 50.7 percent. However after an eight-month legal battle, which was closely watched in the nation of 25 million people, the Supreme Court rejected his petition and upheld the results last year, after which Akufo-Addo spent six months in Britain before returning to Ghana earlier this month. The fallout from the disputed 2012 poll was seen as a key test for a nation widely regarded as West Africa's most stable democracy, which boasts one of the world's fastest growing economies. In the 2008 presidential elections, Akufo-Addo lost by less than one percentage point to ex-president John Atta Mills.

## Domestic News

- **29 March 2014** - On Saturday, the Ivory Coast's leader Alassane Ouattara announced that Ghanaian President John Dramani Mahama has been elected the new head of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). During the closing speech at a summit of the 15-nation regional bloc, President Mahama's Ivorian predecessor announced "I am very happy to tell you that yesterday (Friday) my peers...decided to name as head of ECOWAS, my brother and friend Johan Dramani Mahama, the president of the Republic of Ghana." Ouattara has wrapped up two one-year terms as head of the West African group during which he dealt with the democratic transition in Guinea-Bissau and the war in Mali. The bloc's new leader, 55-year-old Mahama, was vice president in Ghana when president John Atta Mills died in July 2012. He was elected the leader of a country seen as a beacon of democracy in West Africa in December that year.

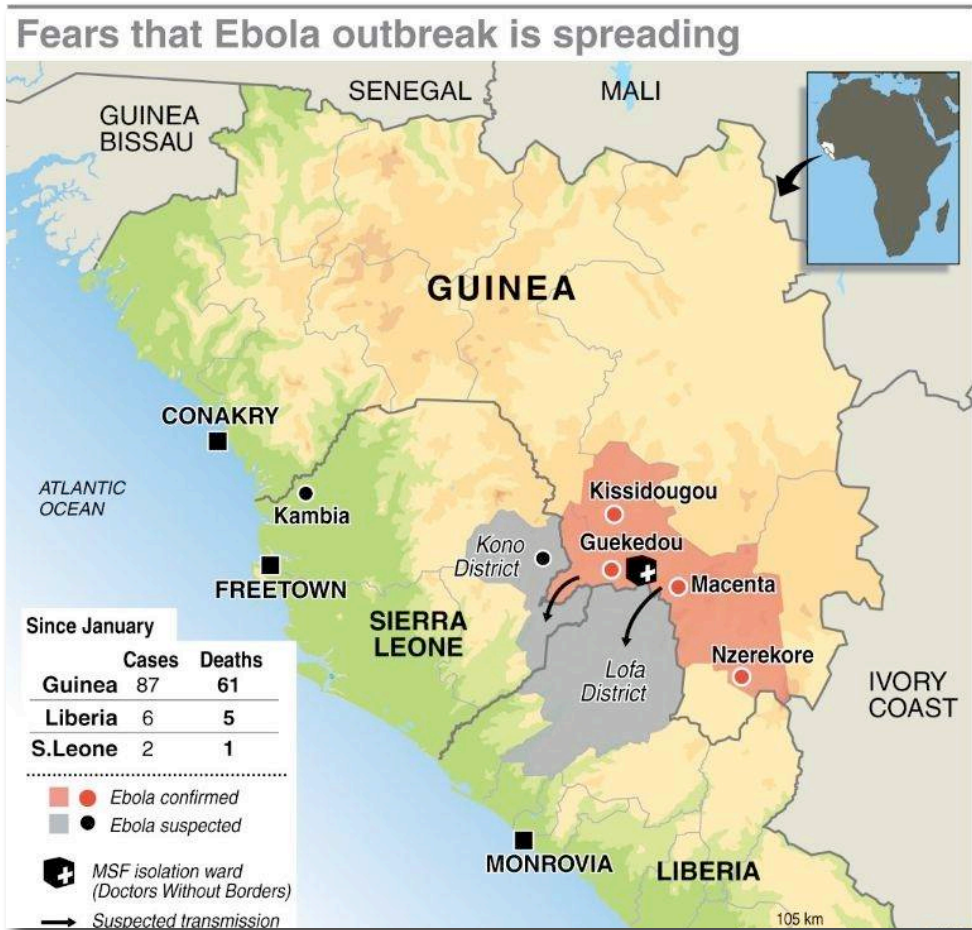
# Guinea

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



## Security Summary

An outbreak of contagious hemorrhagic fever, which has been identified as the Ebola virus, has been confirmed in the Forest region of south-eastern Guinea. So far, at least fifty-nine deaths have been confirmed



and eighty cases have been reported. Ebola cases have been reported in the districts of Macenta, Guekedou and Kissidougou. Although officials had previously indicated that the Ebola virus had spread to the capital Conakry, tests have come back negative. Nevertheless, there have been reports of a hemorrhagic fever in the capital city, which has yet to be identified. MS Risk advises all travellers to Guinea, and those already in the country, to not travel to the affected areas. It is strongly advised that you closely monitor the official health advice issued by Guinean authorities, maintain strict standards of hygiene and avoid eating bush meat. Despite the outbreak, Guinea's



airports and borders have remained open.

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.

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 March 2014** – An Ebola epidemic, which has so far killed dozens of people in Guinea’s southern forests, has now spread to the capital Conakry, with health sources confirming four new cases on Thursday. The spread of Ebola to Conakry marks an escalation in the outbreak of the virus in Guinea. According to Guinean Health Minister Remy Lamah, the spread of the virus appeared to have been transmitted by an old man who showed signs of hemorrhagic fever after visiting Dinguiraye, which is located in central Guinea, more than 150 kilometers (90 miles) from the previously identified outbreaks of Ebola. Four of the man’s brothers later started showing the same symptoms after attending his funeral in the central town of Dabola, which is located 200 kilometers (125 miles) from Conakry. They were tested for Ebola upon their return to the coastal capital city. According to Mr Lamah, “the four tested positive....They have been placed in an isolation ward in Donka hospital.” Conakry, which is a vast, sprawling port city on Guinea’s Atlantic coast, is also home to between 1.5 and 2 million people. Although authorities in Conakry had on Sunday identified three cases of hemorrhagic fever, two of them fatal, samples taken from the victims have tested negative for Ebola. As of Wednesday, 63 deaths had been reported from suspected cases in Guinea’s remote southeastern Forest Region. At least six more people have died in Sierra Leone and Liberia from Ebola-like symptoms, most of them after crossing over from Guinea.
- **26 March 2014** – On Wednesday, Guinea continued its battle to contain an Ebola epidemic threatening neighboring countries as fears and confusion gripped communities under siege from one of the deadliest viruses known to mankind. The Zaire strain, which has been detected in Guinea and which

was first observed in the Democratic Republic of Congo thirty-eight years ago, has a 90 percent death rate. Aid organizations have sent dozens of workers to help the poverty-hit country combat a hemorrhagic fever outbreak, which has already claimed at least sixty-seven victims, many of whom have been confirmed to have been infected by Ebola. The on the ground situation was described in a statement released by Joseph Gbaka Sandounou, a unit manager for Plan International, who was quoted as saying that “on Monday, two more deaths were reported in our area. People are really frightened.” He added that many have “...seen people die in a matter of just two or three days. They are constantly worried who is going to be the next fatality.” The British-based charity also indicated that people in Guinea’s southern forests, which has been the epicenter of the outbreak, which began in February, had been terrified by seeing neighbors bleeding severely as they were struck down by the virus. Prior to this latest outbreak, the Ebola virus had never spread amongst humans in West Africa. Five deaths are now being investigated in Liberia, one in Sierra Leone, with others still being tested, resulting in fears that this could bring the total in the epidemic to above 70. On Tuesday, Sierra Leone warned that a 14-year-old buried recently may have been infected in Guinea, while the deaths of four women and a boy in Liberia are being tested for the killer virus. Confirming two new deaths on Monday, Guinea’s chief disease prevention officer Sakoba Keita told reporters “we are not at the end of this epidemic, we continue every day to record a number of new cases or fatalities.” He did however note “...the daily incidence is lessening. We believe the peak has passed.” Doctors Without Borders (MSF) however has indicated that the spread of the disease was being exacerbated by people travelling to funerals in which mourners touch the dead person’s body.

