



MS | RISK

West Africa Report

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

May 12 - 25, 2014

About MS Risk

MS Risk is a privately owned company domiciled in the Isle of Man. It is underwritten by syndicate 2525 of Lloyd's of London for special risks case management in all jurisdictions. It also acts as retained advisors to syndicates in the Lloyd's of London specialty risk insurance markets: kidnap for ransom, extortion, hijack, illegal detention, illegal war tax, malicious product tamper, terrorism, political and war risk.

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

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

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

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

References are always available.
More information is found at www.msrisk.com

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Summary

May 12 - 25, 2014



Benin

- **19 May 2014** – Six people pardoned by Benin's president, over an alleged poisoning plot against him, have been released from custody.

Gambia

- **13 May 2014** - The Gambia has lifted a ban on flights from Liberia and Sierra Leone, which was imposed at the peak of the Ebola virus outbreak.

Guinea

- **23 May 2014** – On Friday, Guinean health officials announced two new confirmed cases of Ebola in an area previously untouched by the virus, which has killed more than 100 people in the West African country.

Guinea - Bissau

- **20 May 2014** – According to preliminary results released by election officials on Tuesday, the front-runner in Guinea-Bissau's presidential elections, Jose Mario Vaz, has won the decisive run-off.

- **19 May 2014** – Guinea-Bissau election officials began to tally votes on Monday after a post-coup presidential poll, stating that they expected a clear picture of who was leading the race within 24 hours.

Ivory Coast

- **16 May 2014** – The Ivory Coast's Defence Minister Paul Koffi Koffi confirmed Friday that an armed gang attacked an Ivorian village near the border with Liberia, killing three soldiers and ten civilians, adding that two children aged five and seven were amongst the victims.

Mali

On the Ground Reporting

- **24 May 2014** – The African Union's (AU) negotiator announced Friday that the Malian government has signed a ceasefire deal with three rebel groups in the northern region of the country.
- **23 May 2014** – According to officials at the United Nations, Tuareg rebels have made further advances in northern Mali, and have seized Kidal and Menaka.
- **22 May 2014** – Tuareg separatists said on Thursday that they had seized control of several towns in northern Mali after routing government forces, however they did note that they will respect calls for a ceasefire.
 - According to an African security source, a coalition of rebel militias fought together to gain control of Kidal from the Malian army.
- **21 May 2014** – Tuareg fighters killed several Malian soldiers during clashes that erupted in Kidal on Wednesday.
- **20 May 2014** – In the wake of rising tensions in northern Mali, France has delayed its plans to pull troops out of its former colony.
- **19 May 2014** – On Monday, Malian officials deployed 1,500 troops to retake the rebel stronghold of Kidal after Tuareg separatists seized local government offices, taking hostages and engaging the army in a firefight in which dozens were killed.
 - Meanwhile the United Nations confirmed Monday that around thirty hostages, kidnapped by Tuareg rebels in a deadly siege at government offices in northern Mali, have been released.
- **18 May 2014** – Separatist Tuareg rebels launched an assault on the northern Malian city of Kidal over the weekend, killing eight soldiers, storming government buildings, and taking thirty hostages in what officials have stated is a "declaration of war" on the government.
- **17 May 2014** – Reports have indicated that the Malian army exchanged gunfire with Tuareg separatist rebels on Saturday, an incident which has shed doubt on the Prime Minister's visit to the rebel-controlled northeastern region of the country.
 - Meanwhile separatist militants shot dead a Malian soldier as violent anti-government protests erupted in Kidal ahead of Prime Minister Moussa Mara's visit.
- **16 May 2014** – On Friday, Mali's Prime Minister Moussa Mara began a first visit since his appointment six weeks ago to Mali's northern desert region amidst violent protests in the rebel-controlled Kidal region.
- **15 May 2014** – On Thursday, two Malian soldiers were killed, and more than 40 injured, when their military transporter crashed.
- **13 May 2014** – According to a spokesman for the United Nations mission in Mali, three UN peacekeepers have been wounded in the country's far north region.

Regional Reporting

- **19 May 2014** – On Monday, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) expressed worry over the recent purchase of a luxurious US \$40 million airplane for Mali's president despite the impoverished country's deep dependence on international aid.

International Developments

- **21 May 2014** – The UN Security Council has called for an immediate end to the violence in northern Mali after more than thirty people were killed in fighting between rebels and the army in the town of Kidal.

Mauritania

On the Ground Reporting

- **13 May 2014** – According to security sources, a Mauritanian, jailed for the murder of four French tourists in 2007, has died in a secret location where he was being held.

Domestic News

- **13 May 2014** – Mauritania's constitutional court confirmed Tuesday that the country's president will face four other candidates, including a woman and an anti-slavery activist, in the June 21 presidential elections.

Niger

- **24 May 2014** – According to Niger's Interior Minister Hassoumi Massaoudou, dozens of opposition members have been arrested on suspicion of plotting a "military coup" in Niger.
- **21 May 2014** – At least a dozen students were injured and around twenty other arrested when hundreds of students, angered by delays in payment of living stipends, clashed with police in Niger's capital Niamey late on Tuesday.

Nigeria

On the Ground Reporting

- **24 May 2014** – Three people were killed Saturday in the central Nigerian city of Jos in an explosion that targeted football fans watching the European Champions League final.
- **23 May 2014** – Militants in Nigeria have raided three villages and killed those they accused of being anti-Boko Haram vigilantes.
- **21 May 2014** – Boko Haram militants have been accused of killing seventeen people in an attack on a village in northeastern Nigeria, close to where hundreds of schoolgirls were seized over a month ago.
- **20 May 2014** – Two explosions targeted a bus terminal and market, both of which are frequented by thousands of people, in Nigeria's central city of Jos on Tuesday afternoon.
- **19 May 2014** - Nigerian police officials confirmed Monday that they thwarted a fresh attempt to detonate a car bomb in Kano, just one day after a bombing killed four people in an area of the city that has been repeatedly attacked by Boko Haram militants.
- **18 May 2014** – A suicide blast in a street full of bars and restaurants in the northern city of Kano has killed at least four people and wounding five others.
- **16 May 2014** - Despite announcing earlier this week that he would visit the town where more than 200 schoolgirls were abducted, Nigeria's President Goodluck Jonathan confirmed Friday that he has cancelled his trip to Chibok, a move that is likely to anger the Nigerian public and further derail his potential re-election bid.
 - Meanwhile a group of gunmen in Bauchi state, northern Nigeria, have razed two schools.
- **14 May 2014** – An eyewitness has reported that the residents of three villages in northern Nigeria have repelled an attack by suspected Boko Haram fighters.

- Meanwhile witnesses have reported that soldiers have opened fire on their commander in the northeastern city of Maiduguri.
- **13 May 2014** – On Tuesday, manned US aircraft began flying over Nigeria, searching for over 200 schoolgirls abducted by Boko Haram militants, after Abuja dismissed a prisoner-swap offer from the militant's leader.
- **12 May 2014** – A new Boko Haram video released on Monday claims to show the missing Nigerian schoolgirls, alleging that they had been converted to Islam and that they would not be released until all militant prisoners were freed.
 - Meanwhile the international efforts to locate 200 schoolgirls abducted by Islamist militants in Nigeria last month has widened with Israel joining the bid to locate the girls.
- **12 May 2014** – The Foreign Ministry in the Netherlands confirmed Monday that kidnappers have freed three Dutch nationals who were abducted in Nigeria's Niger Delta last week when gunmen stormed their boat.

Domestic News

- **20 May 2014** – Nigeria's parliament has approved a six-month extension to a state of emergency, which has been in place over the past year in three northeastern states that have been hit by Islamist militant violence.
 - Meanwhile according to UN diplomats, Nigeria has requested that the UN Security Council impose sanctions on Boko Haram.
- **14 May 2014** – Despite previously indicating that the Nigerian government would not negotiate with Boko Haram militants, on Tuesday, cabinet minister Tanimu Turaki stated that Nigeria is ready to talk to the Islamist militants in a bid to release the more than 200 schoolgirls who were abducted one month ago.

Regional Reporting

- **24 May 2014** – South Africa's government announced Saturday that African leaders, in Pretoria for President Jacob Zuma's inauguration, will hold informal talks on the security situation in Nigeria.
- **15 May 2014** – According to a source, a suspect wanted over last month's deadly attack the Nigerian capital city, a blast which has been claimed by Boko Haram, has been arrested in Sudan.

International Developments

- **23 May 2014** – On Thursday, the United Nations Security Council approved sanctions against Boko Haram, a decision that was welcomed by Britain and the United States.
- **19 May 2014** – Pentagon officials confirmed Monday that the United States has come to an agreement, which will effectively allow it to share some intelligence with Nigeria in a bid to bolster the search for the missing schoolgirls.
- **18 May 2014** – French President Francois Hollande has announced that while France supports the regional fight against Boko Haram, French troops will not be deployed to Nigeria "simply because Nigeria has its own armed forces that are ready and efficient."
- **17 May 2014** – African leaders meeting in Paris have agreed to wage "war" on Nigeria's Boko Haram militants.
- **14 May 2014** – On Wednesday, British Prime Minister David Cameron announced that Britain has offered Nigeria a surveillance plane and a military team in a bid to help with the search of more than 200 missing schoolgirls abducted last month by Boko Haram militants.
- **12 May 2014** – On Sunday, France's President Francois Hollande called for African leaders to hold a summit in Paris on security in West Africa, with a special focus on Boko Haram who have abducted more than 200 schoolgirls in Nigeria.

Security Summaries for West African States

Sahel Region

There is a very real threat of kidnap to westerners in the Sahel and surrounding regions. The Sahel region includes Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, however the kidnap threat extends to other countries, including Algeria, Cameroon, Libya and Nigeria. Following the military intervention in Mali, which was launched in January 2013, the threat of kidnap and terrorist attacks has increased, with further attacks highly likely to continue.

There are currently around six hostages being held in the Sahel and surrounding regions. Victims in the region have included construction workers, NGO workers, tourists and diplomats of various nationalities, primarily European. Some hostages have been killed.

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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 Chieftancy and land disputes, isolated inter-ethnic violence and civil unrest can occur at any time, including in the Northern, Upper East and Volta regions. A dusk to dawn curfew has been put in place on the Hohoe community in the Volta region. This is due to communal clashes over the exhumation of the Chief Imam of Hohoe. If you are considering travelling to the Northern Region, MS Risk advises you to remain alert to the potential of new outbreaks of flooding which is common in the Upper West, Upper East and Northern Regions during the rainy season, which spans from March to November. We advise that you monitor the local weather reports and expect difficulties when travelling to affected areas during this season.

Guinea – Page 15

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 and in the capital city. The outbreak is now almost entirely concentrated in the Forest region of Guekedou in southeastern Guinea. There have been no reported new cases of Ebola in Conakry since 26 April. The city has therefore passed the 21-day gestation period and is now considered Ebola-free. Travel may be undertaken to Guinea subject to sensible precautions, such as maintaining good personal hygiene and avoiding bush meat.

