



MS | RISK

West Africa Report

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

April 14 – 27, 2014

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

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

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

References are always available.

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Summary

April 14 - 27, 2014



Gambia

- **25 April 2014-** Gambia reopened its borders with Senegal on Friday, ending a week-long diplomatic stand-off between the West African neighbours.
- **15 April 2014** – Airport officials confirmed Tuesday that The Gambia has banned flights from Ebola-hit West African countries from landing in its territory.

Guinea

On the Ground Reporting

- **20 April 2014** – The latest update from the World Health Organization (WHO) shows the cumulative total of clinical cases in Guinea to be 203, with 129 recorded deaths.
- **17 April 2014** – Scientists have reported that the Ebola virus, which has killed scores of people in Guinea and Liberia, is a new strain, evidence that the disease did not spread there from outbreaks in some other African nations.

- Meanwhile, the World Health Organization (WHO) has announced that the Ebola virus outbreak in West Africa has claimed 137 lives.
- **16 April 2014** – Police confirmed Wednesday that five women and two girls have been killed in a landslide at a goldmine in north-eastern Guinea.
- **15 April 2014** – According to the latest World Health Organization (WHO) count, the outbreak of the Ebola virus in West Africa has now been linked to the deaths of more than 120 people.
- **14 April 2014** – Guinea's Foreign Minister Francois Fall reported Monday that the West African country has brought the spread of the deadly Ebola virus under control after more than 100 people have died.

Guinea - Bissau

Domestic News

- **18 April 2014** – The African Union, which suspended Guinea Bissau from its membership, has declared its readiness to lift the sanctions following completion of presidential elections.
- **16 April 2014** – Guinea-Bissau's election commission announced Wednesday that after no one secured a majority in the first round of elections, the country's presidential poll will go to a second round between the main party's candidate and the army-backed hopeful.
- **14 April 2014** – Officials in Guinea-Bissau reported a high turnout on Sunday as the country held its presidential and parliamentary elections, which are aimed at returning stability to a country that has been plagued by drug trafficking and unrest following a series of military coups.
 - Meanwhile observers from the West African regional bloc ECOWAS stated Monday that Guinea-Bissau's elections over the weekend were free and fair.

International Developments

- **16 April 2014** – The United States has praised the holding of successful elections in Guinea-Bissau as an "important step" towards a better future after years of political instability and violence.

Ivory Coast

- **17 April 2014** – The UN is seeking exemption from a UN Security Council (UNSC) arms embargo on Ivory Coast in order to weapons and military equipment across the nation to its peacekeeping mission in landlocked Mali.
- **17 April 2014** – Five Ivory Coast newspapers, whose publications have been temporarily suspended, are denouncing the measure.

Liberia

- **25 April 2014** – The governments of Liberia and China have signed two separate bilateral agreements to enhance Liberia's fight against the Ebola virus, and helping the Liberia Broadcasting System (LBS) respectively.
- **17 April 2014** – The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in Liberia has established a laboratory at the Liberia Institute of Biomedical Research (LIBR) to test for Ebola and Lassa fever.

Mali

On the Ground Reporting

- **23 April 2014** – A mine exploded in the northern Malian town of Kidal seriously injuring a United Nations peacekeeper from Guinea but not harming a delegation of visiting diplomats
- **23 April, 2014** – The Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) has announced that a French hostage, Gilberto Leal Rodrigues, has died.
- **18 April 2014** – An impasse in negotiations between Mali's government and Taureg rebels could be creating insecurity in the country's north.
- **17 April 2014** – Officials in France have indicated that French troops in Mali have freed five local aid workers who were kidnapped in February 2014.
- **16 April 2014** – According to a government official, the Malian government has released nineteen former rebels and has withdrawn arrest warrants issued against them.
- **15 April 2014** – Malian officials have announced that samples from all its suspected cases had tested negative for the disease.
- **14 April 2014** – Security sources have reported the fugitive jihadist commander Mokhtar Belmokhtar is hiding in Libya, from where he plans to mastermind terrorist attacks across Africa's Sahel region.
 - Meanwhile, witnesses have reported that on Monday, militants fired a rocket into the centre of Mali's largest city, failing to cause any damage but panicking residents.

Regional Reporting

- **18 April 2014** – Following a two-day summit in Bamako, police chiefs from several West African nations agreed to strengthen inter-state cooperation to fight organised crime in the region.
- **14 April 2014** – Senegal is planning to send more peacekeeping troops to neighbouring Mali, where international forces are continuing to restore stability after Islamist militants took over the country's north in 2012.

International Developments

- **24 April 2014** – Algeria, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad have agreed to promote dialogue in Mali by convincing the concerned armed movements to participate for security of the region.
- **22 April 2014** – The Netherlands will be sending 450 soldiers to Mali as part of the United Nations mission MINUSMA.
- **15 April 2014** – On Tuesday, the European Union (EU) agreed to launch a new mission to boost police and National Guard forces in Mali.

Mauritania

- **20 April 2014** – Mauritania has announced that its next presidential election will be held on June 21 with a second round on July 5, if needed.

Niger

- **23 April 2014** – Boko Haram has reportedly moved its camp recruitment base to Niger, according to a report issued by the Hausa Service of the BBC.
- **23 April 2014** – Boko Haram is recruiting young members from Niger Republic, paying each N500,000

Nigeria

On the Ground Reporting

- **26 April 2014** – At least 40 people have been killed in clashes between government forces and militants in northern Nigeria, as the search for nearly 200 abducted schoolgirls continues.
- **23 April 2014** – Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), called for massive surveillance in light of increasing theft of oil in the Niger Delta.
- **23 April 2014** – A group of terrorists masquerading as herders have been arrested in Nigeria's central-east Taraba state.
- **20 April 2014** – The Nigerian military has begun a deployment of soldiers along the country's northern borders as part of efforts to rescue the schoolgirls who were kidnapped by Boko Haram.
- **17 April 2014** – The fate of more than 200 girls and young women, who were abducted by Boko Haram militants Monday, was thrown into uncertainty Thursday after the school principal denied a report from Nigeria's military that almost all the students had been freed.
- **16 April 2014** – Local government and security officials confirmed that suspected Islamist militants have struck for a fourth time in three days in Nigeria, killing twenty people including a traditional ruler in attacks carried out in the northeast.
- **15 April 2014** – Nigeria's states security organizations have launched a joint investigation into Monday's bombing in Nyanya, a suburb of the capital city.
- **14 April 2014** - Twin blasts at a packed bus station in Nigeria's capital on Monday have killed more than seventy people.

Domestic News

- **24 April 2014** – Leaders from across Nigeria appealed for a united front against Boko Haram, saying the Islamist insurgents were waging war on Christian and Muslim Nigerians alike.
- **24 April 2014** – Comptroller General of Nigeria Immigration Service, David Parradang, has stated that there are over 1,400 illegal routes into Nigeria, with only 84 approved border control posts.
- **18 April 2014** – A Nigerian was arrested in Nigeria for allegedly being in possession of over 1,000 passport photographs of young boys.

International Developments

- **15 April 2014** – The World Economic Forum stated that its Africa summit will be held in Nigeria's capital next month despite a bomb attack on the outskirts of the city which killed at least seventy-five people on Monday. \

Senegal

- **17 April 2014** – Judges in Senegal are set to pronounce Thursday the fate of ex-president Abdoulaye Wade's son Karim, who has been detained for over a year on corruption charges after accumulating a fortune worth more than US \$1 billion

Sierra Leone

- **24 April 2014** – Spokesman of the Chinese Embassy, Xu Zhou, announced in Freetown that China will donate medical materials to support Sierra Leone in the prevention of Ebola disease.
- **14 April 2014** – A court martial of thirteen soldiers and a captain, who have been accused of mutiny, has opened in the capital city.

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 9

Gambia

Ghana

An outbreak of the Ebola virus disease has been confirmed in Guinea and Liberia. While there have been no confirmations of the deadly disease in Ghana, officials are currently testing blood samples taken from a 12-year-old girl who recently died of a viral fever. MS Risk advises all travellers to or near the affected areas to take the necessary precautions; including maintaining strict standards of hygiene and avoiding eating bush meat. 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 chieftaincy 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.

Guinea – Page 13

Guinea-Bissau – Page 18

Ivory Coast

Liberia – Page 20

Mali – Page 23

Mauritania – Page 30

Niger – Page 32

Nigeria – Page 34

Senegal – Page 42

Sierra Leone

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



Anyone travelling 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 Boulou, 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 communications 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.