- **24 March 2014** – Aid workers and public health officials on Monday attempted to contain West Africa’s first outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus as tests on suspected cases in Conakry allayed fears that it had spread to the capital city. According to the government, at least 59 people have died in an outbreak of the virulent virus raging through Guinea’s southern forests however tests on three hemorrhagic fever cases, in which two of them were fatal, in Conakry were negative. The Pasteur Institute however is still working on identifying the virus behind the fever cases in the capital city. The test results dismissed a statement released Sunday by the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) which had indicated that the Ebola virus “has quickly spread from the communities of Macenta, Gueckedou, and Kissidougou to the capital, Conakry.” On Sunday, officials from the health ministry and the World Health Organization (WHO) met in Conakry for urgent talks on the crisis. A government statement released Monday indicated “from January to March 23, Guinea has recorded a total of 87 suspected cases of viral hemorrhagic fever, including 61 deaths.” The government also indicated that most of the reported cases were in the southern regions of the country. Aid organization Plan International has also warned that the epidemic risks spreading to neighboring countries because of the free movement of people across borders. According to Ibrahima Toure, Plan’s country director in Guinea, “communities, especially children, in the border areas between Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone are vulnerable and need immediate support. A large-scale preventive action will need to be put in place rapidly.” Neighboring Senegal and the Ivory Coast have reactivated their epidemiological surveillance systems. Sierra Leone’s chief medical officer Brima Kargbo indicated Monday that there were no suspected cases in the country, adding that medical teams had been sent to areas bordering Guinea in order to look for unusual cases of fever. **Update (24 March 2014)** – Neighboring Liberia has reported its first suspected victims. While at least 59 people are known to have died in Guinea’s southern forests, the Liberian cases, if confirmed, would be the first indication that the highly contagious pathogen has crossed into another country. A statement released by Liberian Health Minister Walter Gwengile

stated “as of this morning, six cases have been reported of which five have already died – four female adults and one male child. One of the suspected cases, a female child, is under treatment.” The Health Minister further indicated that the patients had come from Guinea for treatment in hospitals in the northern Liberian county of Lofa. He added that inspectors had been in the area since Friday and that “the team is already investigating the situation, tracing contacts, collecting blood samples and sensitizing local health authorities on the disease.”

- **23 March 2014** – According to the United Nations Children’s Fund, an Ebola epidemic, which has already killed dozens of people in Guinea’s southern forests, has now spread to the capital Conakry. A statement released by UNICEF indicated that “at least 59 out of 80 who contracted Ebola across the Western African country have died so far. Over the past few days, the deadly hemorrhagic fever has quickly spread from the communities of Macenta, Gueckedou, and Kissidougou to the capital, Conakry.” The statement further noted that “this outbreak is particularly devastating because medical staff are among the first victims, so far it has killed at least eight health workers who have been in contact with infected patients, hindering the response and threatening normal care in a country already lacking in medical personnel.” The organization has also indicated that it has rushed five tonnes of aid, including medical supplies, to the most affected areas in Guinea’s southern regions. The organization has urged Guineans not to attend funerals wherever possible and to avoid all contact with the sick and the dead. Conakry, a vast and sprawling port city on Guinea’s Atlantic coast, is estimated to have a population of between 1.5 and two million. **Update (24 March 2014)** – Guinea’s government announced Monday that samples taken from three suspected cases of Ebola, which led to two deaths in Conakry, had tested negative. According to Dr. Sakoba Keita, the health ministry’s chief disease prevention officer, “the Pasteur Institute in Dakar worked urgently all last night on samples taken from suspected cases here in Conakry which were all negative. So for now, there’s no Ebola in Conakry, but hemorrhagic fever whose nature remains to be undetermined.”
- **22 March 2014** – On Saturday, as the death toll rose to fifty-nine, officials in Guinea identified the Ebola virus as the source of a highly contagious epidemic affecting the southern regions of the country. Although experts in the West African country had previously been unable to identify the disease, which displayed symptoms including diarrhea, vomiting and bleeding, scientists studying samples in the French city of Lyon confirmed that it was Ebola. According to Dr. Sakoba Keita, the ministry’s chief disease prevention officer, “the Ebola fever epidemic raging in southern Guinea, including the prefectures of Gueckedou and Macenta, since February 9 has left at least 59 dead out of 80 cases identified by our services on the ground,” adding, “we are overwhelmed in the field we are fighting against this epidemic with all the means we have at our disposal with the help of our partners but it is difficult. But we will get there.” A statement released by medical aid group Doctors Without Borders (MSF) indicated that it would strengthen its team of 24 doctors, nurses, logisticians and experts in hygiene and sanitation already in Guinea. The organization has set up isolation units for suspected cases in the southern region of Nzerekore and is looking for people who may have had contact with the infected. According to MSF tropical medical adviser Esther Sterk, “these structures are essential to prevent the spread of the disease, which is highly contagious,” adding that “specialized staff are providing care to patients showing signs of infection” Officials at MSF also indicated that they will be sending around 33 tonnes of medicines and isolation, sanitation and protective equipment in two planes leaving Belgium and France. Ebola, which is one of the world’s most virulent diseases, was first discovered in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 1976. The DRC has since had eight outbreaks of the disease. The most recent epidemic, which occurred in the DRC between May and

November 2012, infected 62 people and left 34 dead. Although there have been outbreaks amongst humans in Uganda, the Republic of Congo and Gabon, the disease had never before been detected in people in West Africa. There have also been fears that the disease could one day be used in a biological weapons attack as, according to researches, the virus multiplies quickly, overwhelming the immune system's ability to fight the infection. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), to date, no treatment or vaccine is available for Ebola, which kills between 25 and 90 percent of those who fall sick, depending on the strain of the virus. The disease is transmitted by direct contact with blood, feces or sweat, or by sexual contact or unprotected handling of contaminated corpses. A medic in neighboring Monrovia indicated that Liberia was also at considerable risk from the disease stating "we have a 90 percent chance of having cases in Monrovia because about 80 percent of goods on the Liberian market come from Guinea."

- **20 March 2014** – A mysterious illness in southern Guinea has killed at least twenty-three people over the past six weeks, however according to the health ministry, the disease has yet to be positively identified. According to Dr Sakoba Keita, the doctor in charge of the ministry's preventive wing, "a feverish sickness whose first symptoms were observed on February 9 has claimed at least 23 lives, including that of the director of the Macenta district hospital and three staff, out of a total of 36 cases." Dr Keita noted that "the administrative district of Gueckedou is the worst affected, with 13 deaths for 19 cases," adding that "the illness is characterized by fever, diarrhea, vomiting, and bleeding in the cases of some patients." Medical experts have been sent to the district in order to identify the highly contagious disease, which is displaying similar symptoms to those caused by Lassa fever, yellow fever and Ebola. About thirty test samples have also been sent to France for analysis, with results expected "within 48 hours." Further samples are due to be examined at the Pasteur Institute in the Senegalese capital Dakar. Protective measures have already been taken, including quarantine for each of the patients, as well as individual and collective measures affecting the local population. Three thousand health kits intended for medical personnel and residents of high-risk areas are awaited from Burkina Faso, while the Swiss branch of Doctors Without Borders (MSF) has already sent one hundred tonnes of medical equipment.

## Regional Reporting

- **29 March 2014** – As Guinea continued its efforts on Saturday to contain an Ebola epidemic, which has already killed dozens and has spread from the southern forests to the capital Conakry, neighboring Senegal has decided to close its borders. In response to the deadly outbreak, the Senegalese interior ministry indicated Saturday that it was closing its border crossings to Guinea "until further notice." The order affects crossings at Kolda and Kedougou in the south of Senegal, which are heavily used by traders, particularly during a weekly market that is attended by thousands from neighboring countries. As of late Friday, officials in Guinea had confirmed eight new Ebola cases, including one fatality. A statement released by the Guinean Health Ministry indicated "the total number of suspected cases recorded from January to 28 March 2014 is 111 cases of hemorrhagic fever including 70 deaths...or a fatality rate of 63 percent." The statement further indicated that all those infected have been put into isolation at the capital's biggest hospital to prevent the highly contagious virus from getting into the population. The World Health Organization (WHO) has also indicated that Liberia has reported eight suspected cases of Ebola fever, including six deaths, while Sierra Leone has reported six suspected cases, five of them fatal.

