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West Africa Report

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

June 23 - July 6, 2014



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

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

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

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

24 hr Contact Information:

Email: operations@msrisk.com
Telephone: +44 207 754 3555

Summary

June 23 – July 6, 2014



Sahel Region

- **3 July 2014** – On Thursday, West African ministers held emergency talks in Accra to discuss how to contain what is now the worst Ebola outbreak in history.

Guinea

- **1 July 2014** – Officials at the World Health Organization (WHO) reported Tuesday that the number of people believed to have died from Ebola in West Africa has now risen to 467, with officials adding that there are now 759 confirmed or suspected cases of Ebola in the region.
- **23 June 2014** – Medical charity Doctors Without Borders (MSF) warned Monday that the Ebola virus epidemic in West Africa is now “out of control” with more than 60 outbreak hotspots.

Guinea – Bissau

- **4 July 2014** – Less than two weeks after the President vowed to fight poverty and bring stability to Guinea-Bissau, the country's Prime Minister Domingos Simoes Pereira presented his new government on Friday.
- **23 June 2014** – On Monday, Guinea-Bissau's newly elected President Jose Mario Vaz vowed to fight poverty and bring stability to the impoverished West African nation.

Ivory Coast

Domestic News

- **3 July 2014** – The head of the Ivory Coast's former ruling party stated Thursday that up to 1,000 supporters of Ivorian ex-president Laurent Gbagbo are in prison, with several being subjected to torture.

International Developments

- **25 June 2014** – On Wednesday, the UN Security Council announced that it is opting to further downsize the number of peacekeepers in its Ivory Coast mission, adding that it will consider ending the mission next year.

Liberia

- **3 July 2014** – The editor of a Liberian newspaper, who has been critical of the government and family of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, has been arrested.
- **30 June 2014** – Liberia's President warned Monday that anyone caught hiding suspected Ebola patients will be prosecuted.

Mali

On the Ground Reporting

- **1 July 2014** – United Nations officials confirmed Tuesday that one peacekeeper has died and six others have been injured after their vehicle struck a land mine in northern Mali.
- **25 June 2014** – Mali security forces have arrested Mahamed Aly Ag Wadoussene, a fugitive who escaped during a jailbreak in Mali's capital city on 16 June, in which at least two people were killed and twenty-two prisoners escaped.
- **24 June 2014** – On Tuesday, sixty soldiers from the Ivory Coast deployed to Gao, increasing their troops number to 120 troops, which form part of the UN Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) peacekeeping force.

International Developments

- **26 June 2014** – On Thursday, the UN Security Council extended the UN mission in Mali for another year, calling on it to prioritize efforts to facilitate peace talks and expand its presence in the north.

- **25 June 2014** – The World Bank has delayed US \$63 million in budget support for Mali while officials evaluate the government's spending and anti-graft plans.

Mauritania

- **29 June 2014** – On Sunday, Mauritania's highest court confirmed the victory of incumbent leader Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz in presidential polls, effectively rejecting an appeal calling for the results to be annulled.
- **23 June 2014** - Despite his main rivals boycotting the elections, which they called a sham, preliminary results indicated late Sunday that Mauritania's President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz has been re-elected after gaining an overwhelming 81.89 per cent of the vote.

Nigeria

On the Ground Reporting

- **5 July 2014** – Clashes between the Nigerian military and Boko Haram militants, which erupted after an attack on the military in the country's restive northeast, have killed fifty-three insurgents and six troops.
- **4 July 2014** – Nigeria's military confirmed Friday that three women have been arrested for recruiting female members for Boko Haram.
 - Meanwhile a suicide bomber killed at least five people and wounded dozens after targeting worshippers at a mosque in a remote village in northeastern Nigeria.
- **1 July 2014** – At least eighteen people have been killed and fifty-five others injured after an explosion erupted at a market in Maiduguri in northeastern Nigeria.
- **30 June 2014** – On Monday, Nigeria's military announced that it has broken up a Boko Haram intelligence cell, arresting its leader who is alleged to have taken part in the April 2014 abduction of over 200 schoolgirls.
- **29 June 2014** – Suspected Boko Haram militants, armed with explosives, attacked a number of churches on Sunday near Chibok, the northeastern town where more than 200 teenage girls were kidnapped nearly three months ago.
- **28 June 2014** – An explosion in the northern city of Bauchi has killed at least ten people and injured fourteen others.
- **27 June 2014** – After cutting short an African Union engagement, Nigeria's President Goodluck Jonathan visited the site of a deadly bombing in the capital to meet victims of the attack, which has been blamed on Boko Haram militants.
 - Meanwhile Nigerian have arrested thirty-seven people in the southern state of Abia on suspicion of being part of a major kidnapping ring.
- **25 June 2014** – Nigeria's national rescue agency reported Wednesday that a loud explosion hit a crowded shopping center in the Wuse district of Nigeria's capital Abuja, killing at least twenty-one people and wounding seventeen.
- **24 June 2014** – Sources indicated Tuesday that suspected Boko Haram militants have abducted more than sixty women and young girls in the restive northeastern region of Nigeria.
 - Meanwhile in a separate incident, unidentified gunmen have killed at least thirty-eight people, mostly women and children, in raids that targeted two villages in northern Kaduna state, an area of the country that has been plagued by years of sectarian conflict.

- **23 June 2014** - On Monday, at least eight people were killed and twelve other were wounded when a bomb exploded at a public health college in Nigeria's northern city of Kano.

Domestic News

- **27 June 2014** – Nigeria's intelligence agency indicated Friday that over the past two weeks, it had been warning shopping complexes in Abuja that Islamic extremists may target them.

Senegal

- **4 July 2014** – A presidential source reported Friday that Senegalese President Macky Sall has fired Prime Minister Aminata Toure after she failed to win a seat at last Sunday's local elections.
- **30 June 2014** – Preliminary results from Sunday's municipal and provincial elections have indicated that President Macky Sall's party has been beaten in the capital city Dakar and in a number of key cities across the country.
- **29 June 2014** – On Sunday, Senegal held municipal and provincial elections, which are seen as a key test for President Macky Sall as he attempts to garner support for his party two years after his own disputed victory.

Sierra Leone

- **27 June 2014** – Officials in Sierra Leone warned Friday that it is now a serious crime to shelter someone infected with the Ebola virus.
- **26 June 2014** – The World Health Organization (WHO) on Thursday called for "drastic action" in order to fight the deadliest Ebola outbreak on record, and announced an 11-nation meeting to address the growing crisis.
- **25 June 2014** – On Wednesday, officials from the WHO announced that, at the request of the Sierra Leonean government, they were changing the way it reports fatalities from the Ebola outbreak in the country.