Gambia

No Travel Restrictions



Security Summary

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

On the Ground Reporting

- **25 April 2014-** Gambia reopened its borders with Senegal on Friday, ending a week-long diplomatic stand-off between the West African neighbours. Four days earlier, Gambia President Yahya Jammeh had ordered the closure of all official crossing points into Senegal. No explanation was given for the decision to close the borders, or to re-open them. An anonymous source reported, "The orders were given this morning by the government. That's all I can say. For now, I cannot tell you why they were opened." The closure came less than a week after Senegalese hauliers ended a month-long border blockade against Gambian vehicles, in protest over transit rights which they say have been decided unilaterally by Gambian authorities. Jammeh reportedly made the decision to close the border during a 21-day "country-wide dialogue with the people tour" which launched on April 17. Speaking on the reopening, Ousman Drammeh, president of the Gambia Transport Union reported, "We just saw (Gambian border police) lift up the barrier and vehicles started going in and out. There are no strange conditions." Jammeh is known for making unilateral and seemingly impetuous decisions.
- **15 April 2014** – Airport officials confirmed Tuesday that The Gambia has banned flights from Ebola-hit West African countries from landing in its territory. Staff at Banjul International Airport has confirmed that President Yahya Jammeh has ordered airlines to cancel all flights from Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone to prevent the spread of the deadly virus. Mali, which is also suspected to have cases of the Ebola virus, does not appear to have been included in the temporary ban, while Sierra Leone, which currently has no suspected cases, is on the list of outlawed countries. According to one airport official, "this decision by the Gambian authorities has left prospective passengers travelling to Banjul...stranded in these West African countries," adding "Brussels Airlines, which transits in Freetown from Europe, is only allowed to drop passengers there, but not pick anyone up." In response to this new decision, Sierra Leone's government has confirmed that it was in talks with Banjul over the

issue. Sierra Leone, where two suspected victims died and were buried before they could be tested, has indicated that it is not questioning Gambia's right to take action, but had no idea of the rationale behind the decision. According to Sierra Leone's government spokesman Abdulai Bayratay, "the government of Sierra Leone is currently engaging the Gambian government on the issue and providing all details of the surveillance system put in effect against the disease." The spokesman further noted "we still have no confirmed laboratory test of any Ebola outbreak here and this has been certified by the WHO, working with our health teams," adding "Sierra Leonean air passengers are travelling freely to Britain, Belgium and all over the world without hindrance." According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the outbreak in Guinea is one of the most deadly in history, with 168 cases "clinically compatible" with the Ebola virus disease reported. Since the start of this year, there have been 108 deaths. The outbreak began in Guinea's impoverished southern forests, but it has since spread to the capital city, Conakry. Neighbouring Liberia has also reported twenty-one cases, including ten deaths.

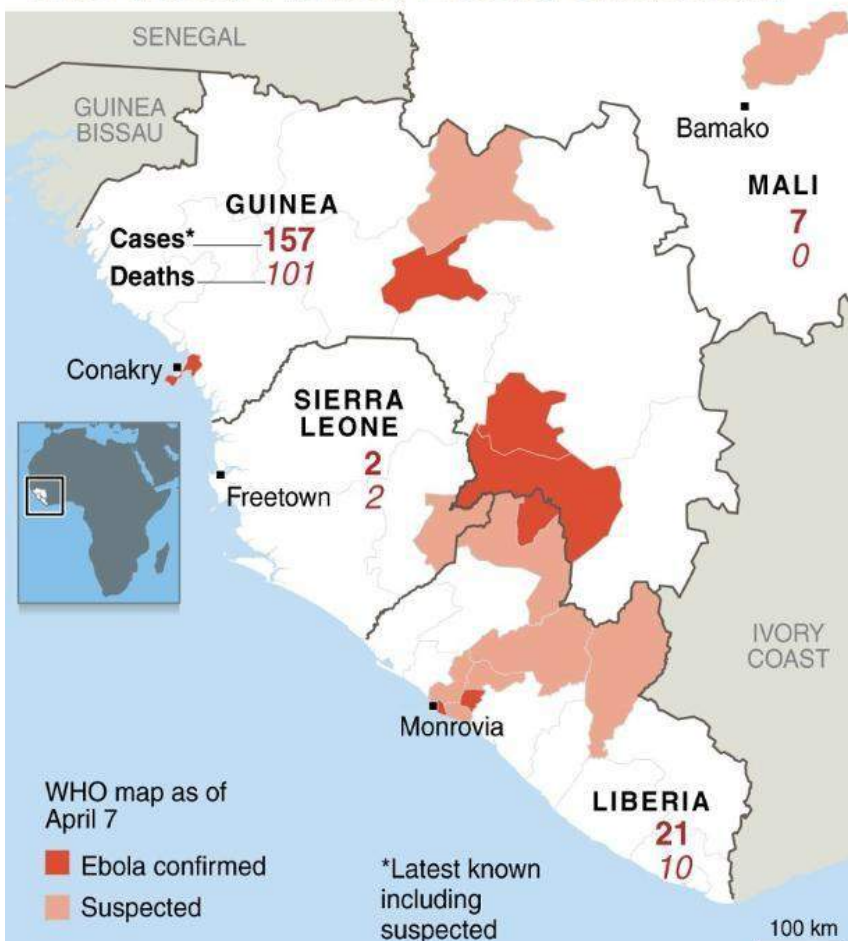
Guinea

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



Security Summary

The West Africa Ebola outbreak



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. Although the outbreak is currently concentrated in the Forest region of south eastern Guinea, there have been confirmed cases of Ebola reported in the capital, Conakry. Several suspected cases have also been reported in Dabola and Dinguiraye in central Guinea. There have already been over 90 deaths reported in Guinea, out of 150 suspected cases, including 202 cases in Conakry. 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, Macenta 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

- **20 April 2014** – The latest update from the World Health Organization (WHO) shows the cumulative total of clinical cases in Guinea to be 203, with 129 recorded deaths. Of the 158 patients tested for *ebolavirus* infection, 109 have been laboratory confirmed, including 61 deaths. The cases have been reported from: Conakry (50 cases, including 20 deaths), Guekedou (120/83), Macenta (22/16), Kissidougou (6/5), Dabola (4/4) and Djingaraye (1/1). Four new cases were isolated on 17 April, one of which is laboratory confirmed. Twenty-nine patients are currently in isolation in: Conakry (17), Guekedou (11) and Macenta (1). Fifteen patients have recovered from the illness and have been discharged from hospital. 230 contacts are currently under medical observation, and seven patients who developed symptoms are in isolation as a precautionary measure. Twenty-four health care workers have been affected (18 confirmed), with 15 deaths (11 confirmed). In neighbouring Liberia, no changes are reported.
 - **Update: 26 April 2014** – UNICEF now reports that from January to 24 April 2014, Guinea has recorded a total of 218 suspected cases of Ebola virus disease with 141 deaths (case fatality rate of 65%). Ebola confirmed cases and deaths stand at 115 and 72, respectively. Eighteen children are among the suspected cases. 13 children have died.
- **17 April 2014** – Scientists have reported that the Ebola virus, which has killed scores of people in Guinea and Liberia, is a new strain, evidence that the disease did not spread there from outbreaks in some other African nations. According to Dr Stephen Gunther of the Bernhard Nocht Institute for Tropical Medicine in Hamburg, Germany, “the source of the virus is still not known,” but it was not imported from nearby countries. Earlier, health officials had indicated that the Ebola virus found in Guinea was a Zaire strain, different from the kind that has caused cases in other parts of Africa. The new research analyzed blood samples from twenty patients in the current outbreak and found the strain was unique. According to Dr Gunther, “it is not coming from the Democratic Republic of Congo. It has not been imported to Guinea from that country or from Gabon, where Ebola also has occurred.” Researchers currently think that the Guinea and other strains evolved in parallel from a recent ancestor virus. The Guinea outbreak likely began last December or earlier and might have been smouldering for some time unrecognized. Dr Gunther has added that their investigation will continue in order to identify “the presumed animal source.”