- **28 March 2014** – The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), a grouping of fifteen countries, has indicated that Guinea’s outbreak of Ebola is now “a serious threat to regional security.” ECOWAS has appealed for help from the international community. Fifteen new confirmed or suspected cases, including in Conakry, were reported on Thursday, bringing the total in Guinea to 103. Most victims have been adults and four health care workers’ deaths have been attributed to Ebola. Scientists from Dakar, Lyon and Hamburg have examined around 41 samples from victims, with 15 testing positive for the Zaire strain of Ebola, which is the most virulent. A statement released by Guinea’s health ministry indicated “WHO has alerted countries bordering Guinea about the outbreak and to heighten surveillance for illness consistent with a viral hemorrhagic fever, especially along land borders.”

## International Developments

- **28 March 2014** – On Friday, the European Union (EU) announced that 500,000 euros (US \$690,000) in aid will be sent “to help to contain the propagation of the virus, which can kill up to 90 percent of affected people, in Guinea and neighboring countries.” The EU funds will be used by health charity Doctors Without Borders (Medecins Sans Frontieres, MSF) “for clinical management, including isolation of the sick and psychological support, research into suspected cases as well as training and the supply of personal protective equipment for health personnel.” The EU aid came after a plea for assistance from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The regional bloc has indicated that it was “deeply concerned” about the epidemic, which presented a “serious threat to the region.”
- **24 March 2014** – Health officials in Canada have indicated that a man is in hospital with symptoms of a hemorrhagic fever that resembles the Ebola virus. He is in isolation in critical condition in Saskatoon, the largest city in the province of Saskatchewan. A provincial medical official has stated that there currently is no risk to the public. According to Dr Denise Werker, the province’s deputy chief medical officer, the man had recently returned from Liberia, which is also currently suffering from a deadly outbreak of an unidentified hemorrhagic fever. She however declined to say how long the man had been in Africa, only stating that he had fell ill after returning to Canada. A virus resembling Ebola has struck in Guinea, with cases also reported in Liberia. As many as 61 people have died of the disease in the remote forests of southern Guinea. **Update (25 March 2014)** – The Public Health Agency of Canada announced Tuesday that a Saskatchewan man who doctors feared may have contracted the Ebola virus or another serious hemorrhagic fever has tested negative for the deadly diseases. According to the agency, in addition to testing negative for Ebola, the man also does not have Marburg hemorrhagic fever, Lassa fever, or Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever. The man, who remains in isolation in a Saskatoon hospital, is currently undergoing additional tests, with sources indicating that he may be suffering from a “severe case of malaria.”

## 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. National elections have been scheduled for 13 April 2014.

### Domestic News

- **26 March 2014** – Campaigning is now underway in Guinea-Bissau ahead of the 13 April presidential and parliamentary elections which are aimed at moving the country from two years of political crisis following an April 2012 military coup. However the organization of the polls remains a concern for officials in Guinea-Bissau and internationally. It has been almost two years since Guinea-Bissau attempted to hold an election. In April 2012, a military coup disrupted the presidential race as it headed into a second round run-off. The upcoming 2014 elections have already been pushed back three times, resulting in the international community to increase pressure in February in an attempt to head off another possible postponement. Despite the campaign being launched, there are still concerns of logistical problems ahead. In the run-up to the polls, Guinea-Bissau's electoral commission carried out a massive biometric voter registration campaign, with authorities indicated it had covered 95 percent of the country's voters. Although electoral commission spokesperson Catia Lopes has stated that technical preparations for the polls are on track, there has not been much of an education campaign in the media about the new voting procedures. According to her, this could be a problem as this will be the first time Bissau-Guineans will vote with biometric voter cards. International funds for organizing the polls were also slow to come in over the past two years, and the electoral timeline is now tight. On March 15, the country's High Court of Justice confirmed thirteen presidential candidates for the election. This decision effectively gave the country less than one month to have all the ballots printed. A total of fifteen parties are running for parliamentary seats. Although Guinea-Bissau is currently attempting to move towards a stability, the political crisis dates back much further than 2012. While

Guinea-Bissau is one of Africa's smallest countries, it is also one of the most unstable, as there have been repeated coups, mutinies, and political assassinations since the country gained its independence forty years ago. No elected president has ever finished his mandate and the military remains to be a destabilizing force. Currently there appears to be no clear presidential frontrunner, with many believing that the elections are expected to go to a second round.

## 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

- **24 March 2014** – The transfer of former Ivorian strongman Laurent Gbagbo’s onetime “street General” to The Hague to face charges of crimes against humanity has divided his West African nation. According to the pro-Gbagbo opposition, the search for closure following more than a decade of turmoil in the Ivory Coast was all but doomed after former youth leader Charles Ble Goude was sent to join his former mentor in the International Criminal Court’s (ICC) detention center. A statement released by the Ivorian National Front Party (FPI) indicated that the government has “cut off dialogue” by embracing a “major obstacle to national reconciliation. While the Ivorian opposition decried what it called “victor’s justice,” advocacy group Ivorian Coalition for the ICC said that it had favored Ble Goude’s transfer, but also urged the government to hand over other names to the court, including from the pro-government camp. While Alassane Ouattara’s government has focused its attention on reconciliation, many doubt whether or not it can be achieved. Furthermore, entire villages in the western region of the country, close to the border with Liberia, continue to be devastated by abuses from both sides. In March 2012, a team from the ICC visited the western town of Duekoue in order to investigate suspected mass graves that appeared to hold hundreds of people killed a year earlier, when forces loyal to the future President Ouattara seized the town. Meanwhile, although the Ivory Coast seems split on the decision to send Ble Goude to the ICC, many have accused the ICC of an anti-African bias, notably as all eight cases that it is currently handling concern African countries, despite the fact that four of them were referred to the court by the countries themselves. The Ivorian government has also argued against surrendering Laurent Gbagbo’s wife Simone to the ICC on the grounds of defending its national



sovereignty while also arguing that its justice system, while imperfect, had sufficiently recovered from the crisis to be capable of trying her.

## Domestic News

- **22 March 2014** – The Ivory Coast’s government confirmed Saturday that Charles Ble Goude, the former right-hand man of Ivorian ex-president Laurent Gbagbo, is on his way to The Hague to be tried for crimes against humanity. The 42-year-old former youth leader faces four counts of crimes against humanity at the International Criminal Court (ICC), including murder and rape, which were allegedly committed during the post-election violence that occurred between 2010 – 2011 in the West African country. The former leader of the “Young Patriots,” and once known as Gbagbo’s “Street Genera,” will join his former boss at the ICC’s detention. In a statement released Saturday, ICC prosecutor Fatou Bensouda hailed the transfer, stating “we are a step closer in helping to unveil the full truth in one of Ivory Coast’s worst episodes of mass violence in recent history.” He added that Ble Goude “allegedly bears individual criminal responsibility, as indirect co-perpetrator, for four counts of crimes against humanity, namely murder, rape and other forms of sexual violence, persecution, and other inhuman acts.” Bensouda also indicated Saturday that “this is not the end of our work in Ivory Coast...we will collect more evidence, and as warranted, bring further cases before the ICC judges without fear or favor, and irrespective of sides or political affiliation of the perpetrators.” The crisis in the country, which was once seen as a beacon of stability in the region, began with Gbagbo’s refusal to concede defeat in the November 2010 elections, effectively sparking armed clashes that killed more than 3,000 people. During the crisis, Ble Goude galvanized support for Gbagbo with fiery speeches, urging mass mobilization against what he called pro-Ouattara “rebels” and their foreign backers, specifically former colonial power France and the United Nations. His election rival Alassane Ouattara, the current president, eventually ousted him thanks to international military backing. Gbagbo, who was transferred to the Netherlands in late 2011, also faces four counts of crimes against humanity however pending further investigation, the court has not yet confirmed the charges. In December 2011, the ICC issued an arrest warrant for Ble Goude however it was not made public until late last year. On Thursday, the Ivorian cabinet agreed to transfer him to the ICC. He was initially arrested in Ghana in January 2013 after more than a year and a half on the run and extradited to the Ivory Coast. On Saturday, Ble Goude’s lawyer indicated that Ivorian investigators had presented little evidence against his client, noting that “we are respectful of the law, but we are not afraid.”
- **20 March 2014** – An official in the Ivory Coast announced Thursday that the country will transfer Charles Ble Goude, the jailed right-hand man of former president Laurent Gbagbo, to the International Criminal Court (ICC). According to a source at the presidency, the decision was made during a cabinet meeting. Gbagbo’s former youth leader was arrested in Ghana more than a year ago and extradited to the Ivory Coast. The Ivorian authorities were initially hesitant to surrender Ble Goude, citing reasons of “national sovereignty,” and stating that the country’s justice system had sufficiently recovered from the crisis to be capable of trying him on its own. They had used similar arguments in declining to transfer Laurent Gbagbo’s wife, Simone, to The Hague. The leader of Gbagbo’s Front Populaire Ivoirien party, Pascal Affi N’Guessan, regretted the decision to transfer Ble Goude, arguing that it would not ease tensions. He indicated “this does not show that the country is advancing on the path of normalization, of some kind of way out of conflict.” The United Nations and rights groups have alleged that forces

backing both Gbagbo and Ouattara committed war crimes and crimes against humanity during the crisis, and that both sides should face justice.