Security Summaries for West African States

Sahel Region

Benin

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

Burkina Faso – Page 10

Gambia

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

Ghana

An outbreak of the Ebola virus disease has been confirmed in Guinea, Sierra Leone 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 12

Guinea-Bissau – Page 14

Ivory Coast – Page 15

Liberia – Page 17

Mali – Page 19

Mauritania – Page 24

Niger – Page 27

Nigeria – Page 29

Senegal – Page 36

Sierra Leone – Page 38

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.

Sahel Region

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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

Security Summary

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.

Regional Reporting

- **3 July 2014** – On Thursday, West African ministers held emergency talks in Accra to discuss how to contain what is now the worst Ebola outbreak in history. Ministers from eleven nations, along with global experts, are hoping to halt the virus' deadly spread after a recent rise in the number of deaths. The highly contagious disease has infected hundreds of people in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The latest figures released by the World Health Organization (WHO) indicated that confirmed or suspected cases have left 467 people dead, with experts fearing that the virus could spread throughout the West African Region. Ministers from Guinea, where 413 confirmed, suspected and probable cases have surfaced so far, including 303 deaths, and Liberia, which has seen 107 cases and 65 deaths, are attending the Accra conference. Sierra Leone, which has recorded 239 cases and 99 deaths, is also represented. Additionally, officials from Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Ghana, the Ivory Coast, Mali, and Senegal, as well as from Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo are also attending. They have been joined by a host of UN agencies and other aid organizations, including MSF and the Red Cross, as well as personnel from disease control centers in Western Africa, the US, Britain and the EU.

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.

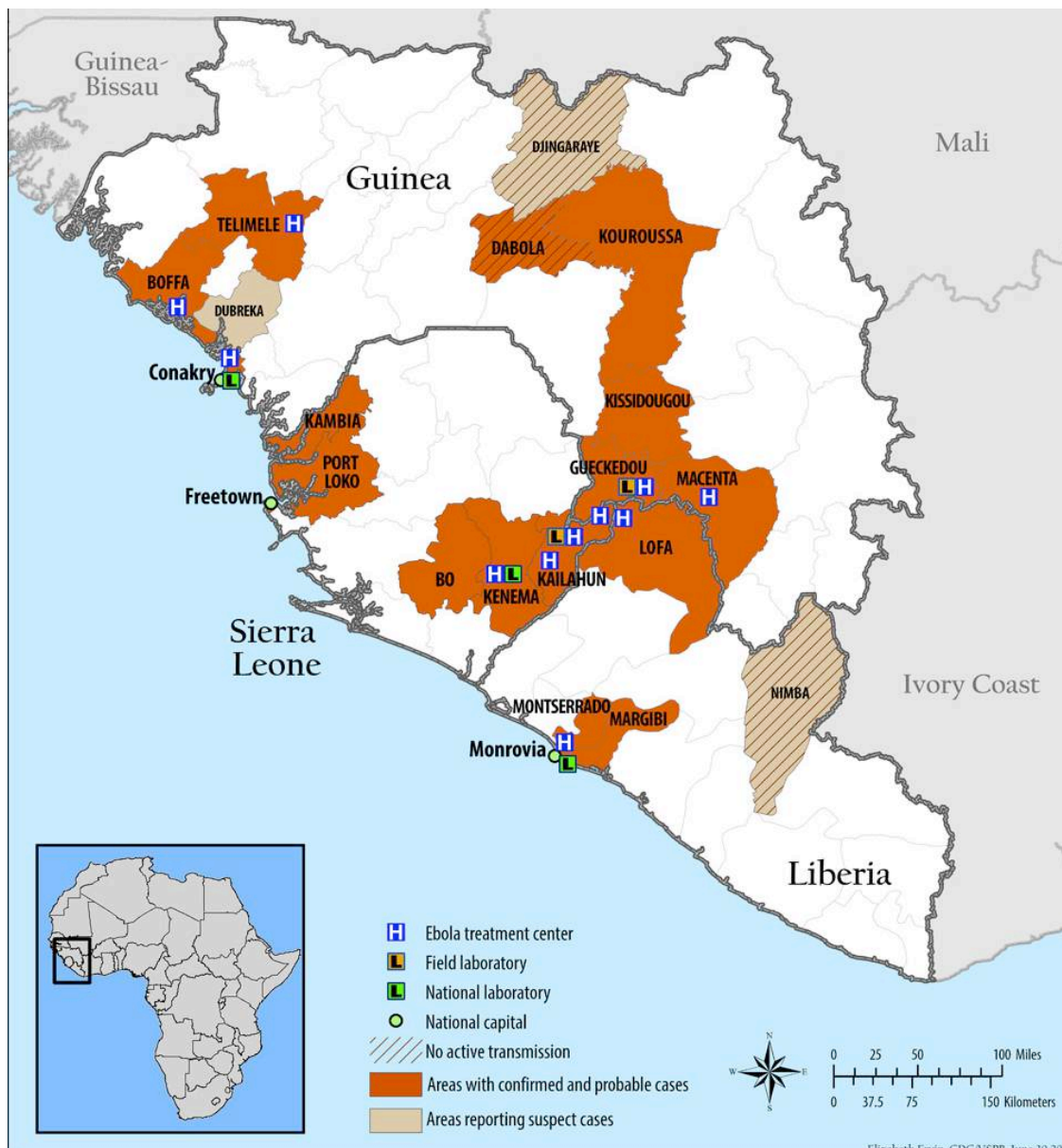
Finally, unconfirmed reports suggest there is an elevated banditry threat on the main routes south and east of the town of Fada N'Gourma en route to Pama and Diapala respectively. Road moves to these areas should be risk assessed and liaison with police should occur until the nature of the threats has 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.

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. Over the past few weeks, further deaths and cases have been confirmed, with health officials indicating that the outbreak has not been contained.

At least two deaths, several injuries and destruction of property were reported during riots that broke out in the eastern suburbs of Conakry on 18 February 2014. Since then, riots have continued throughout the capital city and in nearby towns. The riots and protests are a result of frequent power cuts. Further such violence is likely to

continue over the coming weeks. Violence has broken out in Kankan, in the “Upper Guinea” region in the east of the country. At least three deaths have been reported since 14 December as well as a number of injuries and destruction of property. MS Risk advises all travellers to avoid this region of the country as further instability is likely to continue.