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.

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Liberia

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 centers around Liberia, and patrol the main roads.

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Senegal

On 6 May 2014, Senegal's government reopened the border with Guinea, which was closed after an outbreak of the Ebola fever, which has claimed scores of lives in the neighboring country. The border crossings at Kolda and Kedougou, in the southern region of Senegal, had been previously affected by the closure order.

Local elections are set to take place in Senegal on 29 June 2014. MS Risk advises all travellers to avoid all outdoor rallies and demonstrations as they may turn violent.

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

well as along the border with Mali. MS Risk advises that al- Qaeda militants may cross the border into Senegal and they may target Western interests as well as foreigners.

Sierra Leone

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

There is currently no travel advisory for Sierra Leone. Violent incidents have taken place under cover of crowds in the streets of Freetown. There are also occasional small riots between rival groups of youths in the central and eastern areas of Freetown. If you encounter such an incident, you should leave the area immediately. There is a low threat from terrorism. There is a possibility that retaliatory attacks may be carried out in Sierra Leone. This is due to the country's participation in the intervention in Mali. During the rainy season, May to October, roads can become extremely difficult, even for off-road vehicles. On 9 August a bridge in the capital city of Freetown collapse due to a landslide caused by heavy rain. At least six people were killed in the accident. MS Risk therefore advises all travellers in the country to exercise due caution when travelling by road throughout the season.

Togo

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

Benin

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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

Security Summary

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.



Domestic News

- **19 May 2014** – Six people pardoned by Benin's president, over an alleged poisoning plot against him, have been released from custody. On Monday, the court of appeal in Benin's commercial hub, Cotonou, announced the release of the six individuals, who were arrested between 2012 and 2013, and ordered that their personal belongings be returned. Their release was confirmed by their lawyer, Charles Badou, who stated that all of those held "have returned home and are free to move unrestricted." The release came one day after President Thomas Boni Yayi announced that the six were cleared of any involvement. He also pardoned a prominent businessman, Patrice Talon, who had been fighting extradition from France. Talon was a one-time ally of Boni Yayi, until he was accused in October 2012 of masterminding the alleged plot by switching the president's medicine for poison. He was already facing corruption accusations in Benin before his flight to France. In December 2013, a French appeal court refused to grant his extradition, ruling that he could not be sent home because it was not clear that an arrest warrant for him was still valid. Those held include Boni Yayi's personal physician, Mama Cisse, one of the president's nieces and a former business and industry minister in the government.

Burkina Faso

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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



Security Summary

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

Threats and Concerns

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

Kidnapping Threats

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



Crime

There is also a high risk of armed groups stopping vehicles (including public buses to rob them. Such incidents have occurred in various parts of the country, particularly at night. Therefore, all travel between towns by road at night is to be avoided, especially from Ouagadougou to Po where there is a heightened risk. This is especially severe on market days when bandits often target merchants with stock or cash en route to and from the urban areas.

MS RISK Guidance to Organisations in Burkina Faso:

Although the biggest concern at this time remains in the northern areas of the country, specifically along the porous Mali border and at the junction of the Niger border, the attack and kidnapping in Algeria has demonstrated that such attacks can occur at any place and at any time. In addition, the attack on BP in Algeria came just days after Islamists announced that they would retaliate against French interests in the region. Consequently, it is highly likely that more attacks will take place over the coming months.

There is an increased Burkinabe military presence in the north of the country and companies should review their respective security situations and consider the following:

- Location and safety of personnel
- Security controls, communications and contingency plans at static locations
- Work tempo implications
- Journey management systems in place and working
- Liaison with the military - use of military escorts, coordination between multiple assets, confirmation that military escorts are coordinated and competent for the task.
- Reviewing all crisis management contingencies including but not limited to the following:
 - Kidnap (for ransom or ideological purposes)
 - Medical emergency and evacuation cycle for northern area
 - Interdiction of road moves for personnel and any convoys
 - Loss of communications with remote locations - enhanced comms options, access to stores if replenishment is restricted or cut off.
- Media and public affairs contingency

Companies relying on police escorts in the northern region of the country should ensure that travel patterns do not become predictable. Varying routes is difficult due to the limited road networks; therefore, it is even more important to vary the types of vehicles used as well as the times of the journeys and to avoid travel patterns becoming widely known. This is especially critical given the current tensions along the Mali border and the impending ECOWAS operations. All companies linked to the World Bank/International Finance Cooperation should familiarize themselves with the IFC Voluntary Principles on the Use of Security Forces. This applies to military, police or private security services.

Finally, unconfirmed reports suggest there is an elevated banditry threat on the main routes south and east of the town of Fada N'Gourma en route to Pama and Diapala respectively. Road moves to these areas should be risk assessed and liaison with police should occur until the nature of the threats has been clarified. Companies with operations in the region are invited to report incidents to MS Risk to aid in assessing local conditions. Liaising with insurers to ensure appropriate cover is in place to meet special risks where needed is also strongly advised.

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

- **13 May 2014** - The Gambia has lifted a ban on flights from Liberia and Sierra Leone, which was imposed at the peak of the Ebola virus outbreak. The move comes as Guinea announces that the spread of the deadly virus had "slowed significantly." A statement issued by the Gambian transport ministry indicated, "the general public is hereby informed that airlines serving Banjul and the sub-region can now pick up passengers in Liberia and Sierra Leone." On April 10, President Yahya Jammeh ordered airlines to cancel all flights from Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in a bid to prevent the spread of the deadly virus. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) the outbreak in Guinea is one of the deadliest in history, with 233 cases "clinically compatible" with Ebola virus disease reported, and 157 deaths since the start of the year. The spread of Ebola has however "slowed significantly," with no new cases reported in Conakry since April 26. According to Guinea's health ministry, the total number of laboratory-confirmed Ebola cases in Guinea is 133, including 83 deaths. Liberia has reported six lab-confirmed cases, six probable or suspected cases and 11 deaths, while Sierra Leone had two suspected cases of Ebola, both of which turned out to be Lassa fever.

Guinea

No Travel Restrictions



Security Summary

An outbreak of contagious hemorrhagic fever, which has been identified as the Ebola virus, has been confirmed in the Forest region of south-eastern Guinea and in the capital city. While outbreak is now believed to be entirely concentrated in the Forest region of Guekedou in southeastern Guinea, government officials have confirmed two cases in Telimele. There have been no reported new cases of Ebola in Conakry since 26 April. The city has therefore passed the 21-day gestation period and is now considered Ebola-free. Travel may be undertaken to Guinea subject to sensible precautions, such as maintaining good personal hygiene and avoiding bush meat.

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On the Ground Reporting

- **23 May 2014** – On Friday, Guinean health officials announced two new confirmed cases of Ebola in an area previously untouched by the virus, which has killed more than 100 people in the West African country.

According to Mamadou Rafi Diallo, a spokesperson for Guinea's health ministry, "we recorded two new cases in Telimele. They are the first in this locality, which is in fact a new outbreak." The spokesperson further added that the two are being treated in isolation. The new cases may have been due to the two coming into contact with the body of another victim at a funeral service. Such contact has been responsible for a number of transmissions since the outbreak was first identified in March. Government officials have also indicated that they are closely monitoring forty-one other people who had come into contact with the two confirmed sufferers in Telimele, which is located 250 kilometres (160 miles) from the capital, Conakry. A statement issued by the government on Friday indicated "the government is working with partners to put in place a treatment centre, to identify everyone who has made contact with Ebola victims as well as raise awareness and distribute hygiene kits." The Ebola virus has infected around 170 people elsewhere in Guinea and in Liberia and killed more than 100, however the death toll is likely higher as the government is only counting cases that have been confirmed through laboratory testing. Meanwhile in the capital city, Conakry, no new cases of Ebola have been detected since 26 April.

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. Presidential elections occurred peacefully and the results from the second round-off have been announced. While Jose Mario Vaz won the elections, his rival, independent Nuno Gomes Nabiam, has rejected the results. While political tensions in Guinea-Bissau remain calm, this could change at any moment. All travellers to the country are advised to monitor the political situation and remain vigilant at all times. MS Risk advises against all travel to the northwestern regions of the country, specifically those which border the Casamance region of Senegal, including the Sao Domingos/Mpack road.

Domestic News

- **20 May 2014** – According to preliminary results released by election officials on Tuesday, the front-runner in Guinea-Bissau's presidential elections, Jose Mario Vaz, has won the decisive run-off. The election

commission confirmed that the candidate won an overwhelming 61.92 per cent of the vote against independent rival Nuno Gomes Nabiam, who attained 38.08 per cent of the vote. If confirmed, the former finance minister will be named the country's first elected leader since a military coup in 2012 upended an already fragile country. Although Mr Vaz, 57, of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, won the first round of elections on April 13, he failed to attain an outright majority, which effectively pitted him against Mr Nabiam in a head-to-head second round, which was held on Sunday. The two candidates have 48 hours to present any complaints before the results are confirmed. Mr Vaz's team, and the Guinea-Bissau Human Rights League complained on election day that his supporters were being attacked in Bissau and in the central town of Bafata, which is located 150 kilometres (90 miles) away. Mr Nabiam's team also reported irregularities, making vague references to an attempt at vote-buying on the eve of the run-off, however there was no immediate word on whether the 51-year-old intended to challenge the results. Election turn out during the first round was at 89 per cent, decreasing to 78 per cent in the run-off. The elections have been seen as a key test of Guinea-Bissau's progress since the 2012 coup. **Update (21 May 2014)** - Nunu Gomes Nabiam, who lost Sunday's presidential run-off, has rejected the results, telling journalists in the capital Bissau "I will not accept the result, because the figures collected by my campaign in four of eight regions are different from those announced by the National Electoral Commission."

- **19 May 2014** – Guinea-Bissau election officials began to tally votes on Monday after a post-coup presidential poll, stating that they expected a clear picture of who was leading the race within 24 hours. According to an official from the commission, "the work of compilation of results is very advanced. At the rate things are going, it is possible that we'll have a preliminary picture of voting trends on Tuesday." Voting took place on Sunday in an election that is seen as a key test for a nation that has long been plagued by drug cartels, and political chaos. Since a 2012 coup, Guinea-Bissau has been run by a military-backed transitional regime. On Sunday, almost 800,000 voters had a choice between former finance minister Jose Mario Vaz, who won the first round on April 13 but failed to attain an outright majority, and runner-up Nuno Gomes Nabiam, an independent. Vote counting in the capital took place in an atmosphere of calm in the capital Bissau, with military vehicles patrolling the streets. Around 4,000 troops were ensuring security while 245 observers from various countries were deployed to watch over the count at polling stations. The law requires that a new president be named by the end of the week.

Ivory Coast

No Travel Restrictions



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 an underlying threat from terrorism. Attacks could be indiscriminate, including in places frequented by foreigners.