## International Developments

- **27 March 2014** – Charles Ble Goude, an ally of Ivory Coast ex-President Laurent Gbagbo made his first appearance Thursday at the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague. Appearing before the court, Mr Ble Goude 42, greeted his supporters in the public gallery with a clenched-fist salute, giving his name, age and profession: “Consultant in political communication.” The former youth minister also stated “I know that I will go home.” Mr Ble Goude, a former minister, has been charged with committing crimes against humanity during clashes that followed the 2010 elections. Prosecutors at the court have accused him of being responsible “as indirect co-perpetrator” for four crimes against humanity, including rape, murder and persecution. He however has denied all the charges, including accusations that he led a militia. The crimes are said to have been committed between December 2010 and April 2011, following the disputed elections. His extradition from the Ivory Coast last week has infuriated supporters of Mr Gbagbo who is also at The Hague Court where he is awaiting trial. Supporters of Mr Gbagbo have described last week’s handover of Mr Ble Goude to the ICC as a setback for reconciliation. Many have also accused the ICC and the government, which is now led by Alassane Ouattara, of pursuing “victor’s justice” by targeting only those who were close to Mr Gbagbo. The Ivory Coast’s next elections, which are due to take place in 2015, are expected to be a test of reconciliation in the country.

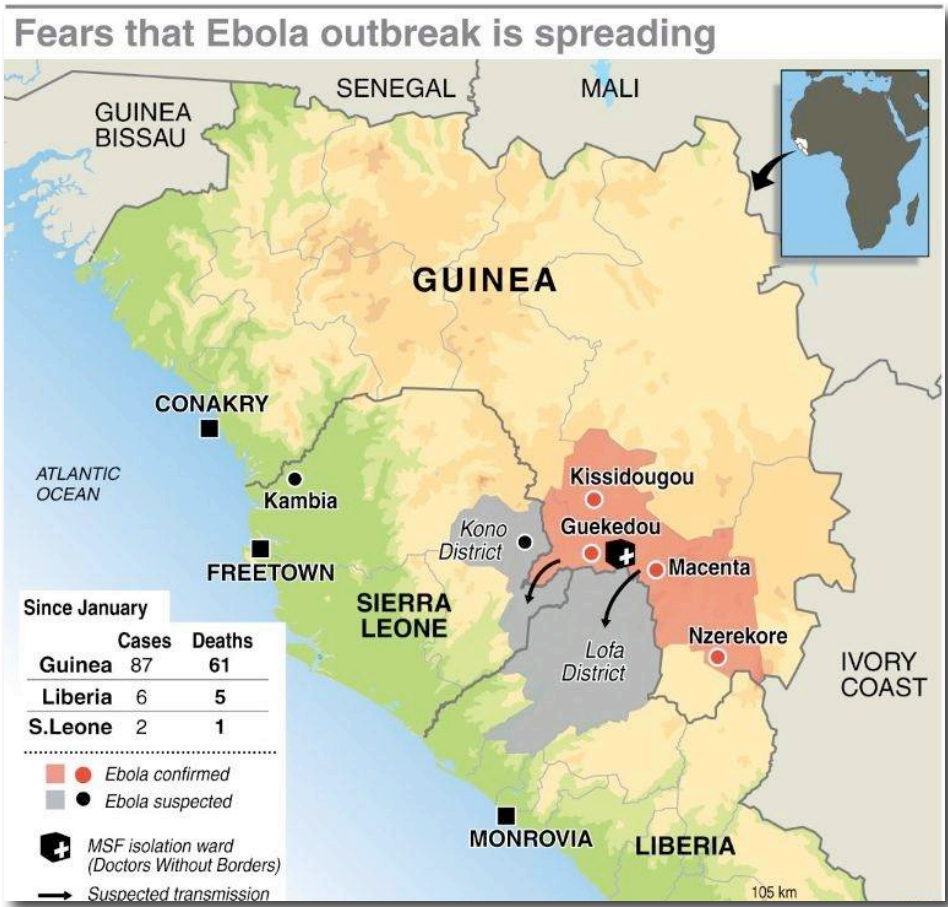
# Liberia

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



## Security Summary

On the 23 March 2014, the World Health Organization (WHO) was notified by the Ministry of Health in Guinea of confirmed cases of Ebola hemorrhagic fever. This is the first outbreak of Ebola reported in Guinea. Since then, cases have been reported in the forested areas of south-eastern Guinea, including in the Guekedou, Kissidougou, Macenta and Nzerekore districts. Four cases have been confirmed in Guinea's capital city Conakry while suspected cases in the border areas of neighboring Liberia and Sierra Leone are still being investigated. Although the Ministry of Health, WHO and other international partners are assisting in the investigation and management of the outbreak, the outbreak is nevertheless rapidly evolving, with case numbers expected to increase in the coming days.



Although the Ministry of Health, WHO and other international partners are assisting in the investigation and management of the outbreak, the outbreak is nevertheless rapidly evolving, with case numbers expected to increase in the coming days.

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 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.

## On the Ground Reporting

- **24 March 2014** - Neighboring Liberia has reported its first suspected victims of the Ebola virus. Sources have indicated that Africa's biggest Ebola outbreak in seven years has probably spread from Guinea to neighboring Liberia and also threatens Sierra Leone. While at least 59 people are known to have died in Guinea's southern forests, the Liberian cases, if confirmed, would be the first indication that the highly contagious pathogen has crossed into another country. A statement released by Liberian Health Minister Walter Gwenigale stated "as of this morning, six cases have been reported of which five have already died – four female adults and one male child. One of the suspected cases, a female child, is under treatment." The Health Minister further indicated that the patients had come from Guinea for treatment in hospitals in the northern Liberian county of Lofa. He added that inspectors had been in the area since Friday and that "the team is already investigating the situation, tracing contacts, collecting blood samples and sensitizing local health authorities on the disease." According to a statement issued by Guinea's Health Ministry, "the total suspect cases recorded to date, amount to 86 cases with 59 deaths," indicating that most cases reported since the start of the outbreak in early February were in the southern regions of the country. The first analyses of samples by the Pastuer Institute in the French city of Lyon indicated that cases in southern Guinea were due to the Ebola virus. Although three cases of hemorrhagic fever, two of them fatal, were reported in Conakry, tests for the Ebola virus came back negative. The disease, one of the world's most virulent, is transmitted to humans from wild animals and between humans by direct contact with blood, feces or sweat, or by sexual contact and the unprotected handling of contaminated corpses. The tropical virus can affect its victims within days, causing severe fever and muscle pain, weakness, vomiting and diarrhea. In some severe cases, it can result in a shutting down of the major vital organs and can cause unstoppable bleeding. To date, no treatment or vaccine is available for the Ebola pathogen, which, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), kills between 25 and 90 percent of those who fall sick, depending on the strain of the virus. It was first discovered in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 1976.

Since then, the central African country has suffered eight outbreaks. The most recent epidemic, also in the DRC, infected 62 people and left 34 dead between May and November 2012. Although there have been outbreaks amongst humans in Uganda, the Republic of Congo and Gabon, the disease had never before been detected in people in West Africa. Days ago, aid organization Plan International warned that the epidemic risked spreading to neighboring countries because of the free movement of people across borders. According to a statement released by Ibrahima Toure, Plan's country director in Guinea, "communities, especially children, in the border areas between Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone are vulnerable and need immediate support." While Liberia may be the first neighboring country to report an outbreak of the Ebola virus within its borders, Senegal, Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast have reactivated their epidemiological surveillance systems. Sierra Leonean aid organization, the Health for All Coalition, has warned that there was a high risk of transmission in border areas, stating "people, good and animals – such as sheep, goats and cows used in Sierra Leone – come from Guinea and it is these districts that they are brought into. And in these areas, people hunt for birds, monkey and baboons for food."