There is currently a low threat from terrorism. Nearly 100 people were reported to have been killed in July in an outbreak of ethnic violence in the “Guinea Forestiere” region in the far south-east of Guinea. A large number of injuries were also reported and properties destroyed. Areas of Guinea that border Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, the Ivory coast, Liberia and Sierra Leone are often tense and have an increased military presence. Therefore, MS Risk advises against all travel to the regions bordering the countries listed above. There have been regular reports of robberies on the routes Mamou, Faranah, Kissidougou, Guekedou, Macent and Nzerekore. MS Risk advises all travellers on these routes to remain vigilant and to avoid travel after dark. Official and unofficial checkpoints may be set up along these routes. Vehicles and passengers are submitted to checks on documentation and baggage. It is advised that you approach such checkpoints with caution, as corruption and extortion are common at roadblocks. Occasionally, checkpoints can be a pretext for armed robbery. Road travel is hazardous during the rainy season, which occurs from May to October. Torrential rains can cause floods and landslides. MS Risk advises you to monitor the local weather reports and expect difficulties when travelling to affected areas during this season.

On the Ground Reporting

- **1 July 2014** – Officials at the World Health Organization (WHO) reported Tuesday that the number of people believed to have died from Ebola in West Africa has now risen to 467, with officials adding that there are now 759 confirmed or suspected cases of Ebola in the region. These latest figures represent a 38 percent increase in the number of deaths and a 27 percent rise in the number of overall cases since the WHO released figures on June 24. According to the latest figures, Guinea has been the hardest-hit by the outbreak, with some 413 cases and 303 deaths believed to be due to Ebola. Neighboring Liberia has seen 107 cases and 65 deaths while in Sierra Leone, 239 patients are believed to be suffering from the virus, with 99 reported deaths. The latest data from the WHO includes cases that have been confirmed in a laboratory as well as probably and suspected cases of the Ebola virus.
- **23 June 2014** – Medical charity Doctors Without Borders (MSF) warned Monday that the Ebola virus epidemic in West Africa is now “out of control” with more than 60 outbreak hotspots. A statement released by the medical charity indicated, “the scale of the current Ebola epidemic is unprecedented in terms of geographical distribution, people infected and deaths.” According to MSF officials, the rapid spread of the disease, which is deadly in up to 90 percent of cases, has overwhelmed aid agencies and health workers and terrified local communities. According to Bart Janssens, MSF director of operations, “with the appearance of new sites in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia, there is a real risk of it spreading to other areas.” According to data released by the World Health Organization (WHO) last week, after the first reported cases in Guinea at the start of this year, at least 337 people have died from the Ebola virus in the three countries. MSF has now called for a “massive deployment” of medical resources by governments in the region to curb the epidemic, with Janssens noting “we have reached our limits...We are no longer able to send teams to the new outbreak sites.” This is the first time the disease has spread throughout the West African Region, with MSF indicating that it has identified more than sixty separate locations with confirmed cases of the virus.

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. 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

- **4 July 2014** – Less than two weeks after the President vowed to fight poverty and bring stability to Guinea-Bissau, the country's Prime Minister Domingos Simoes Pereira presented his new government on Friday. A decree published in the capital Bissau has shown that Prime Minister Pereira's 16-minister cabinet is dominated by members of President Jose Mario Vaz's African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC). Pereira, an engineer who was named Guinea-Bissau's prime minister on June 25, was sworn in on Thursday.
- **23 June 2014** – On Monday, Guinea-Bissau's newly elected President Jose Mario Vaz vowed to fight poverty and bring stability to the impoverished West African nation. During his swearing in ceremony in the capital Bissau, which was attended by leaders from across West Africa, President Vaz pledged to work with other political groups in order to bring stability to the fragile nation of 1.6 million. During the ceremony, President Vaz told the crowds "the chronic instability in which our country finds itself is not the cause of our problems," instead he blamed "the extreme poverty...which we will all fight." During the May elections, Vaz, who represents the dominant African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC), won an overwhelming 62 per cent of the vote against independent rival Nuno Gomes Nabiam. The vote was seen as a key test in a country where no elected president has ever completed his term in office. The 57-year-old is Guinea-Bissau's first elected leader since the army mutinied in 2012, effectively plunging the country into chaos.

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

- **3 July 2014** – The head of the Ivory Coast's former ruling party stated Thursday that up to 1,000 supporters of Ivorian ex-president Laurent Gbagbo are in prison, with several being subjected to torture. Affi N'Guessan, the president of the opposition Ivorian Popular Front told journalists, "after our investigations in jails and with family members, we count 700 prisoners," adding that this was "an approximate figure." He further indicated, "we are convinced that there are up to 1,000 of our peers who live in this hell," noting that "some of them are tortured." Although fifty prisoners detained during the Ivory Coast's post-election crisis, between 2010 and 2011, were released in May, in a gesture that was interpreted as a sign of appeasement for followers of Gbagbo, the party has also indicated that a list of 719 prisoners presented by the Ivorian Popular Front includes more than 200 military personnel and individuals whose cases are yet to reach court. The government has stated that the release of an additional 100 detainees is currently "in progress."

International Developments

- **25 June 2014** – On Wednesday, the UN Security Council announced that it is opting to further downsize the number of peacekeepers in its Ivory Coast mission, adding that it will consider ending the mission next year. The announcement comes after the Council adopted a resolution that extends the UN operation in the Ivory Coast, known as UNOCI, until the end of June 2015, by which time it will have decreased its uniformed personnel from 7,137 to 5,437 soldiers. The resolution also capped the mission's police component to 1,500 personnel. The Council also indicated Wednesday that it will review the mission's mandate and consider "its possible termination after the October 2015 presidential election," adding that the decision would be made "based on security conditions on the ground and the capacity of the government of

Cote d'Ivoire to take over UNOCI's security role." This is not the first time that the mission's size has been reduced. Last year, the mission's peacekeeping contingent was reduced by a third, a move, which reflected the government's success in stabilizing the country. The UN force played a key role in aiding President Alassane Ouattara take power after his predecessor, Laurent Gbagbo, refused to acknowledge defeat in the 2010 presidential elections. The months-long showdown resulted in the deaths of 3,000 people and was followed by efforts to disarm an estimated 65,000 militia fighters.

Liberia

No Travel Restrictions



Security Summary

Cases of the Ebola virus have been reported in a number of areas of Liberia, including in the capital city. While there are currently no travel restrictions for Liberia, MS Risk advises all travellers to maintain strict standards of hygiene, avoid contact with symptomatic and deceased patients, avoid contact with live or dead animals and avoid consumption of bush meat



While there are currently no travel restrictions for Liberia, MS Risk advises all travellers to maintain strict standards of hygiene, avoid contact with symptomatic and deceased patients, avoid contact with live or dead animals and avoid consumption of bush meat

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.