- Meanwhile, the World Health Organization (WHO) has announced that the Ebola virus outbreak in West Africa has claimed 137 lives. In a statement posted on its website Thursday, the UN health agency stated that authorities have identified more than 220 suspected or confirmed cases of the disease in Guinea and Liberia. Nearly 200 of those are in Guinea. In light of the ongoing health crisis, the European Union (EU) announced Thursday that it was increasing its aid to those providing care for Ebola patients to 1.4 million Euros (US \$1.9 million)
- **16 April 2014** – Police confirmed Wednesday that five women and two girls have been killed in a landslide at a goldmine in north-eastern Guinea. According to police officials, the collapse occurred on Tuesday in Kintinian, a settlement located near Siguiri, which is a city on the Niger River near the border with Mali. According to one policeman, “the collapse of the mine, which also wounded at least eight people, including two seriously, occurred...at dawn in a goldmine frequented by illegal miners who don’t think twice about going into deep shafts that only they know and which can be up to 100 meters (330 feet) long.” The policeman added that authorities have in the past closed the mine several times after discovering that non-licensed miners were working in its shafts. In November 2013, around twenty miners were killed in a landslide at a goldmine in Siguiri while another eight were killed in the eastern town of Mandiana in March.
- **15 April 2014** – According to the latest World Health Organization (WHO) count, the outbreak of the Ebola virus in West Africa has now been linked to the deaths of more than 120 people. So far, 121 deaths have been reported in Guinea and Liberia. As of Monday, the United Nations health agency stated that it had recorded a total of 200 suspected or confirmed cases of Ebola, the majority of which are in Guinea. Officials have indicated that the outbreak in West Africa could last for months. The organization Health workers in Guinea are continuing to contain the spread of the deadly virus, specifically by tracking down anyone with whom the sick have had contact. Meanwhile on Tuesday, Mali announced that samples from all its suspected cases had tested negative for the disease. Malian Health Minister Ousmane Kone confirmed that the country had sent out ten samples for testing at labs in the United States and Senegal, adding that all were declared negative for Ebola. There are currently no other known or suspected cases in Mali.
- **14 April 2014** – Guinea’s Foreign Minister Francois Fall reported Monday that the West African country has brought the spread of the deadly Ebola virus under control after more than 100 people have died. Speaking to reporters shortly after a meeting with his South African counterpart Maite Nkoana-Mashabane in Pretoria, Mr Fall stated “we are pleased to say we have controlled the spread of the epidemic,” adding “we have managed to cure some of those infected. The Foreign Minister also noted “we benefitted from help from the international community to stop the spread of the epidemic.” Last week, international aid organizations launched a series of emergency measures in Guinea and across West Africa in a bid to contain the outbreak. The latest outbreak of the Ebola virus has been one of the most deadly, with 157 people infected and 101 deaths reported in Guinea alone. Guinea’s Foreign Minister has also indicated despite the virus being under control, strict measures are still being taken in order to prevent the disease from spreading again. According to the minister, everyone entering or leaving Guinea is checked for Ebola. Meanwhile in neighbouring Liberia, there have been twenty-one cases reported, including 10 deaths.

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 north-western regions of the country, specifically those which border the Casamance region of Senegal, including the Sao Domingos/Mpack road. National elections took place on 13 April 2014.

Domestic News

- **18 April 2014** – The African Union, which suspended Guinea Bissau from its membership, has declared its readiness to lift the sanctions following completion of presidential elections. The Nigerian ambassador to the AU, who currently holds the council presidency, stated that if a new President emerged through a round one victory or a runoff, the nation will have met the council's constitutional requirements. Guinea Bissau went to the polls to elect a new President after the past elections ended in a coup. In the first round of elections, observers stated that the polls were free and fair; however no candidate won the majority vote. The nation will conduct a second round of elections next month. The AU suspended Guinea Bissau from its membership in 2012 after a coup in a nation known for being a transit point for narcotics.
- **16 April 2014** – Guinea-Bissau's election commission announced Wednesday that after no one secured a majority in the first round of elections, the country's presidential poll will go to a second round between the main party's candidate and the army-backed hopeful. Jose Mario Vaz of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC) came first in Sunday's ballot with 40,9 percent of the vote while runner-up Nuno Gomes Nabiam garnered 25.1 percent. Almost three-quarters of Guinea-Bissau's eligible voters turned out for the watershed elections.
- **14 April 2014** – Officials in Guinea-Bissau reported a high turnout on Sunday as the country held its presidential and parliamentary elections, which are aimed at returning stability to a country that has been plagued by drug trafficking and unrest following a series of military coups. Election monitors reported no major incident Sunday and they are expecting a record turnout. The electoral commission stated Sunday that by 2:30PM GMT, turnout had reached 60%. Although no further information has been provided, sources have indicated that some centres stayed open an extra half-hour to ensure that everyone was able to vote. In the capital city Bissau, many turned up well ahead of the 7AM start of voting to ensure that they would get places in the queue. The elections were supervised by 4,200

Bissau-Guinean and West African soldiers while more than 500 international observers will decide whether the vote has been free and credible. Results are expected on Friday however if no clear winner emerges, a presidential run-off is scheduled on May 18. **Update (14 April 2014)** – Guinea-Bissau's election commission's president, Augusto Mendes, told reporters Monday "the numbers are positive. Taking into account the voter turnout in the various polling stations, participation would exceed 70 percent." He added that the commission hoped to publish the official results on Wednesday.

- Meanwhile observers from the West African regional bloc ECOWAS stated Monday that Guinea-Bissau's elections over the weekend were free and fair. The regional bloc has also called on international donors to restart cooperation, which was suspended in the wake of the 2012 coup. According to a statement released by the ECOWAS observer mission, "the election was conducted according to international standards and the election was peaceful, free, fair and transparent." Although the mission did note a few isolated problems in certain areas, including a shortage of ballot papers and an attack by the National Guard on some supporters of one candidate, it stated that these did not impair the overall conduct of the election. Kadre Desire Ouedraogo, the president of the ECOWAS Commission has stated that while "work remains to be done...the hardest part will be after the publication of results." He added that the 750 soldiers deployed to Guinea-Bissau by the 15-member bloc would remain in the country until December 2014. The troops are backed up by a civilian team, which will establish a forum of dialogue between politicians, the military and ordinary people. The last election, which was held in 2012, was aborted when troops under army Chief Antonio Indjai stormed the presidential palace days before a presidential second-round vote was due to take place, plunging the country into chaos. With the elections results scheduled to be released this week, many in Guinea-Bissau are hoping that a successful transition to democracy will result in the unlocking of donor funding, which includes 110 million Euros in European Union aid that was frozen after a 2011 military uprising. The regional bloc's statement Monday also noted that it "...urges all development partners to expedite the lifting of sanctions imposed on the country and to extend financial support towards meeting the urgent post-electoral task of reconciliation, reconstruction and reform." An EU election observation mission also stated that the election was well-organized and conducted in a calm atmosphere.

International Developments

- **16 April 2014** – The United States has praised the holding of successful elections in Guinea-Bissau as an "important step" towards a better future after years of political instability and violence. State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki stated Wednesday that "these elections are an important step toward building a more stable, prosperous, and democratic future for the Bissau-Guinean people." She added that the US "congratulates the people of Guinea-Bissau on the successful completion of peaceful and orderly first-round elections." Almost three-quarters of eligible voters cast their ballots in the watershed polls, which were the first to be held in the West African nation since a military coup destabilized the country in 2012.

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. There is also an underlying threat from terrorism and retaliatory attacks in Côte d'Ivoire due to its participation in the 2012 intervention in Mali. Attacks could be indiscriminate, including in places frequented by foreigners.

International News

- 17 April 2014** – The UN is seeking exemption from a UN Security Council (UNSC) arms embargo on Ivory Coast in order to transport weapons and military equipment across the nation to its peacekeeping mission in landlocked Mali. UN sanctions monitors called for the world body to stop allowing arms to be shipped to Mali after they said a load of military hardware sent by China violated U.N. restrictions. The monitors' report said the shipment of weapons, ammunition and hardware sent by China through Ivory Coast in



November lacked proper permission. They also said China had understated its actual size. The UN has not commented specifically on those allegations, but said all equipment was accounted for. China denied misstating the shipment's size and said all the equipment was correctly received by its contingent, rejecting the monitors' criticism they had been unable to trace it. Chinese troops are part of the 12,000 member peacekeeping mission, MINUSMA, which is deployed to stabilize Mali after a French-led military intervention last year drove off Islamist fighters who had seized the country's desert north. Ivory Coast's main port of Abidjan has been a primary transit point for cargo shipped to the mission. Ivory Coast has been under an arms embargo since 2004.

- **17 April 2014** – Five Ivory Coast newspapers, whose publications have been temporarily suspended, are denouncing the measure. Most of the newspapers were suspended for mocking President Alassane Ouattara or referring to him as a dictator. One was targeted for discussing the safety of bush mean, which the government has banned in the wake of an Ebola outbreak. The National Press Council, acting on a government complaint, banned the papers for several issues. President Ouattara came to power in 2011 after deadly fighting following former President Laurent Gbagbo's refusal to step down. Three of the newspapers which have been temporarily suspended support Gbagbo. On Thursday, editors of the papers called the suspensions, which began this week, abusive. Although according to Reporters without Borders, the Ivory Coast has made significant strikes in press freedom recently, it still regularly suspends opposition newspapers.