Domestic News

- **16 May 2014** – The Ivory Coast's Defence Minister Paul Koffi Koffi confirmed Friday that an armed gang attacked an Ivorian village near the border with Liberia, killing three soldiers and ten civilians, adding that two children aged five and seven were amongst the victims. The Defence Minister has described the attackers as "a group of around 40 bandits armed with Kalashnikovs and bladed weapons who have been marauding in the area to rob homes, plunder harvests and torch villages," however he refused to elaborate on the nationality of the attackers, stating "I do not want to kindle fresh controversy, what we are doing now is combing the area." The raid against Faiteh, a village located in south-western Ivory Coast, took place on Thursday. A local resident has reported, "the town's residents have nearly all fled into the forest." Four Ivorian soldiers were killed in a similar raid on a nearby village that occurred in February. At the time, the government had alleged that the gunmen were from Liberia, however officials in Monrovia denied the accusation. The border region, which is the Ivory Coast's least stable area, has chronically been affected by land feuds and ethnic vendettas. In a single cross-border attack that occurred in 2012, eighteen people, including seven UN peacekeepers, were killed.

Mali

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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

Security Summary

Summary

Fighting in Kidal, in the northern region of Mali, broke out between rebel groups and government forces on 17 May 2014, resulting in casualties on both sides. While a ceasefire between the Malian government and three rebel groups was signed on 23 May 2014, the situation in the country remains tense. There have also been related violent protests that have occurred in the capital, Bamako, and there is a strong possibility of further unrest. MS Risk advises all travellers to Mali to avoid large crowds and demonstrations.

There has been an outbreak of the Ebola virus which has been confirmed in south-eastern Guinea. While there were reports of suspected cases in areas of Mali, specifically near the border with Guinea, these cases have since tested negative for the Ebola virus. Nevertheless, if you are travelling near the border areas 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.

If you are in Bamako, MS Risk advises you to maintain a high level of vigilance, to keep a low profile and to stay alert to the local political developments. We also advise that you avoid sensitive areas, including military installations and large



gatherings of people. Night time checkpoints continue to operate in Bamako, largely controlling access to military and government facilities. Checkpoints are in place from approximately 9PM until dawn.

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

Terrorism

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

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

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

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

Kidnapping

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

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

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

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

Local Travel

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

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

MS RISK Guidance to Organizations in Mali:

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

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

On the Ground Reporting

- **24 May 2014** – The African Union's (AU) negotiator announced Friday that the Malian government has signed a ceasefire deal with three rebel groups in the northern region of the country. The ceasefire comes days after the Tuareg and Arab insurgents captured the flashpoint town of Kidal. Mauritanian President and African Union chairman Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz made the announcement on Malian public television, stating "we have just signed an agreement which opens the way for a ceasefire," adding, "the deal comes into effect with the signature of all parties." Malian President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita has praised the work of his Mauritanian counterpart in securing the deal, stating "all day he negotiated. He convinced our brothers...that there is no alternative to peace and the negotiating table." According to a source from MINUSMA, the ceasefire also indicates that Bamako and the rebel group have agreed to release prisoners as soon as possible in order to facilitate UN humanitarian efforts "and to respect the principles of human rights." They also agreed to setting up an international commission of enquiry to look into the country's recent troubles. Meanwhile officials from the Malian government have indicated that strategic errors were to blame for the army's defeat in Kidal. According to a senior official, "there was a big failure in the chain of command....It is clear that someone in the army took an initiative that was not theirs to take."
- **23 May 2014** – According to officials at the United Nations, Tuareg rebels have made further advances in northern Mali, and have seized Kidal and Menaka. On Thursday, UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric told reporters that fighters from the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) had taken the towns after clashes with Malian government forces, adding "the northern towns of Kidal and Menaka are now under the control of the MNLA, and MNLA movements in Anefis, Aguelhok and other locations have been reported." Mr Dujarric further added that on the humanitarian front, "...our humanitarian colleagues tell us that an estimated 3,400 residents of Kidal have fled to rural areas, Algeria and Gao since fighting erupted." The United Nations has called for a ceasefire in northern Mali, where renewed fighting between Tuareg separatists and government forces has endangered a truce deal, which was agreed last year. An MNLA leader has indicated that forty Malian soldiers had been killed and seventy taken prisoner, while 50 pick-up trucks and 12 armored vehicles had been seized along with tonnes of weapons and ammunition. This latest military setback, in a country that has been plagued by ethnic tensions but just beginning to enjoy relative stability, has pushed the West African state back to the brink of chaos and state failure. Furthermore, this new round of fighting has delayed plans by former colonial ruler France to redeploy some of its troops based in Mali to begin a broader operation to hunt Islamist extremists across Western Africa.
 - Meanwhile, African Union (AU) president Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz arrived in Kidal Friday to hold urgent talks with Tuareg separatists, who have occupied the town. A diplomatic source has indicated that Abdel Aziz, the president of neighboring Mauritania, "has just arrived in Kidal in the context of finding a solution to the crisis." The source added that the President was accompanied by Bert Koenders, the head of MINUSMA. President Abdel Aziz cut short his visit to Rwanda to travel to Bamako on Thursday, where he urged the Malian authorities to enter into dialogue with the rebels. Speaking to reporters in the Malian capital city, President Abdel Aziz stated "we must make every necessary effort to soothe tempers....We will continue to surmount problems with dialogue." According to a diplomatic source, the Mauritanian president travelled from Bamako to Gao in a private jet on Friday, then transferred into a helicopter with air protection from MINUSMA for the onward journey to Kidal. According to the defence ministry, since Wednesday, around twenty Malian soldiers have been killed, and another thirty injured, as the insurgents have battled to recapture Kidal and the smaller settlement of Menaka which is located 660 kilometers (300 miles) to the south.

- **22 May 2014** – Tuareg separatists said on Thursday that they had seized control of several towns in northern Mali after routing government forces, however they did note that they will respect calls for a ceasefire. Attaye Ag Mohamed, an official with the Tuareg National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), confirmed that the militant group “...now control Anefis, Aguelhok, Tessalit, Menaka, Ansongo, Anderamboukane and Lere.” Attaye further indicated that the MNLA took the towns without a fight after government troops either abandoned their positions and sought refuge at the camps of the UN peacekeeping mission or fled south, adding “we are going to hold our positions. We will heed the call from the international community which has asked us to cease fire. We also note that the Malian government has called for an immediate ceasefire.” A parliamentarian from the region, Algabass Ag Intallah, confirmed that Malian troops had pulled out of several northern towns, while a Malian military source has indicated that the army was withdrawing from areas where it was outnumbered. The army had launched an offensive to retake control of Kidal after clashes erupted while Prime Minister Moussa Mara was visiting the town on Saturday.
 - According to an African security source, a coalition of rebel militias fought together to gain control of Kidal from the Malian army. These remarks came in the wake of statements from the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) and the High Council for the Unity of Azawad (HCUC), both of which claimed Wednesday to have captured the bastion of the Tuareg separatist movement. According to an African security source, the HCUC was the main force among “separatists armed groups involved in the fighting against the Malian army,” adding that the MNLA and Arab Movement of Azawad (MAA) also took part. Military operations against militant groups in northern Mali are complicated by the fact that fighters move between separatist and Islamist causes.
- **21 May 2014** – Tuareg fighters killed several Malian soldiers during clashes that erupted in Kidal on Wednesday. According to a source from MINUSMA, the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Mali, “the noise of gunfire has stopped....There are prisoners and deaths among the Malian army’s ranks.” Mohamed Ag Rhisa, one of the leaders of the separatist National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) confirmed that the group had taken “control of the whole town of Kidal,” adding “we have prisoners.” The fighting shattered an uneasy calm, which had held since the MNLA took thirty-two civil servants hostage during a battle that left eight Malian soldiers and twenty-eight rebels dead. **Update (22 May 2014)** - After heavy fighting with ethnic Tuareg separatists, sources have indicated that Malian soldiers retreated Wednesday from the northern town of Kidal, a major setback for the army less than a year after its highly unpopular return to the rebel stronghold. Captain Remi, a spokesman with the French forces confirmed that the Malian army was seen fleeing the town Wednesday afternoon. Local sources indicated that fighting reignited at dawn Wednesday, with local residents reporting that shooting intensified near the governor’s office. The gunfire ended a two-day period of relative calm after tensions increased over the weekend.
- **20 May 2014** – In the wake of rising tensions in northern Mali, France has delayed its plans to pull troops out of its former colony. France had announced earlier this month that it was ending its “frontal war phase” in Mali, after deploying troops there in 2013. While France had planned to redeploy 2,000 of its 3,000 remaining troops, serving in Mali under operation Serval, to other countries in the Sahel region, a French defense source indicated Tuesday that the redeployment has been delayed after fighting between rebels and the army broke out in the northern town of Kidal. According to the source, “given the events of the last 48 hours, the operation to restructure the forces under Serval and send them to other French units in the Sahel-Sahara region has been deferred by a few weeks.” The source also noted that Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian had been due to visit Mali and Chad over the past weekend for a reorganization of the deployment, however his visit was cancelled due to increased fighting.

- **19 May 2014** – On Monday, Malian officials deployed 1,500 troops to retake the rebel stronghold of Kidal after Tuareg separatists seized local government offices, taking hostages and engaging the army in a firefight in which dozens were killed. A Malian army source has confirmed “we have taken every measure necessary to reinforce our presence in the north,” adding that soldiers had been arriving in the region since Saturday, while more are “on their way” from the city of Gao. According to the government, eight soldiers and twenty-eight insurgents died in fighting Saturday outside the regional governor’s offices while around thirty civil servants were being held hostage by the militants. The MNLA has confirmed that it is holding a number of hostages, including the regional director of Kidal, a prefect, the governor’s adviser and twenty-four soldiers, promising “humane treatment” to its captives. Following a June 2013 peace deal, which paved the way for presidential elections, the separatists evacuated the governor’s offices in November last year after a nine-month occupation. However the process deeply divided the MNLA, whose ultimate goal is the independence of Azawad.
 - Meanwhile the United Nations confirmed Monday that around thirty hostages, kidnapped by Tuareg rebels in a deadly siege at government offices in northern Mali, have been released. An official from MINUSMA, the United Nations peacekeeping force in Mali confirmed “we have just taken back around 30 hostages. They are in not bad condition. Two are very tired.” There was no immediate detail on any negotiations behind the release, or confirmation that every hostage had been freed, however a humanitarian source who participated in the handover confirmed their release, stating “they are between 28 and 30 hostages. They are in the hands of MINUSMA.” The announcement made soon after reports emerged that Mali had sent 1,500 troops to restore government control in Kidal, which is the bastion of Mali’s Tuareg separatist movement. According to officials, the civil servants had been held since Saturday, when eight Malian soldiers and twenty-eight insurgents were killed as the two sides exchanged fire outside the regional governor’s headquarters in the rebel stronghold of Kidal.
- **18 May 2014** – Separatist Tuareg rebels launched an assault on the northern Malian city of Kidal over the weekend, killing eight soldiers, storming government buildings, and taking thirty hostages in what officials have stated is a “declaration of war” on the government. The attack was apparently prompted by a visit to Kidal on Saturday by newly appointed Prime Minister Moussa Mara, highlighting regional hostility towards the central government in Bamako and casting further doubt on the viability of reconciliation efforts. In a statement released Sunday, the country’s UN mission confirmed that six local government officials and two civilians had also been killed, however the circumstances of their deaths remain unclear. The violence began Saturday morning when rebels launched a heavy assault on the governor’s office, where officials had gathered to meet with Prime Minister Mara. The Prime Minister had stayed in the army barracks and then left Kidal on Sunday to visit Gao. According to a Defense Ministry statement, the fighting continued throughout the day, with eight soldiers killed and another twenty-five injured. The statement also indicated that twenty-eight assailants were killed along with sixty-two wounded. The Defense Ministry also noted that Malian soldiers had regained control of all administrative buildings in Kidal except the governor’s office. The Malian government has indicated that around thirty civil servants are being held hostage however their whereabouts remain unclear. The Malian government has blamed the clashes on Tuareg separatists however Prime Minister Mara has indicated that militant groups had taken advantage of the crisis to infiltrate Kidal on Saturday night “to participate in the chaos alongside other terrorist groups.” A statement released by MINUSMA indicated that the UN peacekeeping force’s chief Albert Koenders “condemns in the firmest manner” the killings. The United States has also called for restraint and the “immediate” release of the hostages. State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki indicated in a statement “we call for the immediate release of all hostages, and urge all parties to refrain from violence and from any acts that place