On the Ground Reporting

- **3 July 2014** – The editor of a Liberian newspaper, who has been critical of the government and family of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, has been arrested. Friends and colleagues of Octavin Williams claim that the journalist was detained after he published an article on two of President Sirleaf's sons. In Wednesday's edition of Nation's Time, Williams criticized Fumba Sirleaf following the arrest of immigration officers who reportedly leaked to the press the fact that his brother Robert, who is a US citizen, was seeking Liberian documents enabling him to run in forthcoming general elections. Robert Sirleaf, who resigned last year as the chairman of the state oil company amidst allegations of nepotism, has since been named presidential envoy to Kuwait. Deputy police chief Abraham Kromah has confirmed that Williams has been detained, however he has indicated that he had been stopped on a traffic offence while driving a vehicle with foreign number plates. Kromah added "I asked him to follow me to the station. He refused and insulted me." Kamara Kamara, president of Liberia's journalism syndicate has stated that Williams' detention is "intimidation pure and simple and a violation of his rights." Tensions throughout the country have been on the rise ever since President Ellen Sirleaf admitted in an interview with UN radio last week that the majority of government ministers hold US passports.
- **30 June 2014** – Liberia's President warned Monday that anyone caught hiding suspected Ebola patients will be prosecuted. During an interview with the state radio, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf expressed concern that some patients were being kept in homes and churches instead of receiving medical attention at a hospital. Speaking during the interview, President Sirleaf stated "let this warning go out: Anyone found or reported to be holding suspected Ebola cases in homes or prayer houses can be prosecuted under the law of Liberia." Her comments come just days after officials in Sierra Leone issued a similar warning, stating that some patients had discharged themselves from the hospital and were now in hiding. Since the first Ebola cases were confirmed in March, health workers throughout the region have been encountering resistance, with some having been attack. The latest outbreak of the disease in West Africa is already the deadliest on record, with 635 cases and 367 fatalities. According to the latest figures reported by the World Health Organization (WHO), a majority of the deaths, 280 in total, have been in Guinea, where the cases were first reported. In an update released Monday, Liberia's health ministry indicated that the country had recorded 49 deaths, in which 26 were confirmed by laboratory tests.

Mali

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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

Security Summary



Summary

MS Risk advises against all travel to the provinces of Kidal, Gao, Timbuktu and Mopti, as well as parts of the provinces of Kayes, Koulikoro and Segou. 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 country, as such this incident in the west has caused great concern. MS Risk

forecasts that there will be an increased and sustained kidnap threat across Mali and in certain border-regions for some time to come. Incidents of kidnap are likely to occur for three primary reasons:

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

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

Local Travel

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

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

MS RISK Guidance to Organizations in Mali:

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

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

- Liaison with insurers to know any exclusions or limits to existing cover

On the Ground Reporting

- **1 July 2014** – United Nations officials confirmed Tuesday that one peacekeeper has died and six others have been injured after their vehicle struck a land mine in northern Mali. The incident, which occurred Monday, took place thirty kilometers west of Timbuktu. All the peacekeepers involved in the incident were from Burkina Faso. Three of the troops sustained serious injuries. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has condemned the explosion. This is the second such suicide attack to occur over the past month. In May, a suicide attack at a UN camp in the Kidal region killed four Chadian peacekeepers. The UN peacekeeping mission in Mali currently has 11,200 military personnel and 1,1440 police deployed however it is not yet at full strength.
- **25 June 2014** – Mali security forces have arrested Mahamed Aly Ag Wadoussene, a fugitive who escaped during a jailbreak in Mali's capital city on 16 June, in which at least two people were killed and twenty-two prisoners escaped. Major Modibo Traore, a Mali army spokesman, stated, "Mahamed Aly Ag Wadoussene was arrested in Bamako," adding "we knew he was going to try and contact his girlfriend who lives with family in Bamako." Colonel Souleymane Maiga also confirmed the arrest, adding that Ag Wadoussene was arrested on Tuesday night at the Hamdalaye neighborhood of the Malian capital. Ag Wadoussene, who shot his way out of the prison, was being held for his alleged role in the 2011 kidnapping of two French citizens, who ended up in the hands of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). The recent jailbreak has demonstrated that the security situation in Mali remains fragile.
- **24 June 2014** – On Tuesday, sixty soldiers from the Ivory Coast deployed to Gao, increasing their troops number to 120 troops, which form part of the UN Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) peacekeeping force. According to official sources, the new group of Ivorian peacekeepers will succeed an earlier contingent, which recently returned back to the Ivory Coast after spending six months in Mali. Led by Captain Yeboue Maxime Konan, the Ivorian contingent provides support to MINUSMA's equipment transport system for the Eastern sector, which includes the regions of Gao and Kidal.

International Developments

- **26 June 2014** – On Thursday, the UN Security Council extended the UN mission in Mali for another year, calling on it to prioritize efforts to facilitate peace talks and expand its presence in the north. According to officials, the maximum level of peacekeepers in Mali will remain the same, at 11,200 soldiers and 1,440 police personnel, as will the arrangement under which French soldiers in Mali can lead a hand in cases of serious and imminent danger. According to the resolution, the UN mission, which is known as MINUSMA, should "expand its presence, including through long-range patrols...in the north of Mali beyond key population centers, notably in areas where civilians are at risk," adding that the operation should also make it a priority to get negotiations between the Malian government and Tuareg rebels in the north started as soon as possible. Although a ceasefire between the two was agreed days after violent clashes occurred in Kidal on 23 May, talks between the Malian government and rebel groups have failed to materialize. The UN resolution is now urging "Malian authorities to launch without delay an inclusive and credible negotiation process," adding that MINUSMA should "coordinate with and support the Malian authorities" to get the talks

going, ensuring it is “open to all communities of the north of Mali.” The resolution has also called on all armed groups in the area to put down their weapons and has tasked the mission with protecting UN personnel and installations and safeguarding Malian cultural sites.

- **25 June 2014** – The World Bank has delayed US \$63 million in budget support for Mali while officials evaluate the government’s spending and anti-graft plans. The decision comes just weeks after the International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced last month that it would delay a US \$6 million aid disbursement to Mali while the government clarifies its purchase of a US \$40 million presidential jet despite its pledge to fight poverty. Officials at the World Bank indicated Wednesday that they were coordinating its response with the IMF, as both international institutions were concerned about Mali’s procedures for managing its budget. The World Bank’s chief operating officer, Sri Mulyani Indrawati, has indicated that the bank is currently evaluating Mali’s approach to public finances, adding that the bank has delayed board approval of the US \$63 million in budget support since May 29. Last week, the IMF indicated that officials in Mali had agreed to do an audit of the transactions and develop budget guidelines by September, which is when the IMF plans to return to Bamako for its next review of Mali’s US \$46 million aid package.