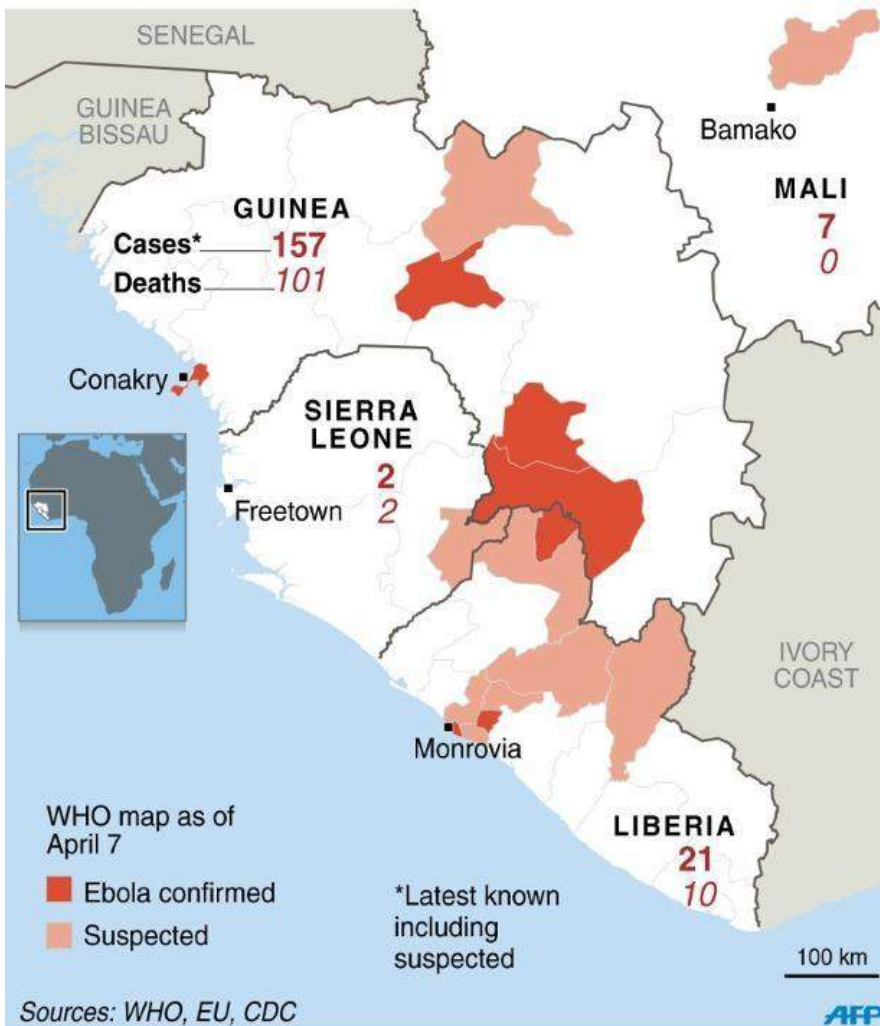
Liberia

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



Security Summary

The West Africa Ebola outbreak



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. The deadly disease has now spread to Guinea's capital, Conakry. There have been confirmed cases in areas of Liberia near the border with Guinea. 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 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 centres around Liberia, and patrol the main roads.

Domestic News

- **25 April 2014** – The Governments of the Republic of Liberia and the People's Republic of China have signed two separate bilateral agreements to enhance Liberia's fight against the Ebola virus, and helping the Liberia Broadcasting System (LBS) respectively. According to the first agreement, the Chinese Government provided the Liberian Government with a batch of medical materials and one million Chinese Yuan (valued at US\$162,310) toward eradicating Ebola. The second agreement states that the Chinese government will dispatch four technicians to Liberia to provide technical instructions in the operation and maintenance of the LBS, and to conduct technical training for its personnel. The Chinese Government shall also supply some necessary equipment and spare parts.
- **17 April 2014** – The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in Liberia has established a laboratory at the Liberia Institute of Biomedical Research (LIBR) to test for Ebola and Lassa fever. In addition, it has also set up case management treatment centres in Foyah, Lofa County, and ELWA Hospital in Monrovia. Experts from US-based Center for Disease Control, MSF, Liberian National Red Cross and WHO are working with committees from the National Task Force on Health Emergency in strengthening surveillance and contact tracing, case management, and community mobilization and sensitization on preventing and containing the spread of the Ebola virus. The following hotlines have been set up where concerned persons can call for further information and provide notice about suspected cases:
 - 0770198517
 - 0777549805
 - 0886530260
 - 0886549805

The Ebola virus has claimed 13 lives in Liberia, bringing the cumulative number of suspected, probable, and confirmed cases to 27. The cumulative fatality rate is 48%.

Mali

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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

Security Summary

There has been an outbreak of the Ebola virus which has been confirmed in south-eastern Guinea. There are currently reports of suspected cases in areas of Mali, near to the border with Guinea; however these cases have not yet been confirmed. If you are travelling near to the border with Guinea, MS Risk advises that you take caution, maintain strict standards of hygiene and avoid eating bush meat.

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 neighbourhoods 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 neighbouring countries. As such the kidnap threat cannot be isolated within the northern regional stronghold. In turn, criminal gangs have previously been engaged to carry out kidnappings for terrorist groups in return for financial rewards. Subsequently attacks can take place throughout Mali.

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

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

Kidnapping

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

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

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

Local Travel

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

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

MS RISK Guidance to Organizations in Mali:

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

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

On the Ground Reporting

- **23 April 2014** – A mine exploded in the northern Malian town of Kidal seriously injuring a United Nations peacekeeper from Guinea but not harming a delegation of visiting diplomats. There has been no immediate claim for the blast, but al Qaeda-linked Islamists who seized northern Mali in 2012 have carried out a series of insurgent-style attacks since they were scattered across the Sahara by a French-led offensive last year. Olivier Salgado, spokesman MINUSMA, said a U.N. vehicle struck a mine near Kidal's airport but the vehicle was not part of the security detail for the Bamako-based diplomats, including ambassadors from Germany and Denmark, a Canadian diplomat and several senior U.N. officials. Kidal is a flashpoint for Taureg separatism; pockets of Islamists still carry out sporadic attacks and the lack of progress in talks with local Taureg and Arab rebel groups is stoking tensions.
- **23 April, 2014** – The Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) has announced that a French hostage, Gilberto Leal Rodrigues, has died. In November 2012, Leal Rodrigues was kidnapped by armed men near the western town of Kayes in Mali, as he was driving a camper van from Mauritania. In a brief telephone interview, a spokesman for MUJAO, Yoro Abdoul Salam, gave no details surrounding the date or circumstances of Gilberto Leal Rodrigues' death, only saying, he "is dead because France is our enemy". Sources say that when Salam was pressed for evidence, such as pictures or video footage of the body, he said, "in the name of Allah, he is dead", before hanging up. French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius had vocalised concern for the 62-year old victim only days earlier. "We haven't had any news for a long time. We are in contact with the family but we are extremely worried," he said. MUJAO is one of several hard-line Islamist groups that occupied the vast desert north of Mali along with Taureg separatist rebels in 2012, following a military coup. The Islamists then overtook the Taureg fight and began to advance toward Bamako, instigating a French-led intervention which pushed the militants out of the region. France and other nations have continued anti-insurgency operations. Last week, French forces successfully freed five Malian aid workers who were taken hostage in a February kidnapping claimed by MUJAO, and in the past month French soldiers have killed about 40 Islamist fighters, including some senior commanders in Mali. France is beginning to wind down the presence of soldiers to approximately 1000 troops; however sources suspect that MUJAO and other militias are regrouping. President François Hollande has said Rodrigues Leal's death will "not go unpunished". In a statement, Hollande said, "France will do everything to know the truth about what happened to Gilberto Leal Rodrigues and she will not let it pass unpunished [...] There is every reason to believe that our fellow died several weeks [ago] because of the conditions of his detention." Spokesman of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Romain Nadal said in a statement, "We condemn in the strongest possible action of this terrorist group way."
- **18 April 2014** – An impasse in negotiations between Mali's government and Taureg rebels could create insecurity in the country's north. The Taureg rebels, who want an independent homeland in Mali's north, launched a rebellion in 2012 and took control of much of the area. Shortly thereafter, al-Qaida-linked extremists moved in, causing a French-led intervention to oust the armed groups last year. There are hopes that Mali's newly elected government will negotiate a political solution, however President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita has not yet named an official negotiator, and the talks have yet to start in earnest. The opposition Party for National Renaissance published a scathing assessment of the situation, stating that the impasse allowed arms groups to operate once again in the north. The report cited recent killings, kidnappings, mine explosions and rocket fire.
- **17 April 2014** – Officials in France have indicated that French troops in Mali have freed five local aid workers who were kidnapped in February 2014. According to French military spokesman Col. Gilles

Jaron, the French forces, working off intelligence tips, intercepted two pickup trucks carrying the hostage-takers and their captives north of the city of Timbuktu, one of three major towns in a vast region on the Sahara's southern rim where the five went missing on 8 February. The French Special Forces, backed by helicopters, led a pre-dawn operation in northern Mali on Thursday. The operation also resulted in the deaths of about ten alleged militants. In a joint statement released earlier on Thursday, the presidents of France and Mali confirmed that French troops had freed five local aid workers. According to the statement, four of the aid workers worked for the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC), adding that they while they were in good health, two of the aid workers had sustained minor injuries. The five aid workers went missing while travelling in a 4x4 vehicle from Kidal to Gao on 8 February 2014. At the time of their kidnapping, it was reported that the MUJAO Islamist militant group was responsible; however it remains unclear who is responsible for the kidnapping of the aid workers. No further details have been released.