civilians at risk.” The Economic community of West African States (ECOWAS), a regional group of sixteen countries, also condemned the violence and the “serious deterioration of the political and security situation.” Prime Minister Mara visited the town of Timbuktu on Friday and Kidal on Saturday. Although he was due to spend two days in Gao, the final leg of his official visit was cut short. Prime Minister Mara returned to Bamako late Sunday to hold urgent talks with President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita.

- **17 May 2014** – Reports have indicated that the Malian army exchanged gunfire with Tuareg separatist rebels on Saturday, an incident which has shed doubt on the Prime Minister’s visit to the rebel-controlled northeastern region of the country. According to an official from MINUSMA, “gunfire erupted Saturday between the Malian army and Tuareg rebels near the governor’s office in Kidal. The prime minister’s visit to Kidal is compromised.” The incident was also confirmed by an official from the regional governor’s office, who described it as “an act of sabotage of the prime minister’s visit.” The official also noted that no one appeared to have been hurt however the situation is “very worrying.” Prime Minister Mara was expected to arrive in Kidal on Saturday as part of his first visit to the northern region of the country since being appointed six weeks ago, however there was no immediate word on whether the trip would be cancelled.
Update (17 May 2014) – Malian Prime Minister Moussa Mara arrived in the rebel-controlled northern city of Kidal on Saturday for an official visit that was delayed as a result of gunfire exchanged between the Malian army and Tuareg separatists. The visit was due to be the second leg of his first tour of the West African country’s restive northern desert since his appointment in April however due to the outbreak of violence in Kidal, he stopped briefly in the neighboring region of Gao instead. An official from the UN’s MINUSMA peacekeeping force in Kidal confirmed, “a MINUSMA helicopter supported by another French unit...allowed the prime minister of Mali to arrive in Kidal.”
 - Meanwhile separatist militants shot dead a Malian soldier as violent anti-government protests erupted in Kidal ahead of Prime Minister Moussa Mara’s visit. A Malian army source confirmed the shootout, stating that the soldier died of bullet wounds. A source in the governor’s office has described the incident as “an act of sabotage of the prime minister’s visit.” The trip, which is party of Mr Mara’s first tour of the northern desert region since his appointment in April, was delayed as shots rang out. The premier was due to meet Malian troops however his arrival was delayed by several hours as he was diverted to Gao after news emerged of the shooting, with violent protests taking place at the regional airport. The Prime Minister was finally able to touch down by helicopter at a UN barracks, where a member of his entourage indicated that gunfire was still audible.
- **16 May 2014** – On Friday, Mali’s Prime Minister Moussa Mara began a first visit since his appointment six weeks ago to Mali’s northern desert region amidst violent protests in the rebel-controlled Kidal region. The official visit began in the town of Timbuktu, where the Prime Minister was accompanied by Annick Girardin, the French Secretary of State for Development and Francophonie, and the European Commissioner for Development, Andris Piebalgs, and is due to move to Kidal on Saturday and then to Gao on Sunday. According to the governor’s office, Prime Minister Mara will travel on Saturday to Kidal, located 1,500 kilometers (930 miles) northeast of the capital Bamako, where several hundred youths and women have been demonstrating against the visit at the local airport. On the ground sources have reported that protesters have thrown stones at security forces while a Malian military source has indicated that the protesters have since been dispersed by UN peacekeepers. MINUSMA, the UN force in Mali, has confirmed that it is investigating the incident, in which four civilians were wounded. Security for the Prime Minister’s tour is being provided by UN peacekeepers and by the French army. In November 2013, Mara’s predecessor Oumar Tatam Ly was forced to cancel a trip to the northern region after protests occupied a runway at the airport.

- **15 May 2014** – On Thursday, two Malian soldiers were killed, and more than 40 injured, when their military transporter crashed. According to army spokesman Souleymane Maiga, the accident, which happened in the capital Bamako, “occurred due to a technical fault in the vehicle.” The spokesman added that the truck was on the road leading from the north of the capital to the presidential palace, however no further details pertaining to the incident have been released. The army had initially reported, “45 soldiers injured, one of them seriously,” before later announcing that two of the casualties had died. The deaths were confirmed by a medical source at the Gabriel Toure Hospital in Bamako.
- **13 May 2014** – According to a spokesman for the United Nations mission in Mali, three UN peacekeepers have been wounded in the country’s far north region. On Tuesday, spokesman Olivier Salgado indicated that a UN vehicle hit a land mine Tuesday morning near the peacekeepers’ base in Kidal adding that the peacekeepers were lightly wounded and have been taken to Gao for medical treatment. Kidal is home to a separatist rebellion of ethnic Tuaregs and al-Qaeda-linked militants are also known to be active in the area. Despite a French-led military operation, which ousted the militants from power in the major towns across northern Mali in early 2013, the situation in the region remains tense. Attacks by extremists have continued despite the presence of French, UN and Malian forces. In February 2014, two medical aid workers were injured when their vehicle hit a land mine in Kidal.

Regional Reporting

- **19 May 2014** – On Monday, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) expressed worry over the recent purchase of a luxurious US \$40 million airplane for Mali’s president despite the impoverished country’s deep dependence on international aid. According to an IMF spokesman, “we are concerned about the quality of recent decisions such as the purchase of the presidential plane worth US \$40 million and the issuance of a US \$200 million state guarantee to allow a private company to buy supplies...for the army.” While the spokesman did note that the money for President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita’s aircraft did not come from the US \$33 million in emergency funding the IMF deployed to the West African country last year, but came from a private Malian bank, as a loan, nevertheless the purchase and the guarantee both illustrate the “weaknesses in public financial management.” He further added that these recent decisions will also delay the first review of a new loan programme from the IMF, which had been scheduled for June, adding that this could ultimately further restrict government finances. Under the loan programme, which was awarded to the Malian government in December 2013, “the authorities have committed to execute their budget in line with the priorities highlighted in their growth-enhancing and poverty-reducing strategies,” adding “getting satisfactory information about these transactions and reassurance that the authorities still stand behind the fiscal stability and sound public financial management objectives of their arrangement with the IMF will take time.”

International Developments

- **21 May 2014** – The UN Security Council has called for an immediate end to the violence in northern Mali after more than thirty people were killed in fighting between rebels and the army in the town of Kidal. A statement released by the 15-member Council on Wednesday stated “the members of the Security Council strongly condemned the violent clashes in Kidal on May 17 and 18,” adding “the members of the Security Council insisted on the need for those responsible for these actions to be identified and held accountable.” The statement further noted “the members of the Security Council called on all parties to act with restraint

and refrain from any further violence that could threaten civilians,” calling for “sincere” peace talks and reiterating “...that only a credible and inclusive negotiation process can bring long-term peace and stability throughout the country.” Sources in the UN force assisting French and Malian forces in peacekeeping efforts in the restive north indicated that several hundred people had fled their homes to Kidal to the relative safety of nearby desert camps. The statement by the UN Security Council came a day after Mali’s foreign affairs minister requested that the Security Council expand the peacekeeping mandate and efforts to disarm Tuareg rebels. While the UN peacekeeping mission is soon up for renewal, Abdoulay Diop has requested “a much more robust mandate, under Chapter VII of the UN charter,” which effectively allows for the use of force. According to Mr Diop, this would enable the soldiers to “deal with threats on the ground and disarmament of all armed groups, in particular the MNLA.” Furthermore, while Mr Diop has indicated that Bamako will honor its commitments to hold “a sincere dialogue” aimed at a definitive peace agreement with the Tuareg rebels, he has accused the MNLA of colluding with terrorist groups, adding that flags of terrorist groups al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and of Ansar Dine (Defenders of Islam) were seen “flying from the vehicles of the attackers, next to those of the MNLA.” The UN’s special representative to Mali, Bert Koenders, indicated that the UN “remains deploy committed to restoring Mali state authority in Kidal,” however he noted that “the priority for today is to revive the political dialogue,” adding “we must call on all concerned to take concrete steps to contribute to the de-escalation of tensions.” the past weekend, Tuareg separatists clashed with Malian soldiers in Kidal during a visit by Prime Minister Moussa Mara. The battle left eight Malian soldiers and twenty-eight rebels dead. The fighters of the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) also took thirty-two civil servants hostage. They were released on Monday.

Mauritania

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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

Security Summary

Summary

Due to the current Ebola outbreak in Guinea, with possible cases being tested in Liberia and Sierra Leone, Mauritania has closed some of its southern border crossings. MS Risk advises all travellers to the area to check with local officials.

Presidential elections have been set for 21 June 2014. On 5 May 2014, the country's opposition party announced that it will boycott the upcoming elections. While there have been no reports of protests occurring in Nouakchott, are throughout the rest of the country, protests may occur as the election date draws near. MS Risk advises all travellers to Mauritania to be alert at all times and to avoid any large public gatherings as they may turn violent with minimal warning.

MS Risk advises against all travel to the provinces of Tiris Zemmour, Adrar, Tagant, Hodh el Chargui, Dakhlet-Nouadhibou and Inchiri. We also advise against all travel to the northern and eastern regions of the country, especially the desert areas north of Oualata-Tichit-Ouadane-Zouerat line, as well as the border areas with Algeria, Mali and Morocco. MS Risk also advises against all but essential travel to the rest of the country, which includes travel along the Nouakchott-Nouadhibou corridor which comprises of the north-south arterial road that runs between these two cities and which passes through Nouamghar. This is



due to extremist groups and armed smugglers that are active in these areas, which has resulted in high threats of terrorism as well as a heightened risk of banditry and kidnapping.