- **18 March 2014** – The Nyaaken Border in River Gee County with the Ivory Coast is said to be vulnerable, with just three Immigration-BIN personnel and no Liberia National Police (LNP) seen in the area. According to several local residents, Nyaaken, which is the last town between River Gee and Maryland, and borders Liberia close to the Ivory Coast, there is little presence of security personnel at the border to keep the place safe. Residents further reported that sometimes at night, the main border remains completely empty, with the few Immigration officers that are assigned at the border, abandoning their duties.

# 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



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## On the Ground Reporting

- **25 March 2014** – The leader of an armed group in Mali’s troubled north has stated that the central government in Bamako could face another uprising from the Tuareg people if it resists pressure to launch the long-delayed talks on the region’s future. Speaking on Monday, Ibrahim Ag Mohamed Assaleh of the Coalition for the People of Azawad (CPA) stated “we would like to give talks a chance and we are asking Bamako to sit down at the negotiating table,” adding “if the Bamako government doesn’t want to suffer from short-term memory, it should recall that we took up arms many times since 1963 because they didn’t listen to us.” Ag Assaleh, a leading Tuareg negotiator for a peace accord sealed last June, launched the CPA this month after falling out with the main Tuareg separatist group behind the 2012 uprising, the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA). CPA members say that their group is backed by 8,000 fighters but is less radical in its aims than the MNLA and respect Mali’s territory. A membership list indicates that the CPA had created thirty official posts covering areas including finances, refugees and human rights. Mali exploded into violence when Tuareg separatist fighters attempted to take over the northern region of the country in early 2012. However Islamist militants eventually occupied the region, triggering a French military intervention last year that drove most of the militants out. Although Malian President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, who was elected in August 2013, is currently attempting to rebuild Mali, many of his critics have noted that Keita’s election promise to build a strong, united Mali is now being undermined by his failure to start talks with the Tuaregs. These remarks have also been highlighted by the United Nations Security Council, which has also warned of a radicalization of fighters unless talks resume. The Tuaregs, a nomadic people in the north who, since 1960, have rebelled four times have stated that the central governments in Bamako have consistently excluded them from power.
- **24 March 2014** – In the wake of an outbreak of hemorrhagic fever Ebola in the Forest Region of Guinea, the Government of Mali has quickly taken stock of the situation, informing the public that practical steps are being taken in order to prevent the introduction and spread of this disease in Mali. Although to date no suspected cases of the Ebola virus have been reported in Malian territory, the techniques of health in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) services are mobilized for the implementation of the action plan adopted. These include: to strengthen the health border control; strengthen epidemiological surveillance, particularly cases of fever and bleeding, vomiting and jaundice; to inform communities and health care providers about preventative measures; strengthen stocks of drugs for the management of cases; establish protective equipment and personnel for the transportation of samples; to prepare health facilities to the establishment of isolation and support units; strengthen the capacity of staff on the prevention and management of potential case load. The government has asked that the population remain calm, assuring them that it will be keeping information on any developments.
- **20 March 2014** – According to legal and military sources, the leader of a military coup, which plunged Mali into chaos two years ago, effectively enabling Islamist militants to seize control of the northern desert, has begun a hunger strike to protest against the conditions of his detention. General Amadou Sanogo is protesting over his transfer to the lakeside town of Selingue, which is located 150 kilometers (90 miles) south of Bamako. His lawyer has indicated that this had transfer had left him cut off from his family and legal advisers as well as depriving him of medical care and essentially placing him in danger. Speaking to reporters, Harouna Toure stated that Sanogo “...is going to observe a hunger strike and also abstain from medical treatment.” A military source close to the general confirmed that

he had begun a hunger strike on Wednesday. Selingue, which lies near the border with Guinea, is the site of one of Mali's largest hydroelectric dams and is a popular tourist destination in the West African country. Sanogo was arrested and charged with complicity in kidnapping last November in connection to the disappearance of dozens of paratroopers loyal to toppled President Amadou Toumani Toure during the 2012 coup. Authorities discovered thirty bodies, some of them in military uniforms, in mass graves near the headquarters of the coup leaders at military barracks in the town of Kati, which is located just outside the capital Bamako. Thirty-two Malian soldiers arrested with Sanogo in November last year have been released after they began a hunger strike in January in order to protest against the conditions of their detention. **Update (25 March 2014)** – Military sources have indicated that General Amadou Sanogo has abandoned a hunger strike to protest against the conditions of his detention. According to a military source close to Sanogo's family, "he was sick. He had a very bad stomach on Thursday," adding "his supporters called on him to abandon his hunger strike rather than die a martyr and apparently he listened to them." On Saturday, members of the MP22 movement, which was formed in the wake of Sanogo's March 22 putsch, staged a march in Bamako to mark the second anniversary of the coup and called on Sanogo to abandon his hunger strike.

- **18 March 2014** – On Tuesday, officials in Mali confirmed that they had summoned the Russian ambassador to Bamako in order to explain why Moscow had agreed to meet with members of an armed separatist group from the West African nation. Malian Foreign Minister Zahabi Ould Sidi Mohamed has indicated that he called in ambassador Alexie Doulian on Monday in order to explain "the parameters of the stay of an armed group in Russia," adding "he insisted that his country recognizes the territorial integrity of Mali and the approach of his country is not at all a recognition of the MNLA. The summoning of the Russian ambassador comes in the wake of a statement that was issued by the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), which indicated that a delegation of the MNLA, led by its political head of Bilal Ag Acherif, met with Russian deputy foreign minister Mikhail Bogdanov on Friday last week in Moscow.
- **17 March 2014** – Malian authorities announced Monday that they are currently holding one of the country's most wanted Islamist fighters after he surrendered to French troops. Since launching a military offensive in Mali in January 2013, France had been pursuing Abu Dar Dar, a leader of the al-Qaeda-linked Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA). On Monday, a Malian military source in the northern city of Gao stated "I confirm that Abu Dar Dar has handed himself into Serval troops," adding "he was then turned over to our troops and transferred immediately to Bamako since yesterday evening. Although there are several fighters in the region who go by the name Abu Dar Dar, the source did not specify which one had been detained. The detention comes just days after French troops killed Oumar Ould Hamaha, a jihadist known as 'Red Beard' with a US \$3 million US government bounty on his head.

## Domestic News

- **27 March 2014** – On Thursday, Mali swore in a new high court that will be charged with hearing a case of high treason against former President Amadou Toumani Toure, who was toppled in a coup in 2012. The case was brought before the National Assembly by the current government in 2012. It has accused the former president of failing in his duty as commander of Mali's armed forces to prevent foreign forces from seizing national territory. Toure will be tried before a new High Court of Justice, whose members were chosen by parliament. According to parliament member Mamadou

Diarrassouba, the new court "...has 18 members, including nine tenured judges and nine deputies. They were sworn in at the National Assembly this morning." Toure, who won power in a 2002 presidential election and was reelected five years later, has also been accused of destroying military equipment and promoting army personnel to positions for which they were unqualified. The coup, which was partly triggered by anger at government corruption and failure to equip the armed forces, which occurred weeks before Toure was due to step down. Toure currently resides in Dakar, the capital of neighboring Senegal.

# Mauritania

**Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country**

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



## Security Summary

### Summary

Due to the current Ebola outbreak in Guinea, with possible cases being tested in Liberia and Sierra Leone, Mauritania announced this week that it was closing all but two of its southern border crossings with Senegal. It has also imposed strict sanitary controls at those crossings.

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.

Since early 2012, there have been demonstrations in a number of locations across the country, including Nouakchott. In general, demonstrations have been peaceful however some have involved clashes with police, resulting in the use of tear gas. On 3 March 2014, one person died and at least 15 were injured in Nouakchott during a



demonstration over an alleged case of apostasy. Protests have been located near the Presidency and the main market area. Smaller demonstrations have taken place in other towns, including Nouadhibou. There is a possibility that further such demonstrations will occur. MS Risk therefore advises all travellers to avoid all political gatherings and demonstrations.