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 cases also being reported 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.

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.

Domestic News

- **29 June 2014** – On Sunday, Mauritania's highest court confirmed the victory of incumbent leader Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz in presidential polls, effectively rejecting an appeal calling for the results to be annulled. During an official ceremony, the chairman of the constitutional council, Sgheyir Ould M'barek confirmed "the candidate Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz was elected President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania in the first round of the presidential election," adding that Abdel Aziz had won "an absolute majority of votes cast" in the June 21 election. Final results released by the council gave Abdel Aziz 81.94 percent of the vote, slightly higher than the provision figure of 81.89 percent, which was released by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) a week ago. Although Abdel Aziz beat out anti-slavery candidate Biram Ould Dah Ould Abeid, who received 8.72 percent of the vote, Ould Abeid later challenged the results, however his request was dismissed by the council. None of the other three candidates in the race polled above five percent.
- **23 June 2014** - Despite his main rivals boycotting the elections, which they called a sham, preliminary results indicated late Sunday that Mauritania's President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz has been re-elected after gaining an overwhelming 81.89 per cent of the vote. The results, which were released by Mauritania's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on Sunday, indicated that Abdel Aziz was firmly ahead of anti-slavery candidate Biram Ould Dah Ould Abeid, who obtained 8.67 per cent. Taking third place was Ibrahima Moctar Sarr, with 4.44 per cent of the vote, while the only female candidate, Lalla Mariem Mint Moulaye Idriss, took only 0.49 per cent. In the weeks leading up to the elections, which were held Saturday, the former general, who seized power in an August 2008 coup, campaigned strongly, highlighting his successes in fighting armed groups linked to al-Qaeda militants both at home and in neighboring countries

in the Sahel region. When Abdel Aziz came to power in 2008, kidnappings and attacks carried out by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) occurred frequently. In 2010 and 2011, Mauritanian troops carried out a number of successful “preventative” raids on AQIM basis in neighboring Mali. However since then, the President has boasted that he has transformed the nation into a regional haven of peace, mainly thanks to his reorganization of the military and security forces. While many Western leaders see Mauritania, which is located between the west coast of Africa and the Sahara desert, as a strong fighter against al-Qaeda-linked groups that operate in the region, the country’s opposition has long criticized the president, and has argued that this price of peace has been the result of authoritarian rule. In the weeks leading up to the elections, the opposition called on the country to boycott the vote. However tensions between the president and the opposition are not new, as the main opposition parties have never accepted Abdel Aziz’s 2009 presidential victory, with many stating that that election was marred by massive fraud. The National Forum for Democracy and Unity, an opposition coalition formed of eleven parties, including a moderate Islamist movement, called out to voters ahead of Saturday’s elections to denounce what they call Abdel Aziz’s “dictatorial power.” While the opposition’s hopes of attaining a high abstention rate were not achieved, the boycott did have some affect on the overall turnout. On Sunday, officials from the electoral commission indicated that voter turnout reached 56.46 per cent, below that of the 2009 elections, when participation stood at 64 per cent. Despite a decrease in voter turnout, African Union (AU) observers indicated Monday that they were satisfied with the vote. The head of the AU mission, Beji Caid Essebsi, who is also Tunisia’s former prime minister, indicated, “overall, this election took place peacefully and in a spirit of political tolerance...I welcome the civic sense among the Mauritians.” He however also noted the boycott and urged that both political sides to seek dialogue in a bid to prevent any post-election violence.

Niger

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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



Security Summary

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



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

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

Nigeria

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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



Security Summary

Summary

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.

There is currently a high threat from terrorism. In June 2014, there were a number of confirmed explosive attacks that occurred in Abuja, Kano and Damaturu. Approximately fifty people were killed in these attacks, with many left injured. Further such attacks are highly likely to occur.

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.

Northern Nigeria

Travelling anywhere in the northern region of Nigeria is extremely dangerous as there is a high risk of travellers being kidnapped or caught up in a terrorist or other violent incident. While taking the right precautions will aid in reducing the risks, this will not eliminate them all together. MS Risk advises all travellers to the northern region of the country to not maintain regular patterns of travel or movement.

If you live in northern Nigeria, you are advised to review your security regularly and to strengthen it accordingly. Due to the risks, particularly of terrorism, having increased in the past few years, good security two years ago is unlikely to be adequate now.

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

- **5 July 2014** – Clashes between the Nigerian military and Boko Haram militants, which erupted after an attack on the military in the country's restive northeast, have killed fifty-three insurgents and six troops. A statement released Saturday by defence spokesman General Chris Olukolade indicated that the rebels attacked barracks and a police station in the town of Damboa, in Borno State, late Friday while most of the troops were out on patrol in the surrounding villages. Five soldiers and a senior officer were killed while repelling the attack. The area has been cordoned off. One resident has reported that "half of Damboa has been burnt, including the police station. People are just fleeing the town."
- **4 July 2014** – Nigeria's military confirmed Friday that three women have been arrested for recruiting female members for Boko Haram. According to officials, the women are said to have targeted widows and young girls, promising them marriage to Boko Haram members. While the militant group does have a female wing, and it appears to be trying to get women to play a more active role in its five-year insurgency, the military indicated Friday that the three women were members of an intelligence cell with one of them said to be the widow of a Boko Haram militant. Boko Haram's attempts to recruit women to play a more active role was evidenced last month when a female suicide bomber died when she was attempting to attack a barracks in Gombe State. The bomb detonated as she was being searched at a security checkpoint. One soldier was killed in that attack, which was the first case of its kind in Nigeria. Women have also been amongst those who have been detained in mass arrests carried out in a number of cities, including in Maiduguri.
 - Meanwhile a suicide bomber killed at least five people and wounded dozens after targeting worshippers at a mosque in a remote village in northeastern Nigeria. According to a source, Muslims in the village of Konduga, located in northeasterly Borno state, were observing Friday prayers when a pick-up truck arrived at the scene. The bomber detonated the bomb a few metres from the mosque after a local vigilante group had stopped the truck in order to inspect it. There has been no claim of responsibility for the latest attack, however Boko Haram militants, who have been staging almost daily attacks in the area, are suspected to be behind it.
- **1 July 2014** – At least eighteen people have been killed and fifty-five others injured after an explosion erupted at a market in Maiduguri in northeastern Nigeria. According to on the ground sources, the attack occurred near Maiduguri's busiest roundabout, which is located near the popular Monday Market, during morning rush hour. Nigeria's defense headquarters has confirmed the attack, stating "a van loaded with charcoal and IED exploded at Monday Market in Maiduguri this morning. The location has been cordoned off." Multiple eyewitnesses have reported that crowds at the scene attempted to attack firefighters deployed to the area, accusing them of arriving too slowly and hindering their efforts to put out the blaze. Although there was no immediate claim of responsibility, officials are blaming Boko Haram militants. Despite attacks in Maiduguri once being a daily occurrence, a military offensive launched last year, and backed by local vigilante groups, has had some success in flushing the insurgents out of the city and into the remote areas

of Borno state, where Maiduguri is the capital. However those gains appear to have now been lost, as a series of attacks in the city this year have targeted civilians and the security services. In January, a bomb attack targeted one of the city's crowded markets while in March, hundreds of militants stormed the military's Giwa Barracks, setting free a number of militants who were in prison.