Since early 2012, there have been demonstrations in a number of locations across the country, including Nouakchott. In general, demonstrations have been peaceful however some have involved clashes with police, resulting in the use of tear gas. On 3 March 2014, one person died and at least 15 were injured in Nouakchott during a demonstration over an alleged case of apostasy. Protests have been located near the Presidency and the main market area. Smaller demonstrations have taken place in other towns, including Nouadhibou. There is a possibility that further such demonstrations will occur. MS Risk therefore advises all travellers to avoid all political gatherings and demonstrations.

Terrorism

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

Kidnapping

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

For companies with employees remaining in Mauritania, MS Risk advises you to arrange a trustworthy escort that is familiar with the country. The use of varied and unpredictable routes and schedules when moving from one location to another is also highly advised. Exercise a high awareness of personal security at all times and monitor the local developments. On 14 May 2013, the Government of Nigeria declared a state of emergency in the states of Adamwa, Borno and Yobe. Both Adamawa and Borno border Cameroon's far North, North and Adamaoua provinces. It is possible that military operations there might have an impact across the border in Cameroon.

On the Ground Reporting

- **13 May 2014** – According to security sources, a Mauritanian, jailed for the murder of four French tourists in 2007, has died in a secret location where he was being held. Sources have indicated that the body of Maarouf Ould Haiba, 35, has been brought to Nouakchott and will be handed over to his family in the coming days. No further details pertaining to the circumstances of Ould Haiba's death on Monday have been released. Ould Haiba was one of three convicted for the murders, which were claimed by al-Qaeda's regional franchise in northern and western Africa. Fellow Mauritanians Sidi Ould Sidna, 29, and Mohamed Ould Chabarnou, 36, are being held in the same prison, which is located in the northern region of the country. In 2010, the three men were sentenced to death, however capital punishment has not been applied in Mauritania since 1987. The four French tourists, shot dead in southern Mauritania in December 2007, were members of the same family. The murder of the tourists marked a turning point for the previously peaceful nation, and resulted in the cancellation of the Paris-Dakar rally. Their deaths were ordered by Algerian jihadist Mokhtar Belmokhtar, a former leader of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), who broke away to form a new Islamist militia at the end of 2012.

Domestic News

- **13 May 2014** – Mauritania's constitutional court confirmed Tuesday that the country's president will face four other candidates, including a woman and an anti-slavery activist, in the June 21 presidential elections. Court officials have named Lalla Mariem Mint Moulaye Idriss, the second woman to run in the country's history, on a list of approved candidates, which also includes opposition party leaders Boidiel Ould Houmeid and Ibrahima Moctar Sarr. Ms Idriss, 57, and anti-slavery activist Biram Ould Dah Ould Abeid were both named as independents. Ould Abeid, a descendant of slaves himself, has won international recognition for leading efforts to combat slavery in a nation where it still exists, despite an official ban more than thirty years ago. The court rejected the candidacies of businessman Alioune Ould Bouamatou and noted the decision of Bar Council president Ahmed Salem Ould Bouhoubeini to pull out of the race. Ould Bouhoubeini, a member of radical opposition coalition the National Forum for Democracy and Unity, announced his withdrawal last week in protest over the "non-transparency" of the election.

Niger

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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



Security Summary

MS Risk advises against all travel to the following parts of Niger: all areas of the country north of the city of Abalak, including the Air Massif region; the province of Agadez (including the road linking Assamakato Agadez and the city of Agadez); areas of Tahoua province north of the city of Tahoua, including the city itself; the area of Tillaberi province north of Niamey, including the road from Niamey to Gao and the road from Niamey to Menaka; areas within 40 km of the border with Nigeria in Diffa, Zinder and Maradi provinces. MS Risk advises against all but essential travel to the rest of Niger, including the capital city of Niamey. There remains a high threat from, including kidnapping, in Niger. On 1 June 2013, three guards were killed and twenty-two inmates escaped from the main prison in Niamey during an attack by suspected Islamist militants. Travellers in Niamey should continue to monitor developments and be alert to announcements and remain vigilant at all times. On 23 May 2013, a military barracks in the town of Agadez and a uranium processing facility near the town of Arlit, approximately 150 miles north of Agadez, were attacked. A number of people were killed and injured. The terrorist group which claimed responsibility for the two attacks has publicly threatened to carry out further attacks in Niger. On 14 May 2013, the Government of Nigeria declared a state of emergency in its northern states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. Both Borno and Yobe border southern Niger. Consequently there is a risk that instability may spill over the border from Nigeria to Niger. There is a high threat of kidnapping from terrorist groups including AQIM and MOJWA. These groups have kidnapped Westerners in Niger and in the wider Sahel region, including in Niamey and the north and west of Niger. Further kidnappings are likely to occur. There is a threat of retaliatory attacks in Niger, due to the country's participation in the French-led intervention in Mali. Levels of crime are high, especially in the capital city



of Niamey. Thefts, robberies and residential break-ins can occur at any time. Banditry, smuggling and other criminal activity is common in border areas, especially after dark. Bandits are thought to be operating in the border area with Nigeria, south of Zinder. MS Risk advises avoiding crossing the border with Nigeria during the hours of darkness.

Since May 2013, outbreaks of cholera have been reported in several places in Niger. As of 25 November 2013 a total of 577 cases, including 13 deaths, have been reported.

On the Ground Reporting

- **24 May 2014** – According to Niger's Interior Minister Hassoumi Massaoudou, dozens of opposition members have been arrested on suspicion of plotting a "military coup" in Niger. The country's Interior Minister has indicated that close to forty allies of parliament speaker Hama Amadou were detained this week for allegedly planning "a campaign of terror," adding that some were found with petrol bombs in their possession. Mr Massaoudou further stated, "they have been calling for violence for months," adding "our action is against people whose goal is to destroy democratic institutions." In recent days, there has been a series of attacks that have occurred between competing parties in the capital Niamey. The arrests also follow a gun attack on the home of a ruling party lawmaker earlier this week and a petrol bomb attack on the party's headquarters, in which three people were injured, one severely. No one was injured in the attack on the lawmaker's home however according to a police statement, two men were arrested in connection with the bomb attack.
- **21 May 2014** – At least a dozen students were injured and around twenty other arrested when hundreds of students, angered by delays in payment of living stipends, clashed with police in Niger's capital Niamey late on Tuesday. According to local sources, police fired teargas and used truncheons to disperse the University of Niamey students after they attacked the government agency responsible for disbursing the stipends. According to Anifa Arzika, a spokesman for the students, "we receive social assistance that the agency pays to us. It only lacked the signature of the director," adding "he persisted in delaying things, which provoked the students' anger." Local residents have also indicated that students ransacked the agency's offices then damaged nearby cars and motorcycles, before throwing rocks at police who arrived to disperse them. A police source has indicated that about twenty students were taken into custody.

Nigeria

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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



Security Summary

Summary

The 14 April 2014 terrorist bomb attack on a bus park in the Nyanya area, which is located in the eastern outskirts of Abuja, was followed by a further explosion in the same area on the evening of 1 May. Both attacks caused multiple casualties and extra security in the area has caused severe traffic congestion. There have been further bombings, which have taken place in

Kano, on 18 May 2014, and Jos on 20 May 2014. MS Risk advises all travellers to the capital city to keep clear of the affected areas.



The United States State Department has issued a warning to US citizens of a plan to attack one of two Sheraton hotels located near Lagos, Nigeria's busy main commercial hub. The statement says those behind the plot were "groups associated with terrorism", but gave no further details. In recent weeks, Nigeria has suffered two bomb attacks on the edge of the capital Abuja, which have heightened security concerns ahead of the World Economic Forum (WEF) for Africa that will be held between 7 and 9 May. Boko Haram, which is mostly active in the northeast, it has struck across the north and in Nigeria's capital, in the centre. The group has never

conducted an attack in Lagos; however its leader Abubakar Shekau has threatened to do so. The State Department said, "As of late April, groups associated with terrorism allegedly planned to mount an unspecified attack against the Sheraton Hotel in Nigeria, near the city of Lagos. There was no further information regarding which of the two Sheraton Hotels in Lagos was the possible target ... There is no further information regarding the timing or method of attack." MS Risk advises all travellers to Nigeria to remain cautious. This includes in the capital city and in Lagos.

In November, a French national was kidnapped in northern Cameroon, near the border with Nigeria, by suspected Boko Haram militants. It is currently believed that the French national has been taken across the border into Nigeria and is likely being held captive in the northern region of Nigeria. MS Risk advises all to avoid travelling to the northern regions of the country, especially to the states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, which are currently under a state of emergency. Continued kidnappings of foreign nationals, especially French nationals, is highly likely to continue.

There have been reports of a security incident involving gunfire that occurred in the Apo district of the capital city of Abuja on the morning of 20 September 2013. The incident may have involved suspected Boko Haram militants. Consequently any travellers in the capital city are reminded to remain vigilant at all times as further attacks may occur with minimal warning.

On 14 May 2013, the Nigerian Government declared a State of Emergency in the states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. That state of emergency has now been extended for an additional six months. Since the announcement, military operations have been going on in all three states and curfews have been put in place in parts of Maiduguri, Borno state and Adamawa state. Curfews can be imposed, amended and lifted at a short notice. Consequently you should be alert to announcements made by the respective State Governments and you are advised to monitor any developments in the affected states. There may be an increased threat of retaliatory attacks elsewhere in Nigeria following the commencement of military operations. MS Risk advises against all travel to: the Riverine areas of Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa Ibom and Cross River States; Warri city, Kano city, Okene City.

We advise against all travel to Adamawa State, Borno State, Yobe State, Gombe State and Bauchi State. This is due to the frequent violent attacks which have been occurring over the past months. More recent attacks have increasingly focused on public places, including bars and restaurants. These attacks have resulted in a large number of deaths and injuries. We also advise against all travel to Kano City and Okene City, which has also seen a frequent number of high levels of violence.

We advise against all but essential travel to Kano state, Kaduna State, Jigwa State, Katsina State, Sokoto State, Zamfara State, Kebbi State, Jos City, Riyom and Barkin Ladi Local Government Areas in Plateau State; Okene Region of Kogi State. These areas have witnessed an increase in violent attacks. We also advise against all but essential travel to Mubi Town in Adamawa State and the area north of Mubi Town that borders Borno State where there has also been a rise in violent attacks. We also advise against all but essential travel to the non-riverine areas of Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers and Akwa Ibom States, Abia State, Kaduna City, Zaria City.

Companies with workers in northern Nigeria, even in areas which are not subject to specific advice against travel, will require a high level of security. In light of the recent kidnappings of Westerners, employers are advised to review their security arrangements and to ensure that compounds are protected.