- **16 April 2014** – According to a government official, the Malian government has released nineteen former rebels and has withdrawn arrest warrants issued against them. The senior official confirmed “nineteen former rebels were released Tuesday night by the government.” No official announcement of the release has been made.
- **15 April 2014** – Malian officials have announced that samples from all its suspected Ebola cases had tested negative for the disease. Malian Health Minister Ousmane Kone confirmed that the country had sent out ten samples for testing at labs in the United States and Senegal, adding that all were declared negative for Ebola. Speaking at a news conference in Bamako, the Minister stated, “all ten samples gave a negative result. This means that, as of today, Mali has no suspect or confirmed cases of Ebola hemorrhagic fever,” adding “nevertheless, we have recommended that our authorities remain vigilant and continue to monitor the situation with the same rigor.” According to the latest World Health Organization (WHO) count, the outbreak of the Ebola virus in West Africa has now been linked to the deaths of more than 120 people. So far, 121 deaths have been reported in Guinea and Liberia. As of Monday, the United Nations health agency stated that it had recorded a total of 200 suspected or confirmed cases of Ebola, the majority of which are in Guinea. Officials have indicated that the outbreak in West Africa could last for months. The organization Health workers in Guinea are continuing to contain the spread of the deadly virus, specifically by tracking down anyone with whom the sick have had contact.
- **14 April 2014** – Security sources have reported the fugitive jihadist commander Mokhtar Belmokhtar is hiding in Libya, from where he plans to mastermind terrorist attacks across Africa's Sahel region. According to a Malian security source, “for some time we have had evidence that Mokhtar Belmokhtar, one of the most dangerous Algerian Islamists, who operated in northern Mali, has gone to Libya to avoid being arrested or killed. From the Libyan territory, he intends to control the entire Sahel.” While the elusive militant, who staged a deadly siege of an Algerian gas plant in January last year, was initially said to have been killed in northern Mali two months later, security experts have since expressed doubts over these reports. In March last year, Belmokhtar was involved in-fighting against Chadian forces in Mali's north-eastern Ifoghas mountains and was reported to have been killed in action, these reports were never confirmed. General David Rodriguez, head of the US Africa Command later stated that Belmokhtar was “in the middle of the Sahel,” exploiting the porous borders between southwest Libya and north-eastern Mali. Belmokhtar's whereabouts have been confirmed by a Nigerian security source along with other sources close to MINUSMA, the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Mali. According to the MINUSMA source “everyone agrees today that he is not dead, that he is still active, but that he has settled for a while in Libya where he is still active.” Belmokhtar was a leader of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), which, along with other armed Islamist groups, took advantage

of a military coup in 2012 in a bid to occupy northern Mali before being driven out by French and African troops. Last year, he split from AQIM and formed the Signatories in Blood, later masterminding the raid of Algeria's In Amenas gas plant in which 38 hostages were killed during the four-day siege. The attacks was said to have been carried out in retaliation for the French-led military intervention in Mali. Branded "the Uncatchable," the one-eyed militant is also believed to be behind twin car bombings in Niger in May 2013 that left at least twenty people dead. In December 2013, United States designated Belmokhtar's groups as a terrorist organization, and the State Department is currently offering a US \$5 million reward for information leading to his capture.

- Meanwhile, witnesses have reported that on Monday, militants fired a rocket into the centre of Mali's largest city, failing to cause any damage but panicking residents. Sources have indicated that the rocket was launched from outside the regional capital of around 90,000 people, which was occupied by Islamist militants linked to al-Qaeda in 2012 before being captured by French and Mali and forces. Gao councillor Moctar Bandiougou confirmed the incident, stating that the rocket had "made a large hole" in the town centre. Rocket attacks, which have usually been blamed on Islamist fighters, are a common occurrence in northern Mali, which is still struggling to return to stability after a coup in March 2012 plunged the country into crisis.

Regional Reporting

- **18 April 2014** – Following a two-day summit in Bamako, police chiefs from several West African nations agreed to strengthen inter-state cooperation to fight organised crime in the region. The summit brought together representatives from Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Niger, Senegal, Togo and Sierra Leone. In addition, Interpol regional bureau, based in Ivory Coast's capital Abidjan, was also represented. Interpol monitors and combats crime in the region known for porous borders manned at times by corrupt officers. A sub-committee of from member-states will work to promote cooperation between police with the aim of strengthening regional capacity to effectively fight against organized transnational crime. Interpol regional bureau chief Yves Abadinan said, "The countries in West Africa now share a common communication network and many databases which have helped in fishing out criminals and providing useful information to pre-empt criminal activities [...] Interpol has also been training officers on the enforcement of existing laws in all areas of crime across the region, which has greatly improved capacities of agents." Last year, Interpol conducted 69 training sessions in Africa for 2482 agents to learn how to apply anti-crime laws. At the time, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) said that lack of cooperation from some member-states and reluctance to send officers for information and training workshops have created lapses in the region's security system.
- **14 April 2014** – Senegal is planning to send more peacekeeping troops to neighbouring Mali, where international forces are continuing to restore stability after Islamist militants took over the country's north in 2012. During a visit by the Malian leader, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, Senegalese President Macky Sall announced Monday that he would send in 250 additional troops. Around 500 Senegalese soldiers are already in the country as part of a United Nations peacekeeping force.

International Developments

- **24 April 2014** – Algeria, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad have agreed to promote dialogue in Mali by convincing the concerned armed movements to participate for security of the region. The Consultation Meeting of the Sahel Countries was held in Algiers and attended by Algerian Foreign Minister Ramtane Lamamra, Malian Minister for National Reconciliation Ould Sidi Mohamed Dahabi, Burkina Faso's Foreign Minister Djibril Bassole, Niger's Foreign Minister Mohamed Bazoum, and Ambassador of Chad to Algiers Salah Hamid Heguerra. In a joint statement, the group aims to "individually and collectively initiate appropriate actions to convince the concerned armed movements to participate in preliminary talks that have been started in Algiers." Algerian FM Lamamra said "the objective of the process is to launch as soon as possible a dialogue in Mali to eventually maintain the territorial integrity and strengthen national unity of Mali."
- **22 April 2014** – The Netherlands will be sending 450 soldiers to Mali as part of the United Nations mission MINUSMA. The mission will be in the area to attempt to protect the population, and improve ties between the central government and the marginalized Tuareg peoples from the North. The troops are allowed to defend themselves, and may use 'any means necessary' to protect local citizens. According to the mission, this is a "robust mandate" that was sorely missing in previous UN-missions. It is likely that mission operations will be hosted in Gao and Bamako. Soldiers from the Dutch army, marines, military police and the air force will be active in the region. The Dutch task is to collect information for all international troops. The mission is expected to run through to 2015.
- **15 April 2014** – On Tuesday, the European Union (EU) agreed to launch a new mission to boost police and national guard forces in Mali. This will be the EU's second operation in the vast African nation which has been threatened by Islamist militants. According to the EU's foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton, the mission "is a further demonstration of the EU's commitment to supporting reform in Mali." EU foreign ministers meeting in Luxembourg also approved a second two-year mandate, until May 2016, for the 560-member EU training mission, which includes soldiers from the Franco-German brigade, which is operating in Africa for the first time. The cost for the period for the EU training mission (EUTM Mali) is estimated at 27.7 million Euros (US \$38.3 million), with four more Malian battalions of around 650 troops due to be trained. The current mission was set up in February last year, aimed at training Malian troops after the army all but collapsed as Islamist militants marched south towards the capital before being halted by a French military operation.

Mauritania

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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

Security 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 travelling 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.

On the Ground Reporting

- **20 April 2014** – Mauritania has announced that its next presidential election will be held in June. While President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz has not yet announced his candidacy, his party has asked him to run again. His party, the Union of the Republic, secured a majority of seats in last year's parliamentary elections, which were boycotted by much of the opposition. Aziz came to power in a 2008 coup in which he overthrew Mauritania's first democratically elected leader. He won presidential elections the following year and has since become a key ally of the West in the fight against terrorism in the Sahara. The first round of elections will be held on June 21. If needed, a second round will take place July 5.

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

A map of Niger, a landlocked country in West Africa, highlighted in yellow. It is surrounded by Algeria to the north, Libya to the northeast, Chad to the east, Nigeria to the south, and Mali, Burkina Faso, and Benin to the west. The capital, Niamey, is marked with a small square. An inset map in the top left corner shows the location of Niger within the African continent. The flag of Niger, featuring three horizontal stripes of orange, white, and green with a red disk in the center, is shown in the bottom right corner.