- **30 June 2014** – On Monday, Nigeria's military announced that it has broken up a Boko Haram intelligence cell, arresting its leader who is alleged to have taken part in the April 2014 abduction of over 200 schoolgirls. A statement issued by the defense headquarters indicated that troops have found a militants' "intelligence cell" headed by a businessman "who participated actively in the abduction of schoolgirls in Chibok," in northeastern Borno state on April 14. The statement further added that the businessman has been identified as Babuji Ya'ari, who also is a member of a civilian youth group, known as the Civilian Joint Task Force (JTF), which has worked along with the military to fight Boko Haram. The suspect is alleged to have used his position within the youth group as a cover to work for the militants. Officials from the Nigerian military also indicated Monday "the arrest of the businessman who is known to deal in tricycles has also yielded some vital information and facilitated the arrest of other members of the terrorists' intelligence cell who are women." The military has accused the suspect of spying for the Islamist militant group as well as spearheading the murder of Emir of Gwoza in Borno state one month ago, adding that since 2011, the suspect has been coordinating several deadly attacks in Maiduguri, including the attacks on customs and military locations in the town. It remains unclear whether this arrest will help in the rescue of the 219 schoolgirls who are still missing.
- **29 June 2014** – Suspected Boko Haram militants, armed with explosives, attacked a number of churches on Sunday near Chibok, the northeastern town where more than 200 teenage girls were kidnapped nearly three months ago. Residents have indicated that gunmen riding on motorcycles opened fire on worshippers and pursued them as they tried to flee into the bush. The attackers also threw explosives into churches as services were on going and torched several buildings. Dozens of people are reported to have been killed in the raids on villages located roughly 10 kilometers (6 miles) outside Chibok, however no one has been able to provide an official death toll. The targeted villages have been identified as Kwada, Ngurojina, Karagau and Kautikari. All are located in Borno state, which is the stronghold of the Militant group. Another resident reported "the attackers went to churches with bombs and guns," adding "from what I gathered, dozens of worshippers, including men, women and children were killed." Several residents in the area also reported that the Nigerian military had not responded to distress calls, which were sent out shortly after the attack began. While these reports have not been verified, if confirmed, it will likely raise further questions about the military's efforts in the northeastern region of Nigeria, which is the epicenter of the militant group's insurgency. **Update (30 June 2014)** – A Borno state government official confirmed Monday that more than fifty people were killed in the latest attack that targeted churches in Nigeria's northeast.
- **28 June 2014** – An explosion in the northern city of Bauchi has killed at least ten people and injured fourteen others. Bauchi state police spokesman Mohammed Haruna confirmed Saturday that the targeted building in the Bayan Gari neighborhood, which is located on the outskirts of the city, was widely known as a brothel. He further indicated "ten people were confirmed dead, while 14 others sustained various degrees of injury," adding that the explosion went off at roughly 10:00 PM (2100 GMT). Police officers have cordoned off the entire area and an investigation into the attack is ongoing. Bomb attacks on targets, which Boko Haram has branded sinful, including churches, bars and schools teaching a Western curriculum, have formed a major part of the militant group's insurgency. Nigerian officials estimate that more than 10,000 people have been killed since the conflict began in 2009. In recent months, the violence has escalated with more than 3,000 deaths recorded since the start of this year. Boko Haram militants have increased their

attacks in the past few weeks. On Wednesday, the capital Abuja was hit, with twenty-four people killed after a bomb exploded at a popular shopping plaza in the heart of the city. Meanwhile in Kano, a bomb planted in the parking lot of a public health college killed eight people on Monday. The Islamist extremist group has also received unprecedented international attention in the wake of the 14 April abduction of more than 200 teenage girls from the town of Chibok in the northeastern region of Nigeria.

- **27 June 2014** – After cutting short an African Union engagement, Nigeria's President Goodluck Jonathan visited the site of a deadly bombing in the capital to meet victims of the attack, which has been blamed on Boko Haram militants. On Friday, President Jonathan visited the Emab Plaza in central Abuja where a bomb blast killed at least twenty-one people on Wednesday. He later visited at hospital where victims were being treated, describing the worsening Islamist insurgency as "one of the darkest phases in the history" of Nigeria. Speaking to reporters outside the hospital, President Jonathan stated "Nigerians are struggling, thinking about how to contribute to the nation's development and working very hard to take care of their families while others are busy to kill people," adding "it is regrettable...But surely we will get over it." Although President Jonathan had planned to attend the second day of talks at the ongoing African Union summit in Equatorial Guinea, he reportedly left the conference on Thursday in order to return to Abuja. It was the third major attack to be carried out in Nigeria's capital city since mid-April, fears have now increased about Boko Haram's growing strength, with sources indicating that the insurgents now appear capable of attacking wherever they want, including remote villages in their northeastern stronghold as well as popular commercial targets near the parliament.
 - Meanwhile Nigerian have arrested thirty-seven people in the southern state of Abia on suspicion of being part of a major kidnapping ring. According to police spokesman for Abia state Geoffrey Ogbonno, "police acting on a tipoff raided their den," adding "we arrested 37 suspected kidnappers and they are still being screened as the investigation continues." Nigeria has one of the world's highest rates of kidnapping with hundreds of millions of dollars in ransom payments going to the criminal gangs that carry them out. Such kidnapping incidents are mostly concentrated in the southern regions of the country, with criminal gangs typically targeting Nigerians, however expatriates are also often kidnapped.
- **25 June 2014** – Nigeria's national rescue agency reported Wednesday that a loud explosion hit a crowded shopping center in the Wuse district of Nigeria's capital Abuja, killing at least twenty-one people and wounding seventeen. A statement released by Manzo Ezekiel, spokesman for the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), indicated "we received the information at about 4:00 PM (1500 GMT) about a blast" at the Emab Plaza, which is located not far from the seat of government. The statement further indicated that a "rescue operation has already commenced." Senior government spokesman Mike Omeri has confirmed that the blast was the result of a "bomb attack." Although Boko Haram's attacks have mostly targeted the northeastern regions of the country, over the past ten weeks the militant group has attacked the capital twice. On 14 April 2014 more than seventy people were killed in a bomb blast at a bus stop on the outskirts of the capital city. The following month, a car bomb near a bus station in the suburbs killed at least nineteen people and injured sixty others. **Update (26 June 2014)** – Nigerian authorities have arrested one suspect and killed another after a bomb claimed twenty-one lives in a shopping center in the capital Abuja. Wednesday's blast targeted the Emab Plaza at 4:00 PM (1500 GMT), with the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) confirming that the attack occurred as shoppers were buying groceries ahead of the country's World Cup match against Argentina, which began an hour later. National police spokesman Frank Mba confirmed Thursday that one suspect had been arrested and that a second suspect had been shot dead by troops as he attempted to escape on a motorbike.