There is a high threat of terrorism occurring in Nigeria. A bomb attack that occurred at a bus station in Kano city on 18 March 2013 resulted in multiple casualties. Attacks could be indiscriminate, including government, security and educational institutions, international organisations as well as public venues and areas such as restaurants, bars, markets, hotels, shopping centers, places of worship and other areas that are frequented by expatriates, foreign tourists and business travelers. Terrorist attacks have been known to occur on religious and public holidays. There have been regular attacks on churches in northern Nigeria at times of worship. The US government has published an Emergency Message for US citizens, detailing information that Boko Haram may be planning attacks in Abuja. This information has been assessed as being credible and attacks could occur at any time, including against international hotels that are frequently visited by Westerners. There is also an increased level of kidnap threat in Nigeria in which foreign nationals have typically been the targets of such kidnaps.

Kidnapping

Although recent incidents of kidnapping have mostly occurred in northern Nigeria, MS Risk advises that such kidnappings can take place anywhere in the country.

- On 16 February 2013, after storming the compound of Lebanese-owned construction firm Setraco in Bauchi state, gunmen killed a security guard and abducted a Briton, an Italian, a Greek, two Lebanese and two Syrian workers. The British construction worker is believed to have been killed along with the six other foreign nationals. This was the worst case of foreigners being kidnapped in the mostly Muslim north of Africa's most populous country since an insurgency by Islamist militants intensified two years ago.
- In December 2012, a French national was kidnapped by armed men in Katsina State in northern Nigeria, reportedly from a residential compound.
- In 2012, a Lebanese national was kidnapped in Kaduna State. His Lebanese colleague was killed during the abduction
- In January 2012, a German national was killed in Kano city. He was killed on 31 May 2012.
- In May 2011, a British national and an Italian national were kidnapped together in Kebbi State. Both hostages were killed in Sokoto on 8 March 2012.

Threats and Terrorism

Attacks by Islamist groups in northern Nigeria have become the biggest threat to stability in Africa's top oil producing country. This has been exacerbated by the fact that Western governments are currently concerned that militants may link up with groups elsewhere in the region, including al-Qaeda's North African wing, AQIM. These concerns have been further intensified by the conflict and military intervention in nearby Mali.

On the Ground Reporting

- **24 May 2014** – Three people were killed Saturday in the central Nigerian city of Jos in an explosion that targeted football fans watching the European Champions League final. The attack, which occurred at about 9:30 pm (2030 GMT) on Bauchi Road, a predominantly Muslim area of the city, came just days after a twin car bomb attack occurred in the city's crowded market, killing 118 people and raising fears that Boko Haram's violence had spread from the northeast. Chis Olakpe, the commissioner of police for Plateau state, of which Jos is the capital, confirmed the attack, stating "so far, we have three dead, three injured....The target was the football viewing central." The commissioner further noted that it is currently too early to say who may have been responsible for the blast. While he declined to comment on reports that the explosion was a suicide bombing, he did reveal that the bomber's improvised explosive device had gone off prematurely."
- **23 May 2014** – Militants in Nigeria have raided three villages and killed those they accused of being anti-Boko Haram vigilantes. According to local residents, more than thirty people were killed in attacks overnight Friday in the northeastern state of Borno, with sources reporting that the raids took place as the UN Security Council approved sanctions against the Islamist group. The militants reportedly arrived in a convoy and gathered the men of the community together. They accused them of being members of vigilante group and killed them. About twenty-five men were killed in Moforo, while another eight men were

killed in Kimbi. It is not known if there were casualties from a raid that occurred early on Friday in the village of Kabrihu, which is located near the Sambisa forest. According to one resident, the militants also burnt down all the shops in the market, leaving the villages destitute. On the ground sources have reported that in the wake of increasing violent Boko Haram attacks, many villages in the northern states affected by the on going insurgency have formed vigilante groups in a bid to protect their communities from militant attacks. Meanwhile Nigerian officials have reported that following on last weekend's summit, which was hosted by France, President Goodluck Jonathan is due to travel to South Africa for discussions with other African heads of state on combating terrorism in Africa.

- **21 May 2014** – Boko Haram militants have been accused of killing seventeen people in an attack on a village in northeastern Nigeria, close to where hundreds of schoolgirls were seized over a month ago. The latest attack comes one day after 118 people died in a twin bomb attack in the central city of Jos. That attack has also been blamed on Boko Haram. During the early morning hours on Wednesday, Boko Haram militants reportedly spent hours killing and looting in the village of Alagarno, which is located near Chibok. Witnesses in Alagarno reported that suspected Boko Haram fighters arrived close to midnight, and killed and looted for hours before leaving in stolen vehicles. One survivor has indicated that every single building in the village had been torched. **Update (21 May 2014)** – Two attacks carried out by Boko Haram gunmen have killed thirty people near Chibok. Sources have indicated that the first attack, which occurred Monday afternoon, killed ten people in the village of Shawa, which is located seven kilometers (4.3 miles) from Chibok. Gunmen then stormed the nearby village of Alagarno late Tuesday, stealing food, razing homes and firing on fleeing civilians. According to one resident, “it was a sudden attack....They began shooting and set fire to our homes. We had to flee to the bush. They killed 20 of our people.” Many of those who fled the attack in Alagarno are believed to be in Chibok.
- **20 May 2014** – Two explosions targeted a bus terminal and market, both of which are frequented by thousands of people, in Nigeria's central city of Jos on Tuesday afternoon. Police have indicated that there are an unknown number of casualties and that the blasts could be heard miles away, indicating that they were sizable. The city of Jos is located in Nigeria's middle belt region in Plateau state, which divides the country into the predominantly Muslim north and Christian south. While the cause of the explosions was not immediately known, the attacks did occur amidst a number of bomb attacks that have been carried out by Boko Haram militants. Two separate bomb blasts in April killed more than 120 people and wounded more than 200 in Abuja. On Monday, a suicide car bomber killed twenty-five people in the northern city of Kano. Police there detonated a second car bomb on Monday. **Update (21 May 2014)** – Twin car bombings in central Nigeria have killed at least 118 people. Mohammed Abdulsala, the coordinator of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) indicated that buildings collapsed because of the intensity of the blasts in the New Abuja Market area, causing raging fires. He further indicated that “more bodies may be in the debris,” adding “the exact figure of the dead bodies recovered as of now is 118...56 people were injured.” According to military officials, improvised explosive devices were hidden in a truck and minibus. The second went off about twenty minutes after the first as emergency service workers tended to the victims. A spokeswoman for the state government, Jonah Jang, has indicated that most of the victims were women. On Wednesday Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan condemned the attack, calling it a “tragic assault on human freedom” and condemning the perpetrators as “cruel and evil.” A statement released by the President's office indicated, “President Jonathan assures all Nigerians that the government remains fully committed to winning the war against terror and...will not be cowed by the atrocities of enemies of human progress and civilization.” The latest attack, coupled with a suicide car bomb attack, which killed four in the northern city of Kano on Sunday, has raised new questions pertaining to the

government's grip on the country's security. Furthermore, the Nigerian president has come under criticism for his lackluster response to the kidnapping of more than 200 schoolgirls by Boko Haram militants and has faced calls to quit for failing to ensure the safety of Nigerians and their property.

- **19 May 2014** - Nigerian police officials confirmed Monday that they thwarted a fresh attempt to detonate a car bomb in Kano, just one day after a bombing killed four people in an area of the city that has been repeatedly attacked by Boko Haram militants. A statement released by police officials indicated "the police in Kano today...at about 9:00 AM (0800 GMT) averted what could have been another devastating bomb blast in the ancient city of Kano," adding "Kano police operatives, acting on intelligence, tracked and recovered a Mitsubishi station wagon car...loaded with assorted gas cylinders, one container of fuel and other electrical components of improvised explosive devices." The statement added that the vehicle was packed with material for an improvised explosive device but was recovered and made safe before it could be detonated. Meanwhile investigators combed the scene of a suicide car bomb attack that killed four in Kano on Sunday. While authorities have indicated that it is too early to say who is behind the violence, many have suggested a link to local politics rather than Boko Haram. Some local residents have made a link between the blast and local government elections held in Kano on Saturday, at which the main opposition All Progressives Congress (APC) won all 44 seats.
- **18 May 2014** – A suicide blast in a street full of bars and restaurants in the northern city of Kano has killed at least four people and wounding five others. Witnesses have reported that the explosion, which targeted the mainly Christian area of Sabon Gari, was caused by a car bomb and occurred at a time when the street was busy. The attack was confirmed by Kano Police Commissioner Adelere Shinaba, who stated "at about 22:00 (21:00 GMT), we heard an explosion and immediately mobilized to the scene where we discovered a suicide bomber....Five people, including the bomber, were killed." According to the police commissioner, the victims were "three men and a girl of about 12." Police Superintendent Aderenle Shinaba also indicated that the car exploded before the bomber reached his target of the busy restaurants and bars, which line Gold Coast Street, adding that the casualties could have been much higher. While the area has been previously targeted by Boko Haram militants, it is the first attack on Nigeria's second largest city in months. The Sabon Gari quarter is a popular area where people dine, play games, dance and drink alcohol late into the night. Bars and alcohol-sellers in the Sabon Gari area have been targeted on a number of other occasions. Last July, at least twenty-four people were killed while in March 2013, a suicide bomber drove a car laden with explosives into the neighborhoods bustling bus station, killing at least twenty-five people. In March 2013, In January 2012, about 150 people died in a series of coordinated attacks carried out by Boko Haram militants.
- **16 May 2014** - Despite announcing earlier this week that he would visit the town where more than 200 schoolgirls were abducted, Nigeria's President Goodluck Jonathan confirmed Friday that he has cancelled his trip to Chibok, a move that is likely to anger the Nigerian public and further derail his potential re-election bid. Sources earlier this week indicated that President Goodluck Jonathan would stop in Chibok, located in north-eastern Nigeria, while on his way to a conference in France, which is set to focus on the on going threat from Boko Haram militants. However on Friday, a senior government official indicated that the president, who is under pressure over his government's failure to rescue the girls, will fly directly to Paris, citing that the visit was called off for security reasons. The president will take part in a summit in Paris convened by French President Francois Hollande. The leaders of Nigeria's neighbours, including Benin, Cameroon, Chad and Niger, are also scheduled to attend the summit on Saturday, which will also include representatives from the EU, UK and US. A statement released by the French President's office indicated that the delegates will "discuss fresh strategies for dealing with the security threat posed by Boko Haram

and other terrorist groups in west and central Africa.” The cancellation of this visit also underlines just how fragile the security situation is in the north-east despite the on-going military operations, which were launched last May. It is also likely to result in further criticism of the president. The cancellation of the President’s visit to Chibok comes days after the Nigerian government ruled out negotiations with Boko Haram, over a possible release of prisoners. At a meeting on Wednesday, UK Africa Minister Mark Simmonds indicated that President Jonathan had “made it very clear that there will be no negotiation.”