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

Legend:

- Red: Advise against all travel
- Yellow: Advise against all but essential travel

Map Labels:

- Neighboring Countries:** ALGERIA, LIBYA, MALI, CHAD, NIGERIA, BURKINA FASO, BENIN.
- Cities in Niger:** Niamey, Agadez, Zinder, Maradi, Goudoumaria, Diffa, Tasker, Tanout, Aderbissinat, Abalak, Ingal, Assamakka, Arlit, Bilma, Madama, Abala, Ouallam, Bouza, Soukouloutane, Dogondoutchi, Dossou, Gaya, Tiliaberi, Tamou.
- Water Bodies:** Niger River, Lake Chad.
- Scale:** 0 to 100 miles / 0 to 100 kilometres.
- Source:** FCO 266 Edition 4 (May 2013) © Crown Copyright 2013

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.

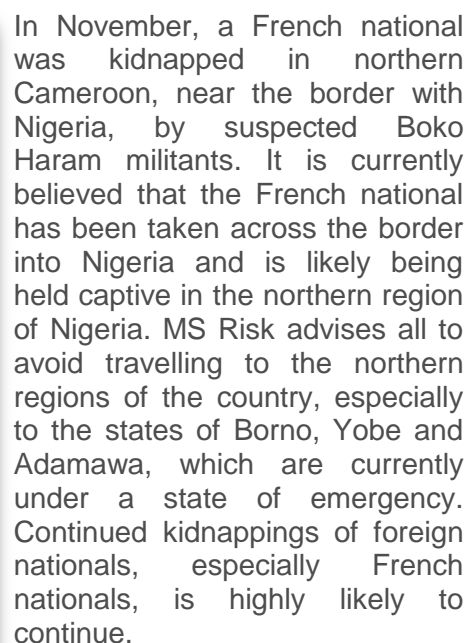
On the Ground Reporting

- **23 April 2014** – Boko Haram has reportedly moved its camp recruitment base to Niger. The report, issued by the Hausa Service of the BBC, said Boko Haram has infiltrated Niger Republic, where internally displaced persons from Borno and Yobe States have been flocking to since the crisis escalated. According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), about 50,000 Nigerians have poured into Niger while fleeing from the insurgents. Thus far, the insurgents have been confined to the two states where they have carried out most attacks. However according to the report, it is only a matter of time before the insurgency begins to thrive in Niger as the sect has intensified its recruitment drive. Many unemployed youths were being wooed by the promise of lots of cash by the insurgents. The group's recruitment drive in Niger lends credence to the belief that the operations of the army in the Sambisa forest and other locations where Boko Haram has its camp, have led to a depletion of the sect's members. Boko Haram is in desperate need of new recruits to continue its campaign of terror. In an effort to stem Boko Haram growth, former military Head of State, Major-General Muhammadu Buhari has called on politicians, irrespective of their party affiliation, to join hands with the federal government to defeat the insurgents. As head of the APC, Buhari wished the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan success in fighting the terror war and said, "We stand ready to help in any meaningful and productive way to fight this battle against evil. We extend our hand and earnest offer of cooperation in this regard."
- **23 April 2014** – Boko Haram is recruiting young members from Niger Republic, paying each N500,000, a newly released report by BBC states. Their pay is raised should their bombs kill more people in Nigeria. According to the report, when youths, barely into their teens are enlisted, they are given Tramol [an opiate drug], marijuana and alcohol. They break into houses for cash; sometimes beat people for money, and steal their animals for food. They gather again for their opium and drinks. Although the recruits reportedly do not like the sect and its activities, they said they took to violence as being students they have no jobs and are poor. A documentary has focused on a gang of young boys of a Niger Republic border town with Nigeria, Diffa. The boys explained their association with the sect. "They have paid 500,000 Nigerian naira (\$3,085, £1,835) to those of us who followed them over there. The rest of us, here, we give them information. When they come, we inform them about what's going on, what the security forces are up to. If they tell you to set off a bomb and it succeeds, if it kills a lot of people, they will pay you a lot of money." However, the ideals for which Boko Haram is fighting – the imposition of strict Sharia, an Islamist caliphate and the banning of Western education – hold no interest for the gang. One member stated, "Boko Haram Islamist militants from Nigeria regularly come across the border, looking for recruits. We can't contact them, they come to us." Asked if they agree with Boko Haram's reason for fighting, the gang answered in unison: "No. We only do it for the money [...] we have no jobs; some of us are still at high school but we need money. Violence has become a form of work for us." Boko Haram has also been attacking the Niger region, several planned have been

foiled over the last months; and dozens of men suspected to have links to the group have been arrested. Military police, customs officers, as well as national guards conduct daily patrols along the porous border to mitigate the threat. The borders are supposed to be protected by joint patrols with the Nigerian military, however they have not yet begun.

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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



There have been reports of a security incident involving gunfire

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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 centres, places of worship and other areas that are frequented by expatriates, foreign tourists and business travellers. 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

- **26 April 2014** – At least 40 people have been killed in clashes between government forces and militants in northern Nigeria, as the search for nearly 200 abducted schoolgirls continues. Nigerian Defence Ministry spokesman Major General Chris Olukolade said the clashes, which occurred in the state of Borno where the abducted girls are thought to be held, left over 40 militants and four soldiers dead. At least nine other Nigerian soldiers were wounded in the clashes. Residents living near Bulanbuli say they heard dozens of explosions overnight Friday. Over 230 schoolgirls were abducted in Chibok, a local government area of Borno, on April 14. To date, 43 students have managed to escape. More than 185 students are still missing. Although no group has claimed responsibility for the kidnapping, it has been blamed on Boko Haram.
- **23 April 2014** – Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), has decried the increasing theft of oil in the Niger-Delta and called for massive surveillance by security agencies to check the trend. Managing Director of the company, Mr. Mutiu Sumonu, said the scourge has become a major threat to the Nigerian economy. He revealed that as much as 150,000 barrels of oil were being stolen each day from Nigeria, adding that most of the oil was illegally shipped and sold in international markets, while some quantities of crude were being refined along the creeks. Sumonu added that crude oil theft, illegal refining, pipeline vandalism and their attendant environmental degradation were prevalent in the Niger-Delta region. He identified poverty, corruption, unemployment, and ineffective law enforcement as some of the factors responsible for the oil theft.
- **23 April 2014** – A group of militants masquerading as herders have been arrested in Nigeria's central-east Taraba state. The latest report from the Nigerian military undermines government assurances that the Islamic insurgents have been contained in a remote north-eastern corner of the country. One of the detainees confessed to being a member of the Boko Haram who had been operating in northeast Borno and had recently been deployed to Taraba. The military had been searching for Fulani herdsmen accused of recent attacks, killing dozens in a region rife with conflict over land and water resources between the mainly Muslim semi-nomadic herders and predominantly Christian farmers. Instead, according to Defence Ministry spokesman Maj. Gen. Chris Olukolade, they came upon "a group of terrorists operating under the guise of herdsmen" who engaged troops in a battle. The military's claim that the Islamic militants are operating in Nigeria's central states comes as the extremists have

increased the number and geographic spread of terror attacks. Three weeks ago, the governor of Benue state said he suspected that Islamic extremists were responsible for deadly attacks there that had previously been blamed on Fulani herders. The government's failure to pursue and punish perpetrators in attacks in what is called the Middle Belt make the region ripe for Islamic extremists who say Muslims are being persecuted there, Human Rights Watch has warned. In a video released over the weekend, Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau stated, "We carried out the (Abuja) attack because you killed Muslims in Plateau," referencing an attack in which soldiers said they killed marauding Fulani herders but traditional leaders said the soldiers killed innocent people. President Goodluck Jonathan is expected to propose renewing a state of emergency imposed 11 months ago on the north-eastern states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, the traditional operating area of Islamic militants. Many northern governors have expressed their opposition, saying the emergency has brought untold hardships and failed in its primary mission to curtail the uprising.

- **20 April 2014** – The Nigerian military has begun a deployment of soldiers along the country's northern borders as part of efforts to rescue over 230 schoolgirls who were kidnapped by Boko Haram. A day after the attack, 14 of the girls escaped when one of the lorries in which they were being conveyed broke down. On Friday, another 14 escaped from their abductors near the Cameroon border. The principal of the school which the girls attend, Mrs. Asabe Kwambura, reportedly said members of the sect were dressed in military uniforms. Troops have been deployed to the borders along Niger, Chad and Cameroon to search for the girls, with the largest concentration along the Cameroonian area. An anonymous military source said they believe Boko Haram may sneak the schoolgirls out of Nigeria. "The information we have is that the kidnapers are still within Nigeria, especially within the Sambisa terrain, hence the deployment of more troops at borders to prevent their escape to neighbouring countries." Another source suggested that the girls may be divided into different groups and separated them to make it impossible to get all the girls in one place. One of the girls who escaped was said to have disclosed that the sect members did not harass them sexually.