- **24 June 2014** – Sources indicated Tuesday that suspected Boko Haram militants have abducted more than sixty women and young girls in the restive northeastern region of Nigeria. The kidnapping occurred during a raid last week in Kummabza village in the Damboa district of Borno state, which left at least thirty people dead. Although Nigeria's defense headquarters in Abuja indicated on Monday that it was "yet to confirm the several reports on the abduction of girls in Borno as of now," a senior officer in the Damboa local government did state "over 60 women were hijacked and forcefully taken away by the terrorists," adding "the village was also destroyed. Some of the survivors of the attack, who do not have means of transporting themselves, especially old women and men, trekked to Lassa, in the Askira-Uba local government area of Borno state, 25 kilometers away....Others went to Gulak in Adamawa state, where they are now taking refuge." The abductions are the latest to take place in the state of Borno, which has been the worst affected by the militant group's five-year insurgency. On April 14, Boko Haram militants kidnapped more than 200 teenaged girls from their dormitories at a boarding school in Chibok while on June 7, at least 20 young mothers from a nomadic settlement in and around the village of Garkin Fulani were also reportedly kidnapped, however it has since been claimed that their disappearances could be due to annual migration. Last week's kidnappings are believed to be an attempt by the militant group to refocus attention on its demands for the release of militant fighters. Boko Haram has indicated that it would be willing to release the 219 schoolgirls in exchange for the freedom of its fighters who are currently being held in Nigerian jails. **Update (25 June 2014)** - A security source indicated late Tuesday that Nigerian security forces are investigating reports of a mass kidnapping in villages located in the northeastern state of Borno, where Boko Haram militants abducted more than 200 schoolgirls two months ago. If confirmed by officials, the latest abduction will likely fuel further public frustration over the Nigerian government's inability to end the five-year insurgency. Sources have indicated that military officials are currently looking into reports that suspected Islamist insurgents raided at least three villages over the weekend, located 100 kilometers (60 miles) from the state capital Maiduguri. Nigerian media are reporting that as many as 91 villagers had been kidnapped, most of them women and young girls, however these reports have not been verified. While the militant group, which has killed thousands in bomb and gun attacks, was initially focused on targeting government and security targets as well as churches and those Muslim leaders who rejected their brand of Islam, recently, Boko Haram militants have increasingly been targeting civilians, gaining global attention when they kidnapped more than 200 girls from a school in the remote Borno village of Chibok in April.
 - Meanwhile in a separate incident, unidentified gunmen have killed at least thirty-eight people, mostly women and children, in raids that targeted two villages in northern Kaduna state, an area of the country that has been plagued by years of sectarian conflict. According to the head of the area's local government, Emmanuel Adamu Danzaria, the late Monday attacks targeted the remote villages of Fadan Karshi and Nandu, in the southern region of Kaduna state, adding, "twenty-one people were killed in Karshi and 17 others were killed in Nandu. We are yet to identify those behind the attacks." Ahmed Maiyaki, spokesman for Kaduna Governor Mukhtar Yero, confirmed the attacks and the death toll however he declined to discuss which group may have been responsible. Kaduna, which has a religiously divided capital city, has seen waves of violence that has often involved the area's Christians and Muslims, with the unrest often being sparked by elections and other political disputes. Following Nigeria's 2011 polls, hundreds were killed in Kaduna. Separately, in rural areas, bloodshed has been linked to fighting over land, which has erupted between agrarian groups and a tribe of composed of mainly nomadic herdsmen, the Fulani.
- **23 June 2014** - On Monday, at least eight people were killed and twelve other were wounded when a bomb exploded at a public health college in Nigeria's northern city of Kano. Kano state police Commissioner

Aderenle Shinaba confirmed the attack, which occurred at the School of Hygiene, stating that one suspect was detained and that his vehicle was seized for investigation. According to sources, the bomb blast, which went off at around 1 PM (1200 GMT), occurred in the parking lot near the office of the school's provost. Although there were no classes on campus, because of a term break, new students were reportedly on the grounds for registration. Access to the area has since been tightly restricted by the military, causing massive traffic build-up. This is the third bomb blast to occur in Kano in the last four months. While Boko Haram did not immediately claim responsibility for the attack, the school does match two of the militant group's targets: schools and Western medicine.

Domestic News

- **27 June 2014** – Nigeria's intelligence agency indicated Friday that over the past two weeks, it had been warning shopping complexes in Abuja that Islamic extremists may target them. According to Marily Ogar, spokeswoman for the Department of State Security, Nigerian intelligence officials had received information that Boko Haram extremists were planning such an attack, adding "about two weeks ago we heard information that they were planning an attack at a busy shopping mall or market...and so we had to go from one shopping complex to another trying to tell people to be more aware." Although the state department did not publish the intelligence reports on the threat to shopping malls, apparently in order to avoid wide panic, last week the government warned that it had received information that Boko Haram was planning to hijack petrol tankers in the capital and to plant explosives inside. On Friday, police officials also indicated that they had defused a massive car bomb packed with thirteen explosive devices outside the main mosque in Kano. Emab Plaza, where the attack occurred Wednesday, is the biggest and busiest shopping center in Abuja. The explosion occurred around rush hour as many residents were hurrying to view Nigeria's football team play against Argentina at the World Cup in Brazil. While it remains unclear if the bomb was timed to coincide with that, Boko Haram has in the past bombed several football viewing venues, prompting two northeastern states to ban public events to watch the football tournament. On the ground sources have reported that the increased security throughout the city may have prevented the attack from killing even more as witnesses reported that a security guard had stopped a car bomber from entering the mall just moments before the massive explosion on Wednesday.