#### *Terrorism*

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

#### *Kidnapping*

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

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

# Niger

**Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country**

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



## Security Summary

MS Risk advises against all travel to the 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.

# 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

- **30 March 2014** – On Sunday, Nigeria's secret police indicated that there had been an escape attempt by detainees at their headquarters, with unconfirmed reports that Boko Haram militants were involved. According to Department of State Services (DSS) spokeswoman Marily Ogar, "there was an attempted jail break by our inmates when the suspect handler went to feed them." The spokeswoman did not provide details on the number of inmates involved in the escape attempt nor did she disclose why they were being held however she did note that an official statement would be issued later. According to a security source, the incident occurred when inmates disarmed one of the guards, hitting him with their handcuffs before seizing his rifle and shooting him. The condition of the guard was not immediately known. The DSS headquarters in the capital Abuja are located near the presidential villa and nearby residents reported hearing gunfire on Sunday morning. Shortly after the incident, traffic was diverted in the area. **Update (30 March 2014)** – Twenty-one people have been killed in an attempt to escape from detention at the headquarters of Nigeria's secret police in the capital Abuja. It remains unclear whether all of those killed during Sunday's unrest are prisoners, however Marily Ogar, spokeswoman for the State Security Services indicated that two service personnel had been seriously injured in the incident. The army has deployed to the area in order to secure the headquarters.
- **26 March 2014** – According to Nigeria's main relief organization, more than 1,000 people have been killed in three states in northeastern Nigeria as a result of Boko Haram violence. The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) figures are the starkest indication yet of the increase in bloodshed that has occurred in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe, resulting in growing concern. During its presentation in Abuja on Tuesday, NEMA's officials indicated that people living in the states were "caught up in an intensifying conflict," which has been raging since 2009. The added "the human toll: more than 1,000 people dead and 249,446 displaced between January to March 2014....One in five of the total population are not living in their own homes." According to NEMA, some 3.2 million people,

nearly a third of the overall population in the three states, were affected by the crisis, most of them women, children and older people. A total of 244,000 were living with friends or relatives and just over 5,000 were in camps. Officials indicated that “immediate assistance” was required for 1.5 million people while there needed to be an “urgent and significant scale-up” of humanitarian assistance, especially food, water and healthcare. Since the start of the new year, violence in northeastern Nigeria has increased, with a number of high-profile attacks being carried out, including one on a boarding school in Yobe which left dozens of students dead. The state of emergency, which was imposed in the three states in May of last year, has also largely forced the militants out of urban centers and into the rural areas, resulting in villages in remote and rural areas bearing the burnt of continued attacks which have been blamed on the militants.

- Renewed violence between herdsmen and farmers in central Nigeria has killed seven people, just days after a previous attack that claimed thirteen lives. Benue state spokesman Daniel Ezeala confirmed the incident, stating “we recovered seven bodies following the attack on Agena village yesterday (Tuesday),” he added that “it was the usual attack by Fulani on Tiv farming communities in the state.” The state spokesman has indicated that local police officers have quelled the violence. Central Nigeria, where the mainly Christian south meets the largely Muslim north, has been plagued by communal violence for many years. The latest attack comes just days after another incident which occurred Sunday, when suspected Fulani herdsmen killed thirteen people in Gbajimba, another Tiv farming village. Earlier this month, some 100 people were killed in nearby Kaduna state when assailants armed with guns and machetes attacked local villages.
- **25 March 2014** – Two explosions in Nigeria’s troubled northeastern city of Maiduguri on Tuesday have killed at least eleven people, including five police officers who were believed to have been the targets. Borno state police spokesman Gideon Jibrin confirmed the explosions, stating that one vehicle exploded at 7:50AM (0650 GMT), killing three civilians. while another bomb was thrown at a police vehicle ten minutes later, killing five police officers. It was not immediately clear whether the three others killed in the second attack were the insurgents behind it. Boko Haram militants are suspected to be behind the latest attack to hit Maiduguri.
- **24 March 2014** – In a new video released on Monday, Boko Haram has claimed responsibility for an attack on a key military barracks in the northeastern city of Maiduguri, and warned of further bloodshed, including against civilians. The video depicts a man dressed in white, wearing black headgear and carrying an assault rifle. He claims to be the group’s leader, Abubakar Shekau and confirms that “we carried out the attacks in Maiduguri (on March 14).” The thirty-seven minute video, which depicts the man speaking in the local Hausa and Kanuri languages, as well as Arabic, also depicts images showing what appear to be heavily armed Boko Haram fighters arriving in pick-up trucks and firing on the Giwa barracks with assault rifles and rocket propelled grenades. The man in the video however appears to be younger, thinner and with different mannerisms than from the older videos released by the militant group. This is likely to prompt questions about whether the militant leader, who had previously been reported killed, is still alive. Shekau was reported to have been killed in a gun battle in the northeastern region of Nigeria between 25 July – 3 August 2013, however a man resembling him has featured in a number of videos since then. Nigeria’s military has yet to confirm officially whether Shekau is still alive and defence spokesman Chris Olukolade has stated that whoever was making the claims in the videos was immaterial. Shekau has been declared a global terrorist by the United States,

which put a US \$7 million (5.1 million euro) bounty on his head. Nigeria has separately offered 50 million naira (US \$300,000) for information that will lead to his capture or death.

- Meanwhile police officials indicated Monday that gunmen have killed thirteen people in an attack on a farming community in central Nigeria. A further ten people were injured in the shooting that occurred in the village of Gbajimba on Sunday morning. According to Benue state police spokesman Daniel Ezeala, “the residents of the community, who are mainly Tiv farmers, tried to repel the attack,” adding “thirteen people lost their lives, while 10 were injured and several houses were burnt by the attackers.” The state police spokesman has blamed the attack on Hausa-speaking Fulani herdsmen. Violence over grazing rights is common in Nigeria, particularly in the so-called Central Belt, where the mainly Christian south meets the largely Muslim north. Earlier this month, at least 100 people were killed in Kaduna state when assailants armed with guns and machetes stormed local villages. Two weeks ago, Benue state governor, Gabriel Suswam, narrowly escaped death during a visit to a camp for victims of violence when his convoy was ambushed by suspected Fulani gunmen. Fulani leaders have for years complained about the loss of grazing land, which is crucial to their livelihood, with resentment between the herdsmen and their agrarian neighbors rising over the past decade.
- **23 March 2014** – At least seventeen people have been killed in an explosion in a village market in northeastern Nigeria. According to local police chief Lawan Tanko, the deadly blast struck a busy marketplace late on Thursday in the remote village of Nguro-soye, Borno state, killing at least seventeen people and injuring many more. The attack, which is currently being investigated by police, has been blamed on Boko Haram militants. Police chief Tanko did not say that “there is an ongoing military operation in the area against the group and the attack was likely in frustration over their losses.” News of the attack was slow to emerge after insurgents destroyed nearby telecom towers, shutting down communications in the area. Nguro-Soye lies close to the town of Bama, where sixty people were killed last month in coordinated bomb and gun attacks carried out by Boko Haram militants who then went on to burn half the town. According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), so far in 2014, some 700 people have been killed in more than forty incidents.
- **22 March 2014** – Following deadly attacks that have been blamed on Boko Haram militants, public secondary schools in Nigeria’s northeastern Borno state have been closed indefinitely. The closure reportedly affects 85 secondary schools, which cater to some 120,000 students across the troubled state, which is also home to Boko Haram who has vowed to stop children attending school. Some public schools in the northern part of Borno however has been closed for over two years amidst fears of attacks. A Borno state official confirmed the closure of the schools, stating that the state commissioner for education had already ordered schools in Konduga, Bama, Mafa, Dikwa and Damboa towns, where Boko Haram has launched several deadly raids, to relocate their students to safer schools in Maiduguri. Deadly attacks blamed on Boko Haram militants have intensified since the turn of the year, with some 700 killed in more than 40 attacks, effectively making it one of the bloodiest years since the insurgency began in 2009. A wave of attacks on education targets, including the killing of boarding school students, has prompted international condemnation and is one of the reasons behind the decision to shut down public secondary schools. Late last month, forty-three students were shot when suspected Boko Haram gunmen stormed the Federal Government College in Buni Yadi, in nearby Yobe state. In the wake of deadly attacks on schools in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe, officials in Nigeria also recently shut five government colleges in the country’s restive northeast.