- Meanwhile a group of gunmen in Bauchi state, northern Nigeria, have razed two schools. According to police spokesman Haruna Mohammed, dozens of gunmen in cars and on motorcycles stormed the neighboring villages of Shadarki and Yelwan Darazo, setting two primary schools ablaze, one in each village. According to the police spokesman, “the attackers came in a group of around 30 and set fire to Shadarki Primary school before proceeding to Yelwan Darazo where they also burnt another primary school and a telecoms mast.” He added that no one was hurt in the attacks, which occurred at about 11:00 PM (2200 GMT) on Wednesday when the schools were empty. None of the gunmen was arrested and Mohammed declined to indicate whether the attackers were part of Boko Haram.
- **14 May 2014** – An eyewitness has reported that the residents of three villages in northern Nigeria have repelled an attack by suspected Boko Haram fighters. According to the eyewitness, about 200 of the militants were killed during the fighting, which took place in the Kala-Balge district of Borno state. Sources have indicated that the residents had formed a vigilante group in a bid to protect the area, which is located not far from the site of a market massacre last week in which more than 300 people were killed. A security official has indicated that the vigilantes in Kala-Balge, which is located near Lake Chad, were ready for a fight after learning of an impending Boko Haram attack on Tuesday. Suspected Boko Haram militants overran the town of Gamboru Ngala ten days ago on its busy market day in a killing and looting raid that lasted about five hours.
- Meanwhile witnesses have reported that soldiers have opened fire on their commander in the northeastern city of Maiduguri. According to sources, Maj. Gen Ahmed Mohammed escaped unhurt after soldiers shot at his car at the Maimalari barracks. Sources inside the Maimalari barracks have indicated that the soldiers accused Maj Gen Ahmed Mohammed of putting their lives and the lives of their families at risk by failing to ensure that they were well-equipped to tackle Boko Haram militants. They also alleged that the military top brass had failed to give them a promised special allowance for fighting on the front line. The soldiers have blamed the commander for the deaths of their colleagues who were killed in an ambush by suspected Boko Haram militants. Colleagues of the protesting soldiers were killed in an ambush while driving back on Tuesday from Chibok, where Boko Haram militants abducted the schoolgirls one month ago. Army spokesman Maj. Gen. Chris Olukolade has described the incident in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state, as an internal matter, adding that there was no need for public concern. While no further information pertaining to the incident has been released, the shooting does show that morale within Nigeria’s army is low as soldiers continue to battle Boko Haram. **Update (15 May 2014)** - Nigeria has removed a commander, involved in the search for the kidnapped schoolgirls, after troops fired shots into his vehicle and accused him embezzling money that is meant to be used for weapons and food. On Thursday, army officials attempted to calm rebellious soldiers in the country’s northeast just one day after troops in Maiduguri, the military headquarters in the region, revolted and accused their commander. Top officers flew into Maiduguri on Thursday in a bid to defuse tensions as soldiers complained of inadequate cars, guns and armor to fight Boko Haram. Maj Gen Chris Olukolade, a military spokesman, has indicated that the army will discipline those soldiers who took part in the revolt, adding, “let me assure that the

military will sustain the current tempo in the fight against insurgents.” Officials from Borno State have indicated that President Goodluck Jonathan will visit Maiduguri Friday in a bid to assess the military campaign. While Nigeria is coming under intense pressure, both from home and abroad, to rescue the abducted girls, the soldier’s revolt has demonstrated how the call for action is colliding with the harsh realities on the ground.

- **13 May 2014** – On Tuesday, manned US aircraft began flying over Nigeria, searching for over 200 schoolgirls abducted by Boko Haram militants, after Abuja dismissed a prisoner-swap offer from the militant’s leader. A senior US administration official confirmed Monday that “we have shared commercial satellite imagery with the Nigerians and are flying manned ISR (intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) assets over Nigeria with the government’s permission. No further information pertaining to the mission has been released, and it remains unclear what kind of aircraft is being deployed and where they are based.
- **12 May 2014** – A new Boko Haram video released on Monday claims to show the missing Nigerian schoolgirls, alleging that they had been converted to Islam and that they would not be released until all militant prisoners were freed. In the twenty-seven minute video, the group’s leader, Abubakar Shekau, speaks before what he says were about 130 of the girls. He states, “we will never release them until after you release our brethren.” The militant leader, who has made prisoner exchange demands before, further indicated that some of the teenagers had converted from Christianity to Islam. In the video, the girls are seen wearing the full-length hijab and praying in an undisclosed rural location. Three of the girls are also shown speaking in the video, with two of them stating that they were Christian and that they have since converted to Islam, while the other indicates that she is a Muslim. The fact that only about 130 of the 276 schoolgirls are shown in the new video indicates that the girls have likely been split into smaller groups to help avoid detection. Local officials have also indicated that they have started making copies of the video in order to show relatives and friends of the abducted girls in a bid to identify them. On April 14, a total of 276 girls were abducted from the northeastern town of Chibok, in Borno state, which has a sizeable Christian community. While some of the managed to escape, some 223 are still missing. Meanwhile hours after the release of a new Boko Haram video, Nigerian officials rejected conditions set out by Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekasu for the release of more than 200 schoolgirls held hostage by the Islamist militants. Asked if the government would reject the suggestion by Shekau that the girls may be released once Nigeria frees all militant prisoners, Interior Minister Abba Moro stated, “of course,” adding “the issue in question is not about Boko Haram...giving conditions.” **Update (13 May 2014)** - On Tuesday, Borno state area governor indicated that the female hostages shown in a video released by Boko Haram have been identified as students of the secondary school attacked by the militants on April 14. Speaking to reporters in Abuja, Borno state’s Governor Kashim Shettima stated “all the girls in that video were identified by students of the Government Girls Secondary School, Chibok.”
 - Meanwhile the international efforts to locate 200 schoolgirls abducted by Islamist militants in Nigeria last month has widened with Israel joining the bid to locate the girls. Sources have indicated that Nigeria’s President Goodluck Jonathan spoke to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu by telephone and accepted an offer for assistance in finding the girls, who were kidnapped from their school dormitory in the town of Chibok, Borno state, on April 14. According to the president’s spokesman, Reuben Abati, President Jonathan told Prime Minister Netanyahu, “Nigeria would be pleased to have Israel’s globally acknowledged anti-terrorism expertise deployed to support its ongoing operation.” Britain, the United States and France have already deployed specialist teams and equipment in a bid to aid Nigeria’s military in the search, which is concentrated in the remote

northeast. While France has called on African leaders to hold a summit focused on the issue, Washington has specified that US troops will stay out of any rescue mission. US Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel stated that “there’s no intention, at this point, to put American boots on the ground,” admitting that locating the girls will not be an easy task. Update (20 May 2014) – Israeli security sources confirmed Tuesday that Israel has sent two anti-terror experts to Nigeria to join the search for the two hundred schoolgirls kidnapped by Boko Haram militants. According to the source, “there are in Nigeria two advisers who have dealt with terrorist matters in the past....They were sent there by the state to help.” The pair are not currently serving as intelligence personnel for the Israeli government and according to the source, “they are not soldiers, not officers. They are not part of the security system.”

- **12 May 2014** – The Foreign Ministry in the Netherlands confirmed Monday that kidnappers have freed three Dutch nationals who were abducted in Nigeria’s Niger Delta last week when gunmen stormed their boat. Ministry spokeswoman Johanne Doornewaard confirmed the release, adding that they were all in good health. She further indicated that she had “no information” on whether any ransom was paid. The hostages are still in Nigeria and a Dutch ambassador has been sent to the Delta region to meet with them. Amsterdam-based environmental activist Sunny Ofehe, along with two Dutch men and one woman, were kidnapped last Sunday after armed men stormed their boat. Sources have indicated that the group, which also included another Netherlands-based Nigerian, were blindfolded and eventually taken to an unknown location where the two Nigerians were released. The group was en route to visit a hospital financed by oil company Chevron when the kidnapping took place.

Domestic News

- **20 May 2014** – Nigeria’s parliament has approved a six-month extension to a state of emergency, which has been in place over the past year in three northeastern states that have been hit by Islamist militant violence. On Tuesday, senators unanimously approved the continuation of special powers in the states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. Tuesday’s vote followed a similar backing from the lower chamber House of Representatives last week. President Goodluck Jonathan had requested the extension after calling the continued violence in the three states “daunting” and expressing concern over the mounting civilian casualties. The government first imposed a state of emergency in the three states on May 14 last year in an attempt to crush Boko Haram militants who have been waging an increasingly violent insurgency in the region since 2009. Thousands of additional troops have been deployed to the region, coupled with curfews being imposed and security tightened, including the cutting off of mobile phone networks in a bid to prevent the co-ordination of attacks. However despite the apparent initial gains in pushing the militants out of the urban centers, the attacks have continued, increasing in frequency and intensity to the extent that President Jonathan requested a further six-month extension in November last year. His renewed request therefore came as no surprise as Boko Haram militants are responsible for the deaths of more than 2,000 people, most of them civilians, this year alone.
 - Meanwhile according to UN diplomats, Nigeria has requested that the UN Security Council impose sanctions on Boko Haram. UN diplomats indicated Tuesday that Nigeria, which is currently serving a two-year term on the council, sent a letter Monday night to the committee monitoring sanctions against al-Qaeda requesting that Boko Haram be added to the list of organizations that are subject to an arms embargo and asset freeze. Sources have further indicated that unless any of the fourteen

other council members object the move by this Thursday afternoon, Boko Haram will be added to the al-Qaeda sanctions list. The al-Qaeda sanction's list currently includes sixty-two entities and groups, as well as 213 individuals who are also subject to travel bans.