- **17 April 2014** – The fate of more than 200 girls and young women, who were abducted by Boko Haram militants Monday, was thrown into uncertainty Thursday after the school principal denied a report from Nigeria's military that almost all the students had been freed. Late Wednesday night, Major General Chris Olukolade, the Defence Ministry spokesman, had stated that all but eight of the students have been accounted for, adding "the others have been freed this evening." However on Thursday, speaking to reporters, principal Asabe

Kwambura stated "up till now we are still waiting and praying for the safe return of the students...the

security people, especially the vigilantes and the well-meaning volunteers of Gwoza are still our searching for them. The military people too are in the bush searching.” She added that only fourteen of the 129 girls who were kidnapped have since returned to the town of Chibok. Four of them had jumped from the back of a truck while ten others escaped into the bush. Gen Maj Olukolade has not made any comments. **Update (18 April 2014)** – In a statement released Friday, the Nigerian military has admitted that most of the girls who were abducted by Boko Haram militants from their school in the north-eastern state of Borno on Monday are still missing. On Thursday, Nigeria’s defence spokesman had claimed that only eight of the kidnapped girls were still missing. This statement was contrary to the position of the state government and the school principal who indicated late Thursday that most of the abducted girls were still missing.

- Meanwhile Nigerian officials have indicated that machete-wielding bandits have attacked delegates at a meeting of Nigeria’s main opposition coalition, wounding several in the northern city of Kaduna. Aisha Umar of the National Electoral Commission has stated that the attackers on Thursday also cut off the arm of a man carrying a ballot box. Scores of people have been hospitalized in the wake of the attack. Sources have indicated that bandits armed with machetes, knives and clubs also hijacked the ballot boxes for the election of ward leaders for the All Progressives Congress in the state of Kaduna. Police officials have made several arrests.
- **16 April 2014** – On Wednesday, local government and security officials confirmed that suspected Islamist militants have struck for a fourth time in three days in Nigeria, killing twenty people including a traditional ruler in attacks carried out in the northeast. The unprecedented string of attacks, which began with a massive explosion in the capital that killed at least seventy-five people, has many questioning the ability of Nigeria’s military to contain Boko Haram’s insurgency. This year alone, the insurgency has killed more than 1,500 people, compared to an estimated 3,600 between 2010 and 2013.
- **15 April 2014** – Following Monday’s deadly bomb blast, which ripped through a packed bus station killing at least seventy-five people, Nigerian police have boosted security across the capital city. Nigeria’s police spokesman Altine Daniel confirmed that police have “beefed up security” after the attack at the Nyanya bus station a few kilometres south of the city centre. The deadliest attack ever to hit the capital city has raised fears that the deadly insurgency waged by Boko Haram militants may be spreading from the remote northeast areas the group has primarily targeted in recent months. Central Abuja, which is home to major hotels, foreign missions and sprawling government complexes, has been mostly on lock down for the past two years, with security being reinforced after an August 2011 car bombing at the United Nations headquarters in the city, which was also blamed on Boko Haram. While the Nigerian military has claimed that Boko Haram militants have been contained in the remote region, and that they lacked the capacity to carry out major attacks in urban centres, Monday’s massive bombing, which occurred just a few kilometres from the seat of the country’s government, has undermined these claims. In turn, the bus station attack may be an indication that the militants have identified loopholes within Nigeria’s continuing counter-insurgency measures and that they are now exploiting them.
 - The Nigerian military has joined the search for at least 100 teenage girls who were abducted from a secondary school in the remote north-eastern region of Nigeria. It is believed that Boko Haram militants are behind the kidnapping and that they may have taken the group to a forest located near the Cameroonian border. Officials have indicated that the air force, army, police and local volunteers are involved in the search. Sources have indicated that the gunmen, riding in trucks and on motorcycles, stormed the town after sundown, torching several buildings before opening fire on troops who were guarding the school. The gun battle, which occurred on

Monday, reportedly lasted several hours however the militants were ultimately able to overpower the troops and enter the school. According to multiple eyewitnesses, some of the schoolgirls in the Chibok area of southern Borno state narrowly escaped their kidnappers by jumping off a truck in the middle of the night as the gunmen sought to take them away. According to a security source, “we were able to follow the path of the trucks and we found it broke down deep in the bush,” adding “we are now trying to locate the whereabouts of the abducted girls.” A local politician has indicated that about fifty army soldiers had been stationed near the school ahead of annual exams. Boko Haram has repeatedly attacked schools in the northeast region, during an insurgency that has killed thousands since 2009. In an attack earlier this year in Borno state, eyewitnesses reported that Boko Haram gunmen had surrounded a girl’s school, forcing the student to leave and ordering them to immediately return to their villages. The militant group has also been blamed for a series of school massacres, including the mass shooting of students in their sleep earlier this year in Yobe state. Such attacks, coupled with Boko Haram’s insurgency, have crippled education in Borno, with schools across the state being shut down in a bid to curb such attacks. **Update (16 April 2014)** – Sources have indicated that the Nigerian schoolgirls kidnapped by Boko Haram militants were taken to a stronghold of the Islamist group. The defence ministry has confirmed that 129 girls were taken by gunmen in the north-eastern state of Borno late Monday, just hours after a bomb was detonated in a packed bus station on the outskirts of Abuja, killing at least seventy-five people. Monday’s bombing has also been blamed on Boko Haram. Three girls who managed to escape and return to Borno’s Chibok, have briefed locals about the attack, with one official stating that “the girls told us they were taken to the Konduga district part of Sambisa forest by their captors.” Boko Haram is known to have a number of well-fortified camps in this area. The girls added that they ran after getting permission from the gunmen to use the bathroom and they were helped back to Chibok by nomadic herdsman from the Fulani ethnic group. Borno’s Governor Kashim Shetimma has told journalists that fourteen of the hostages had escaped so far and offered 50 million naira (US \$300,000; 215,000 Euros) to anyone with information that leads to the others being rescued. President Goodluck Jonathan has summoned his top security chiefs to a meeting on Thursday in order to discuss “the security situation in the country” in the wake of the Abuja bombing and the kidnapping. He has expressed concern for “the plight” of those who were abducted.

- **14 April 2014** - Twin blasts at a packed bus station in Nigeria’s capital on Monday have killed more than seventy people. Officials reported Monday that more than seventy people have been killed in two blasts that were carried out in crowded bus station on the outskirts of Nigeria’s capital, Abuja. Abbas

Idris, head of the Abuja Emergency Relief Agency, has stated that so far officials have confirmed 71



people dead and 124 injured, however these numbers are likely to rise in the coming days. The cause of the explosions, which occurred at the Nyanya Bus Park roughly 5 kilometres (three miles) south of Abuja, was not immediately clear however security officials at the scene are currently working to determine the cause of the explosions. For now, they are suspecting that the explosion occurred inside a vehicle. While no group has claimed responsibility for the attacks, officials in Abuja believe Boko Haram militants are likely behind it. The incident occurred as commuters were about to board buses and taxis to go to work in central Abuja. The blast ripped a hole four feet deep (1.2 meters) in the ground of Nyanya Motor Park and destroyed more than thirty vehicles, causing secondary explosions as their fuel tanks ignited and burned. The capital city been previously attacked by Boko Haram insurgents. In 2011, it carried out a suicide bombing at a United Nations building in Abuja, killing at least 26 six peoples. The incident has been one of the group's most prominent attacks. More recently however, the group's violence has been concentrated in the remote north-eastern region of the country. If Monday's attack is confirmed by Boko Haram, the attack on the outskirts of Abuja would cast further doubt on the military's claims that the insurgents have been weakened and lack the capacity to strike prominent targets. This year, Boko Haram militants have killed more than 1,500 civilians in three states in north-eastern Nigeria. Although the Nigerian government launched a military operation in May last year, aimed at ending the near four year insurgency, since then, the militants have been pushed out of the major city centres in the states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa and have relocated into the villages and surrounding areas where they have continued to carry out violent attacks. They have also been suspected of crossing the porous borders between Nigeria and Cameroon, where they have taken shelter from the ongoing military operations and where they have carried out attacks.