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## Domestic News

- **26 March 2014** – According to Nigeria’s Justice Minister, assets worth US \$458 million, which were stolen by former Nigerian dictator Sani Abacha and frozen by the United States, should ultimately be returned to Nigeria. Although Nigeria had not previously commented on the asset freeze, which the US Justice Department stated was “the largest civil forfeiture action to recover the proceeds of foreign official corruption” it had ever brought, a statement from Nigeria’s Justice minister Mohammed Adoke indicated that the country had applauded “the efforts of the United States to recover the funds for the benefit of the people of Nigeria.” Mr Adoke has further indicated that his office was cooperating with Washington’s legal efforts against Abacha’s relatives and associates, which could result in the permanent forfeiture of all the money. He noted that “the overall objective of these efforts is to ensure that Nigeria as the Victim State is able to have the forfeited assets repatriated,” adding Nigeria “will do all that is required to realize this objective.” The US Justice Department did not specify what actions would be taken with regard to the Abacha funds when the seizure was announced on March 5. If however the Abacha funds are repatriated directly into Nigeria’s coffers, this will likely spark criticism amongst civil society leaders who claim that the government cannot be trusted to spend money on public services. The US has said that the funds held in various European accounts were the “proceeds of corruption” during Abacha’s iron-fisted military rule between 1993 and 1998.
- **19 March 2014** – Nigeria’s new broader approach to tackling the Boko Haram insurgency has won plaudits, with the plan now being seen as a recognition that military might alone would not end the continuing bloodshed. In a rare public announcement, National Security Adviser Sambo Dasuki unveiled the new measures, which touch not only on past mistakes but also indicate a more joined-up approach towards tackling the crisis. Dasuki’s “soft power” plan includes “de-radicalization” programmes for suspected and convicted Boko Haram fighters as well as closer co-operation with communities most affected by the deadly violence. Dasuki also acknowledged that the militants, whose guerrilla tactics have killed thousands since 2009, had been more effective in conveying their message, and that had to change. The new policy has effectively been seen as an attempt to regain the upper hand from the insurgents who have continued to carry out vicious attacks on a weekly basis despite the launch of military operations in May last year. Since the beginning of this year, Boko Haram’s attacks have intensified, with more than 700 people having died in the restive northeast, while tens of thousands more have fled for their lives, either in fear of further attacks or after militants razed their homes and businesses. A wave of strikes, including the slaughter of boarding school students in their beds while they slept, prompting international condemnation and raising questions about the military’s response. Senior officials however have maintained that Boko Haram are on the back foot, attributing the rise in violence to a weakened enemy lashing out as soldiers cut off escape routes, seizing arms and ammunition.
  - Meanwhile as Nigeria’s top brass visited troops in northeastern Nigeria, the country’s military told Boko Haram militants Wednesday that talks remained an option. Speaking in the northeastern city of Maiduguri, army chief of staff Lieutenant General Kenneth Minimah stated “to the insurgents, the dialogue table is still open, else the national power is available to the armed forces to crush the insurgency.” Minimah was accompanied on the visit to the city, which was the scene of a daring Boko Haram strike on a military barracks carried out last Friday, by his air force counterpart Air Marshal Adesola Amosu. Nigeria’s counter-insurgency efforts have

largely involved ground troops who have been supported by air power. However a wave of recent deadly attacks has prompted questions about whether the strategy is effective. Many had previously urged the government to open channels of communication with more moderate elements within Boko Haram and broaden the counter-insurgency fight to include economic and social development in the impoverished north.

- **18 March 2014** – Nigeria on Tuesday unveiled a new “soft power” plan to defeat Boko Haram, hoping to win hearts and minds in the restive northeastern region of the country. National Security Adviser Sambo Dasuki indicated that the government was to introduce schemes to encourage local communities to shun extremism as well as “de-radicalize” suspected militants awaiting trial. Speaking during a news conference in Abuja, the security adviser indicated that “it’s a stick and carrot approach....We believe that we can win the war against terror by mobilizing our family, cultural, religious and national values.” He further noted that new tactics were required because the militants had infiltrated communities in the remote region, enabling them to spread their message more effectively than the government. Dasuki’s comments come in the wake of an upsurge in Boko Haram-linked violence that has killed more than 700 people so far this year, one of the deadliest rates since the insurgency began in 2009. Since emergency rule was imposed in the northeastern states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe last May, some 300,000 people have been displaced, piling pressure on local authorities and relief agencies. Despite the emergency rule, the attacks have continued. Last Friday, militant fighters launched a daring strike on the Giwa barracks in the Borno state capital, Maiduguri, hurling explosives to break out dozens of their brothers in arms from custody. The attack came after a wave of strikes on civilians in rural Borno as well as on a boarding school in Yobe, that saw students killed in their beds, prompting international condemnation. This increase in violence has also raised fears that the Boko Haram insurgency is out of control and has created an impression that the militants can roam the northeast with impunity and attack at will. The military’s counter-insurgency tactics have also been called into question, while there have been doubts about whether troops are adequately equipped to deal with the threat quickly and decisively. Overall, strategic direction has been criticized as lacking, although there are signs that the new defense minister, former army general Mohammed Gusau, is trying to get everyone into line.
- **17 March 2014** – Nigeria’s President Goodluck Jonathan has opened a national conference, calling on delegates to tackle the country’s burning issues head on in order to build a stronger and more united nation. According to the president, the meeting is a chance to build “a stronger foundation for faster development” to guarantee “a more united, progressive and prosperous nation.” Nearly 500 delegates from the hundreds of ethnic, religious and linguistic groups that make up Africa’s most populous nation have converged in Abuja for the conference which could last three months. Likely to be high on the agenda are questions on how to tackle the Islamist-linked violence, rampant corruption and how to share oil wealth more fairly. The effectiveness of the country’s political structure is also likely one of the questions that will be discussed. Strictly off-limits, however, is the discussion about whether Nigeria should break apart just one hundred years since British colonialists merged the previously separate northern and southern protectorates.

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## Regional Reporting

- **27 March 2014** – Cameroonian authorities confirmed Thursday that they had arrested three suspected arms dealers who are believed to be linked to Nigeria’s militant Islamist group Boko Haram. According to a Cameroonian police official, the men were caught in the far north of the country on Wednesday, near the Nigerian border where the group has been waging a brutal armed insurgency. The police official added “members of the BIR (an elite rapid-response unit of Cameroon’s army) and the police found a significant stock of arms including a Kalashnikov and rocket launchers near Goulfey.” He further noted that the “three suspects were taken in for questioning, suspected of being the arms traffickers that supply Boko Haram,” adding “the stock of weapons was sizeable, and we think the plan was to bring them through Cameroon before taking them to Nigeria.” While the official did not specify where the men were from, he did indicate that the arms had come from Chad. Shortly after their arrest, the men and all seized weapons were taken to Maroua, the regional capital. Boko Haram is fighting a bloody insurgency in the majority-Muslim north of Nigeria, with the National Emergency Management Agency stating this week that more than 1,000 people have been killed in the violence so far this year. Some of the group’s fighters are thought to have fled to neighboring Cameroon since the Nigerian army launched a military offensive in May last year. Although Nigeria recently appealed to its neighbors for help in trying to eradicate the group, so far this month, six suspected fighters and one Cameroonian soldier have been killed in clashes after Boko Harm militants infiltrated into neighboring Cameroon, proving that the shared porous border is being used effectively by the militants as a source of safety.
- **17 March 2014** – Officials in Cameroon have indicated that Boko Haram militants are suspected of carrying out an attack on one of the country’s markets near Kousseri, which left at least one soldier dead. A similar attack had occurred in the same area on 9 March. Local residents have reported that the attackers entered Cameroon through the porous borders, shooting at soldiers Thursday night in a market near Kousseri, a town located near Cameroon’s borders with Chad and Nigeria. The governor of the Far North Region, Awah Fonka Augustin, also believes that Boko Haram militant are behind the attack, stating that while the town has returned to normal, the population remains uneasy despite soldiers being deployed to the region to protect them. Cameroon’s Minister of Communication, Issa Tchiroma Bakari, has also indicated that the attack was the work of foreign insurgents from a bordering country that is experiencing what he called a “religious crisis.” While the minister did not specifically name Boko Haram as the group responsible for the attack, he did call on neighboring countries to respect Cameroon’s peaceful position. Cameroon is seen by many as being caught between Nigeria’s violence-plagued north and the sectarian conflict that is engulfing its eastern neighbor, the Central African Republic. Furthermore, this attack is not the first time that suspected Boko Haram militants have entered Cameroon’s territory. In two separate incidents last year, Boko Haram militants kidnapped a French family and a French pries in the northern region of Cameroon. They were later brought over the border into Nigeria. In turn, concerns have also surfaced that the militant group may be using neighboring states, particularly Cameroon, as a safe haven from which they are able to launch attacks and seek shelter from the ongoing Nigerian military campaign. Amidst these concerns, Cameroonian officials earlier this month strongly denied that the country was allowing its territory to be used as a raining ground for terrorist groups, including Boko Haram.