- **14 May 2014** - Despite previously indicating that the Nigerian government would not negotiate with Boko Haram militants, on Tuesday, cabinet minister Tanimu Turaki stated that Nigeria is ready to talk to the Islamist militants in a bid to release the more than 200 schoolgirls who were abducted one month ago. The decision comes just one day after a video of Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau was released. In the 27-minute video, Shekau states that captured girls who had not converted to Islam could be swapped for jailed fighters. As the schoolgirls begin their second month in captivity, Nigeria's cabinet minister Tanimu Turaki, who is the special duties minister and chairman of a committee established by President Goodluck Jonathan and tasked with finding ways of reaching an agreement with Boko Haram, stated Tuesday that if Shekau was sincere, he should send people he trusted to meet the standing committee on reconciliation. He has added, "dialogue is a key option" in bringing the crisis to an end and that "an issue of this nature can be resolved outside of violence." Tuesday's announcement by the government's cabinet minister demonstrates that the Nigerian government appears to be changing its stance in relation to dialogue with the militant group. The Nigerian government had initially suggested that there would be no negotiations with Boko Haram, however with increasing national and international pressure to locate the girls, who are believed to have been split up into smaller groups, it appears that the government is now looking at all the options in a bid to secure their release. In terms of a possible prisoner swap, such arrangements have been organized before. In July 2013, one of the wives of Boko Haram's leader Abubakar Shekau was released, along with the wives of other top commanders. Nigerian authorities have jailed several commanders, thousands of alleged fighters as well as wives and children fighters, all of which could be used to negotiate the release of the girls. On Monday, a new Boko Haram video emerged, showing about 130 of the girls wearing hijabs and reciting Koranic verses. The governor of northeastern Borno state, Kashim Shettima, has indicated that those seen in the 27-minute video have been identified as the abducted schoolgirls from Chibok Secondary School. While the more than 200 schoolgirls on Wednesday began their second month as Boko Haram hostages, lawmakers in Abuja are set to debate a request from President Goodluck Jonathan for a six-month extension to a state of emergency, which was first imposed in three northeastern states exactly one year ago. Given the apparent lack of progress in curbing the violence, after the state of emergency was imposed on 14 May 2013, President Jonathan is currently facing calls to explore a negotiated settlement. Despite initial gains from a surge of troops in the states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe, tighter security along with measures including curfews and cutting the mobile phone networks appear to have been lost. Attacks have increased in the rural areas of the northeast, resulting in mounting civilian casualties. This year alone more than 1,500 civilians are estimated to have been killed. The Nigerian government has now been urged to improve its counter-insurgency tactics, including an increase in the use of intelligence, instead of just conventional means to defeat the militant fighters. Sources have also indicated that the head of the US Africa Command, General David Rodriguez, met with Nigeria's top brass in Abuja on Monday in order to discuss the search as well as the overall military cooperation.

Regional Reporting

- **24 May 2014** – South Africa's government announced Saturday that African leaders, in Pretoria for President Jacob Zuma's inauguration, will hold informal talks on the security situation in Nigeria.

Government spokesman Clayson Moneyila indicated that the leaders will meet to discuss security in Nigeria. The talks follow a string of recent attacks in the country, which is under growing international pressure to tackle the increasingly bloody uprising that is rapidly transforming into a regional security issue. Nigeria's President Goodluck Jonathan is amongst twenty other heads of state who will be present at the event.

- **15 May 2014** – According to a source, a suspect wanted over last month's deadly attack the Nigerian capital city, a blast which has been claimed by Boko Haram, has been arrested in Sudan. The source confirmed Thursday that Aminu Sadiq Ogwuche was detained on Tuesday as he attempted to attain a visa from the Turkish embassy in central Khartoum. The source further indicated that "there wasn't any resistance" to the arrest, adding that the suspect was still in Sudan. On Tuesday, Nigerian officials indicated that Ogwuche was the subject of a "Red Notice" from Interpol. He had arrived in Khartoum late last year to study Arabic at the International University of Africa, however he had visited Nigeria earlier this year. He is suspected of being involved in last month's attack in Abuja. On 14 April 2014, at least seventy-five people were killed after a bomb exploded at a packed bus station in Abuja. The attack was initially blamed on Boko Haram by the country's president, with the militant group officially claiming responsibility for the attack days later. In the early 1990's, Sudan became a notorious refuge for militants, including now-dead al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, who was based in Sudan from 1991 until 1996. Although the United States continues to designate Sudan as a State Sponsor of Terrorism, a 2013 US State Department report indicated that the country "is generally responsive to international community concerns about counter-terrorism efforts." The report did however note that Sudan's vast, and mostly unmonitored borders with Chad, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Libya and South Sudan have hampered any counter-terrorism efforts. **Update (16 May 2014)** – Reports emerged Friday that the suspect, wanted over the deadly attack last month in Nigeria, dropped out of university in Britain, fuelling concerns that he may have been radicalized there. According to sources, army deserter Aminu Sadiq Ogwuche, who served in a Nigerian intelligence unit, was arrested in Sudan on Tuesday over the April 14 bomb explosion at a busy Abuja bus station. He is alleged to be the co-mastermind behind the attack. Conflicting reports have also emerged about his nationality. While Nigeria's secret police and the Department of State Services stated earlier this week that Ogwuche was "UK-born," this report has been denied by British officials who have stated that Ogwuche is not a British national. It is understood that security services are currently looking into his activities during his time in Britain. It also emerged Friday that Ogwuche had studied at the University of South Wales between 2007 and 2010, when it was known as the University of Glamorgan, however he failed to complete his course. The University has reported that Ogwuche was a member of the university's debating society and that he wrote on an online professional profile that his goal was "to be a successful businessman." The institution also indicated that it was "surprised" to hear of his alleged involvement with Boko Haram, stating "there were no reported indications of extremist behavior during his time as a student."

International Developments

- **23 May 2014** – On Thursday, the United Nations Security Council approved sanctions against Boko Haram, a decision that was welcomed by Britain and the United States. The approval, which came into effect after no objections were raised by the Security council's 15 members, effectively means that the militant group will be added to a list of al-Qaeda-linked organizations and subject to an arms embargo and asset freeze. US envoy Samantha Power has stated that this is an "important step" in support of efforts to "defeat Boko Haram and hold its murderous leadership accountable," however it is difficult to say what practical effect the

move will have on the militant group which operates on a cash economy. Nigerian ambassador Joy Ogwu also stated, “it is a significant step,” adding “the important thing is to attack the problem and that is terrorism.”

- **19 May 2014** – Pentagon officials confirmed Monday that the United States has come to an agreement, which will effectively allow it to share some intelligence with Nigeria in a bid to bolster the search for the missing schoolgirls. While the US military has been flying manned and unmanned surveillance aircraft over Nigeria, officials have been unable to directly share intelligence with Abuja as protocols with the Nigerian government had not been established. Sources have indicated that the US had initially refused to share intelligence with Nigeria over corruption issues within its military and over fears that it had been infiltrated by Boko Haram. However on Monday, Pentagon spokesman Colonel Steve Warren confirmed the agreement, adding that it was finalized over the weekend. Warren did note however that while the agreement would allow the US military to share some intelligence, including aerial imagery, with Nigerian officials, this did not mean that all raw US intelligence gathered could be shared, a point which likely highlights the US’ fears of corruption and infiltration issues. The Pentagon’s announcement follows a meeting in Paris over the weekend where West African leaders agreed to work together in a bid to combat Boko Haram, which, according to them, had become a shared threat.
- **18 May 2014** – French President Francois Hollande has announced that while France supports the regional fight against Boko Haram, French troops will not be deployed to Nigeria “simply because Nigeria has its own armed forces that are ready and efficient.” When questioned about the growing criticisms, particularly in the US, about the Nigerian military’s efficiency and ability to rescue the abducted schoolgirls, Hollande warned against being too harsh on the Nigerian armed forces, noting “I don’t think you can compare a terrorist group and a regular army,” adding “its this confusion that gives an excuse to terrorist groups. There is an army in Nigeria. Its forces are trained. They’re having trouble intervening in that area, the North, a specific region. We can provide them information, help them with some training. But there will be no French military intervention.”
- **17 May 2014** – African leaders meeting in Paris have agreed to wage “war” on Nigeria’s Boko Haram militants. Meeting in Paris, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan and his counterparts from Benin, Chad, Cameroon and Niger have approved an action plan to counter Boko Haram, which has been blamed for the deaths of 2,000 people this year as well as last month’s abduction of the schoolgirls from northeastern Nigeria. French President Francois Hollande, who hosted the summit, confirmed Saturday that regional powers had pledged to share intelligence and co-ordinate action against the group. Hollande indicated that the participants had agreed on a “global and regional action plan,” adding that this involved “coordinating intelligence, sharing information...border surveillance, a military presence notably around Lake Chad and the capacity to intervene in case of danger.” In the longer term, the countries have agreed to forge a regional counter-terrorism strategy under the auspices of the existing but barely active Lake Chad Basin Commission, with technical experts and training support from Britain, France, the European Union and the United States. The countries also agreed to push for UN sanctions against the leaders of Boko Haram and Ansaru, which is another Nigerian Islamist group. Senior State Department official Wendy Sherman has indicated that such sanctions could be proposed to the Security Council as early as next week, adding that Saturday’s discussions were “very positive and very focused.” The Paris summit brought together President Francois Hollande, Nigeria’s President Goodluck Jonathan, and their counterpart from Benin, Cameroon, Niger and Chad. Representatives from the UK, US, and EU also took part in the summit.
- **14 May 2014** – On Wednesday, British Prime Minister David Cameron announced that Britain has offered Nigeria a surveillance plane and a military team in a bid to help with the search of more than 200 missing

schoolgirls abducted last month by Boko Haram militants. Speaking to Parliament, Prime Minister Cameron stated “today I can announce we have offered Nigeria further assistance in terms of surveillance aircraft, a military team to embed with the Nigerian army in their HQ and a team to work with US experts to analyze information on the girls’ location.” The Ministry of Defence however has clarified that one Sentinel plane would be sent. Specialist teams from France, Britain, the United States and Israel have been deployed to help in the search operation, which Nigeria’s military has indicated is concentrated on the Sambisa forest area of Borno state. Last week, Britain sent a team of experts to Nigeria. The team includes officials from the ministry of defence. **Update (20 May 2014)** – A UK spy plane, sent to help search for the more than 200 girls abducted by militants in Nigeria last month, has developed a technical fault. According to the UK’s Ministry of Defence (MoD), the plane, which left the UK on Sunday, has been forced to land in Senegal for repairs. According to the MoD, the “state-of-the-art surveillance jet” will be operating from Ghana, adding that the jet was “capable of flying for significant periods of time at high altitude,” and was fitted with a “dual mode radar,” which could “locate moving targets and offer radar imagery.” Once operational again, the aircraft will join US aircraft in attempting to locate the girls.

- **12 May 2014** – On Sunday, France’s President Francois Hollande called for African leaders to hold a summit in Paris on security in West Africa, with a special focus on Boko Haram who have abducted more than 200 schoolgirls in Nigeria. Speaking during a visit to the Azerbaijan capital Baku, President Hollande stated that he “...suggested, with Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan, a meeting of Nigeria’s neighboring countries,” adding that the meeting will take place Saturday “if the countries agree.” According to a source close to the French president, the leaders of at least five African countries, including Chad, Cameroon, Nigeria, Niger and Benin, may take part. **Update (12 May 2014)** – French President Francois Hollande has invited US and British officials to attend a Paris summit this weekend, which will focus on the threat from Boko Haram. Speaking Monday to journalists during a visit to the Armenian capital Yerevan, the French President stated that he “...asked the Americans and British to send a delegation to Paris on Saturday so we can act together in an efficient way.” Hollande further indicated that while the possibility of a French military operation would not be on the table at the summit, he did note that the focus would be on “coordinating resources, especially when it comes to intelligence.” Hollande also stated that “we must not talk with these groups, we must fight them,” adding “on Saturday a global strategy will be defined.”



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