- **Update (15 April 2014)** – The toll from Monday's massive explosion at a busy bus station in Nigeria's capital rose to 75 dead Tuesday, with officials indicating that the death toll is expected to grow. Health Minister Onyebuchi Chukwu has stated that there are 141 wounded. While so far there have been no claim of responsibility, President Goodluck Jonathan is blaming the attack on Islamic extremists. The explosion, which occurred just five miles from Nigeria's seat of government, is increasing doubts in the country and regionally about the military's ability to contain a 5-year-old Islamic uprising that has killed more than 1,500 this year alone. Although the Nigerian government and military have recently claimed to have the extremists on the run and contained in the far northeast along the borders with Cameroon and Chad, attacks carried out by extremist militants have increased in frequency and mortality. Last month, the militants launched a daring raid, freeing hundreds of detainees from the military's main barracks, the Giwa Barracks, in Maiduguri. Nigerian soldiers responded by gunning down the released prisoners. Local hospital staff officials have since reported that at least 425 people were killed, mainly detainees. Monday's attack, which occurred hundreds of miles from the insurgents' traditional strongholds in the north-eastern region of the country, also comes shortly after Abubakar Shekau, the leader of Boko Haram, threatened to attack the capital city and to take the conflict across the border and into Cameroon if that country continues to assist Nigeria in its fight. Responding to the attack in the capital city, former Vice President Tiku Abubakar stated that Nigeria needs outside help, adding "the bombings...automatically cast doubts on the government claims of containing the crisis to the fringes of the country." He has called for increased intelligence to pre-empt attacks and has suggested, "it is time for Nigeria to accept foreign assistance with fighting terrorism in the country."

Domestic News

- **24 April 2014** – Leaders from across Nigeria appealed for a united front against Boko Haram, saying the Islamist insurgents were waging war on Christian and Muslim Nigerians alike. President Goodluck Jonathan held a security meeting with governors of 36 states in Nigeria's largely Christian south and mostly Muslim north to seek ways of ending the Islamists' five-year-old insurgency. In a statement after the meeting, the President said, "We agreed that the Boko Haram war is not a religious war and therefore it's a war against all Nigerians and should be treated as such." The insurgency by the group, whose name means "Western education is sinful" in the northern Hausa language, has killed thousands in the past two years. Officials have long feared that Boko Haram, which wants to carve a breakaway Islamic state out of Nigeria, will harden religious divisions. The group has repeatedly targeted Christians - blowing up churches or killing minority Christian ethnic groups in the north however, the majority of their victims have been Muslims. The Islamists destroy churches, but also mosques. Theodor Orji, governor of the southern Abia state, said, "Both Muslims and Christians are being killed. Boko Haram doesn't discriminate against any person. Boko Haram is not a religious war and people should not misrepresent it to be," Orji said.
- **24 April 2014** – Comptroller General of Nigeria Immigration Service, David Parradang, has stated that there are over 1,400 illegal routes into Nigeria, with only 84 approved border control posts. In addition, un-demarcated or poorly marked borders in Nigeria have made stringent control difficult. The distance between one land-control post to another is over hundreds of kilometres, making it impossible for anybody to determine who controls it. Parradang blamed the porous border on colonial demarcation which, he said, would take time to correct. "You can draw the map of Nigeria but when you go on the ground it is a different thing. It is an issue that will take time." According to him, borders in the North are fairly open, while those in the South-West are less open.
- **18 April 2014** – A Nigerian was arrested in Nigeria for allegedly being in possession of over 1,000 passport photographs of young boys. The Public Relations Officer of the Ogun State Police Command, Muiyiwa Adejobi said the suspect, Abdulkarim Sallah, was apprehended in Ogijo, Sagamu Local Government Area of Ogun State. The suspect was also in possession of a camera and "some forms", and could not explain his visit in Ogijo or in Nigeria. Sallah claimed to have been staying in Nigeria with a friend from Niger. Mr. Adejobi said due to the nature of the case, the Commissioner of Police has directed that the Department of Criminal Investigation should transfer the case to the Nigerian Immigration Service, Ogun State Command, for further investigation, saying the police "will not leave any stone unturned" to ensure security of lives and property in the state. He has called on member of the public, particularly the traditional ruler in the area, to provide the police with relevant and prompt information on the matter.

International Developments

- **15 April 2014** – On Tuesday, the World Economic Forum stated that its Africa summit will be held in Nigeria's capital next month despite a bomb attack on the outskirts of the city which killed at least seventy-five people on Monday. In a statement released Tuesday, the forum stated "these tragic events will not stop us from delivering on our promise to host a world-class meeting next month." Abuja has hosted a number of high-profile international events, including West African and African Union summits; however the World Economic Forum conference has been described as the most prestigious meeting to come to Nigeria's capital. The forum has indicated that it is putting in place

unprecedented security measures in order to protect delegates in Abuja. The forum's statement further noted that "our security planning for the World Economic Forum on Africa is already well under way and will be the largest security operation ever mounted in this country for an international summit," adding "in total, over six thousand security personnel, consisting of police and army will be deployed, covering a secure area the size of 250 square kilometres." The bombing, which has been blamed on Boko Haram militants, targeted morning commuters at the Nyanya bus terminal south of the city-centre and was the deadliest attack ever carried out in Abuja. In the wake of Monday's attack, Nigerian police have increased security across the capital and have pledged to intensify surveillance at all "vulnerable targets. The World Economic Forum on Africa is set to be held at a number of hotels and venues in heavily-guarded central Abuja from May 7 – 9.

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. Local elections will take place in Senegal on 29 June. MS Risk advises travellers to avoid all demonstrations and to leave any affected areas at the first sign that unrest may develop. There have been a number of deaths and injuries. There is currently an underlying threat from terrorism. Attacks could be indiscriminate, including in places frequented by expatriates and foreign travellers. With the ongoing French military intervention in Mali, authorities in Senegal have increased security in the capital city as well as along the border with Mali. MS Risk advises that al- Qaeda militants may cross the border into Senegal and they may target Western interests as well as foreigners.

On the Ground Reporting

- **17 April 2014** – Judges in Senegal are set to pronounce Thursday the fate of ex-president Abdoulaye Wade's son Karim, who has been detained for over a year on corruption charges after accumulating a fortune worth more than US \$1 billion. The anti-corruption court in Dakar is expected to announce whether it intends to dismiss the case, order that the younger Wade be tried or extend his detention for a further six months. On Tuesday, Justice Minister Sidiki Kaba told lawmakers that "within 48 hours the

we will know if the trial will take place or not.” Mr Wade, 46, who held a number of cabinet posts during his father’s presidency, was initially remanded in custody on 17 April 2013. He is alleged to have acquired companies and real estate valued at US \$1.4 billion (1 billion Euros) by corrupt means, including land across Dakar, a fleet of luxury cars and a number of companies operating in West and Central Africa, including media and financial firms. Under Senegalese law, investigators would normally have had a maximum of six months to investigate Mr Wade before either sending him to trial or dismissing the case, however the anti-corruption court extended the pre-trial detention period in October for another six months, adding a new charge relating to an unexplained sum of US \$205 million (150 million Euros), which prosecutors say Mr Wade deposited into several Monaco bank accounts. An account in Singapore containing US \$95 million (69 million Euros) was attributed to him last week. Mr Wade refused last week to answer questions from investigating judges, stating that the “charges against me are political and fanciful.” He has consistently denied any wrongdoing and has stated that his wealth was acquired legitimately. The former ruling Senegalese Democratic Party (PDS) accuses the regime of Macky Sall, who defeated Mr Wade’s father in the 2012 presidential elections, of conducting a “witch hunt” against the PDS hierarchy since it came to power. In July last year, the regional court of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) rejected a request for Mr Wade’s immediate release, ruling that Senegal was not violating his rights by detaining him.

Update (17 April 2014) – Judicial sources confirmed Thursday that the son of former Senegalese leader Abdoulaye Wade is to be tried in June for corruption. According to a ministry of justice source, “Karim Wade will remain in prison and will go on trial in two months for illicit enrichment.”

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 neighbouring 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.

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 collapsed 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.

Domestic News

- **14 April 2014** – A court martial of thirteen soldiers and a captain, who have been accused of mutiny, has opened in the capital city. According to the charge sheet that was read out in court on Monday, each soldier faces eight counts of mutiny. The men were arrested in August 2013 in the northern town of Makeni on suspicions that they were planning a meeting that was aimed at destabilizing the democratically government. At the time, local media reported that the soldiers had intended to kidnap the president and murder the defence minister during the visit, which was later cancelled. This account however has not been independently verified and details of the event leading up to the soldiers' arrests were not addressed in court on Monday. All fourteen have pleaded not guilty to the charges. They have

all been denied bail. If found guilty, the penalty for mutiny is death by firing squad. While soldiers have complained of low wages and inadequate housing in Sierra Leone, which is struggling to emerge from the 1991 – 2002 civil war, protests against President Koroma, who won a second term in the 2012 elections, are rare.

Domestic News

- **24 April 2014** – Spokesman of the Chinese Embassy, Xu Zhou, announced in Freetown that China will donate medical materials to support Sierra Leone in the prevention of Ebola disease. An agreement was signed by the Chinese Ambassador and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. According to the agreement, the Chinese Government will donate a medical materials valued at RMB 1,000,000 Yuan (\$162,600) to support the Government of Sierra Leone in the prevention of Ebola disease. Xu concluded that the support was an expression of the friendly sentiments of the Chinese Government and people towards the Sierra Leonean Government and people, and a demonstration of the close relations between the two countries.



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