## International Developments

- **17 March 2014** – A new discriminating phone call revealed on Tuesday indicated that Turkish Airlines allegedly shipped weapons to unknown groups in Nigeria, which has been ravaged by violence between the army and Boko Haram militants. In a tape posted online, Mehmet Karatas, an assistant executive of the airline, allegedly tells Mustafa Varank, an advisor to Turkey's Prime Minister, that he feels guilty over the national flag carrier's arms shipment to Nigeria. During the tape, Karatas is allegedly heard saying "I do not know whether these (weapons) will kill Muslims or Christians. It is a sin." The leaked conversation is just the latest blow to Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has been hit by a corruption probe ensnaring his key allies and a widening phone-tapping scandal. The leaked call also has the potential to harm the airline's image, which is 49 percent state-owned and is currently in an aggressive push to become a global player. The call is the latest in a series of recordings implicating Erdogan and his aides in corruption and other abuses of power ahead of crucial local polls which are set to occur on 30 March 2014. The Prime Minister has dismissed most of the tapes, stating that they are "vile" fakes put together by rivals. **Update (20 March 2014)** – Turkish Airlines has denied reports that it has been bringing arms into Nigeria, which may have found their way in northeastern Nigeria, where Boko Haram militants have caused violence. An official statement released by the airline indicated "Turkish Airlines has not been involved in any carriage of arms to that country (Nigeria) from Turkey nor from any country."



# Senegal

## No Travel Restrictions



## Security Summary

In response to the outbreak of the Ebola virus in Guinea, Senegal has closed its border crossing to Guinea. The order affects the crossings at Kolda and Kedougou in the south of 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.

## Domestic News

- **29 March 2014** – As Guinea continued its efforts on Saturday to contain an Ebola epidemic, which has already killed dozens and has spread from the southern forests to the capital Conakry, neighboring Senegal has decided to close its borders. In response to the deadly outbreak, the Senegalese interior

ministry indicated Saturday that it was closing its border crossings to Guinea “until further notice.” The order affects crossings at Kolda and Kedougou in the south of Senegal, which are heavily used by traders, particularly during a weekly market that is attended by thousands from neighboring countries. As of late Friday, officials in Guinea had confirmed eight new Ebola cases, including one fatality. A statement released by the Guinean Health Ministry indicated “the total number of suspected cases recorded from January to 28 March 2014 is 111 cases of hemorrhagic fever including 70 deaths...or a fatality rate of 63 percent.” The statement further indicated that all those infected have been put into isolation at the capital’s biggest hospital to prevent the highly contagious virus from getting into the population. The World Health Organization (WHO) has also indicated that Liberia has reported eight suspected cases of Ebola fever, including six deaths, while Sierra Leone has reported six suspected cases, five of them fatal.

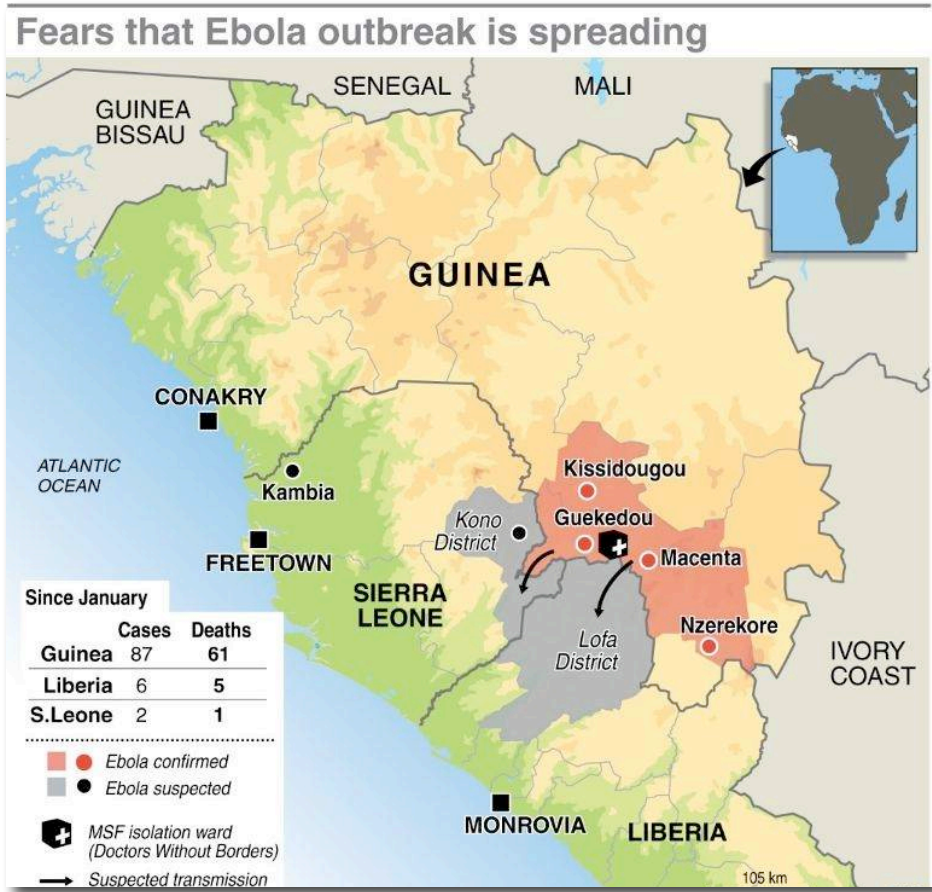
# Sierra Leone

No Travel Restrictions



## Security Summary

On the 23 March 2014, the World Health Organization (WHO) was notified by the Ministry of Health in Guinea of confirmed cases of Ebola hemorrhagic fever. This is the first outbreak of Ebola reported in Guinea. Since then, cases have been reported in the forested areas of south-eastern Guinea, including in the Guekedou, Kissidougou, Macenta and Nzerekore districts. Four cases have been confirmed in Guinea's capital city Conakry while suspected cases in the border areas of neighboring Liberia and Sierra Leone are still being investigated. Although the Ministry of Health, WHO and other international partners are assisting in the investigation and management of the outbreak, the outbreak is nevertheless rapidly evolving, with case numbers expected to increase in the coming days.



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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.

## International Developments

- **25 March 2014** – On Tuesday, countries in West Africa were on high alert after Sierra Leone warned that an Ebola outbreak ravaging Guinea may have crossed its border as Liberia was testing five death cases. Sierra Leone's chief medical officer Brima Kargbo told reporters Tuesday that "we still do not have any confirmed cases of Ebola in the country. What we do have are suspected cases which our health teams are investigating." The chief medical officer added that one of the cases concerned a 14-year-old boy thought to have died two weeks ago in Guinea before being buried in a village on the Sierra Leone border. The second was a patient who was still alive in the northern district of Kambia. Tests are currently underway as a variety of deadly, highly-contagious tropical bugs, including the Marburg virus and Lassa fever, can lead to similar symptoms experienced with Ebola, including vomiting, diarrhea and profuse bleeding. Authorities in Sierra Leone however have not announced which other pathogens have been picked up in samples. Since the start of February, more than sixty people have died of hemorrhagic fever in Guinea, with the Ebola virus identified as the cause in 13 of 45 samples tested by scientists. The Ebola disease had never before been detected amongst people in West Africa. On Monday, Liberia, which border Guinea to the south, reported that four women and a boy had died of suspected Ebola. Internationally, Canada's health ministry had feared that the virus may have crossed continents after a man was hospitalized with symptoms consistent with Ebola infection after returning from Liberia. However a spokesman for Canadian Health Minister Rona Ambrose indicated Tuesday that tests on the patient had proved negative.



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