Senegal

No Travel Restrictions



Security Summary

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.

Domestic News

- **4 July 2014** – A presidential source reported Friday that Senegalese President Macky Sall has fired Prime Minister Aminata Toure after she failed to win a seat at last Sunday's local elections. Toure, who had held the post since September, was attempting to defeat the popular Socialist mayor of the capital, Khalifa Sall, in Dakar's constituency of Grand Yoff. Her departure from government will likely open the way for President Sall to speed up his reform process and attempt to create more jobs ahead of next elections, which are set for 2017. In what appears to be a sign of public discontent over the policies of President Sall, who came to

power two years ago, the government performed poorly in Sunday's elections, especially in the large cities. Many voters have indicated that the president's policies, which are aimed at tackling corruption and improvising governance, have failed to provide jobs and economic growth.

- **30 June 2014** – Preliminary results from Sunday's municipal and provincial elections have indicated that President Macky Sall's party has been beaten in the capital city Dakar and in a number of key cities across the country. Early results published Monday have shown that in Dakar, the President's Alliance for the Republic (APR) party has been beaten by a coalition led by the outgoing mayor of the city, Khalifa Sall, who is from the Socialist Party (PS). The Presidential party also appears to have lost control of a number of cities and towns in Ziguinchor, Saint-Louis, Touba, Podor and Dagana while many members of the government who were running in the local polls appear to have also been beaten in their strongholds. This will likely prove to be a significant disappointment for the ruling party who prior to the elections controlled only a few towns and were hoping to reinforce their local support. The official results are due to be announced by the end of next week.
- **29 June 2014** – On Sunday, Senegal held municipal and provincial elections, which are seen as a key test for President Macky Sall as he attempts to garner support for his party two years after his own disputed victory. Voting began at 0800 GMT and is due to end at 1800 GMT, with election results expected to be released the following week. More than 5.3 million people are eligible to vote for new councilors across 602 districts who will in turn elect mayors and heads of provinces. In March 2012, a bitterly disputed presidential election was marred by violence that left up to fifteen people dead and at least 150 injured. President Sall had won that election with more than 65 percent of the vote against Abdoulaye Wade who had been in power for twelve years. Sunday's local elections are seen as a key test for the President and his party, which control only a few local communities. The presidential party, the Alliance for the Republic (APR), which was created in 2008, does not yet have a strong foundation in the country and is undermined by internal differences however the APR hopes that Sunday's elections will allow it strengthen its base despite poor economic results.

Sierra Leone

No Travel Restrictions



Security Summary

Summary

On the 23 March 2014, the World Health Organization (WHO) was notified by the Ministry of Health in Guinea of confirmed cases of Ebola hemorrhagic fever. This is the first outbreak of Ebola reported in Guinea. Since then, cases have been reported in the forested areas of south-eastern Guinea, including in the Guekedou, Kissidougou, Macenta and Nzerekore districts as well as in the capital city, Conakry. There have been confirmed cases of the Ebola virus in Sierra Leone. These cases have been reported in the regions near the border with Guinea.

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.

On the Ground Reporting

- **27 June 2014** – Officials in Sierra Leone warned Friday that it is now a serious crime to shelter someone infected with the Ebola virus. A statement released by the country's Health Ministry indicated "the Health Ministry wishes the general public to know that any person who obstructs or interferes with the performance of the medical team in any Ebola observation and treatment centers, would be guilty of an offence and liable to punishment." The Health Ministry's statement highlights the ongoing challenges that are being faced by those combatting the disease, especially in the remote areas of the country. Recent reports have indicated that in some villages, health workers have been attacked after rumors spread that the drugs they were dispensing were actually causing the disease. The Ministry's statement also noted that a number of patients had discharged themselves from a hospital in the Kenema district, where the outbreak is taking place, and have now gone into hiding.

- **26 June 2014** – The World Health Organization (WHO) on Thursday called for “drastic action” in order to fight the deadliest Ebola outbreak on record, and announced an 11-nation meeting to address the growing crisis. As of Sunday 22 June, 635 cases of hemorrhagic fever, most confirmed to be Ebola, including 399 deaths, have been reported across Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. This effectively makes the outbreak the largest ever “in terms of the number of cases and deaths as well as geographical spread.” A statement released by the UN agency stressed that “drastic action is needed,” and warned of the danger that the virus could jump to other countries. The WHO’s call for drastic action comes just days after medical charity Doctors Without Borders (MSF) indicated that the virus was now “out of control.” Since the deadly epidemic emerged in Guinea in January, WHO has deployed more than 150 experts in a bid to tackle the crisis. However despite its efforts, and the efforts of other medical charities, over the past three weeks there has been a “significant increase” in the number of cases and deaths reported each day. According to WHO’s regional director for Africa, Dr Luis Sambo, the agency is now “gravely concerned by the on-going cross-border transmission into neighboring countries as well as the potential for further international spread,” adding “this is no longer a country specific outbreak but a sub-regional crisis that requires firm action by governments and partners.” WHO’s top Ebola specialist Pierre Formenty warned last week that the recent surge in cases had likely come in part because efforts to contain the virus had been relaxed too quickly after the outbreak appeared to have slowed down in April. In order to address the on going crisis, officials at the WHO announced Thursday that they will convene a meeting of the health ministers from 11 countries in Accra, Ghana on July 2 – 3 in order “to discuss the best way of tackling the crisis collectively as well as develop a comprehensive inter-country operation response plan.” Ministers from Guinea, where nearly 400 confirmed, suspected and probably cases have surfaced so far, including 280 deaths; and Liberia, which has 63 cases and 41 deaths, will take part in the meeting. Ministers from Sierra Leone will also be present. Additionally, neighboring countries, including Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, Mali and Senegal, and countries as far afield as the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda have also been invited. The meeting will also include a range of UN agencies and other aid organizations including MSF and the Red Cross as well as the Western African, British, EU and US centers for disease control.
- **25 June 2014** – On Wednesday, officials from the WHO announced that, at the request of the Sierra Leonean government, they were changing the way it reports fatalities from the Ebola outbreak in the country. Previously, probable and suspected deaths from Ebola were included in the count however from now on, only laboratory confirmed cases will be reported. Therefore this reduces the death toll in Sierra Leone from 58 to 34 as of 24 June 2014. According to WHO spokeswoman Fadel Chaib, the way that deaths are reported in Guinea and Liberia, which are the other two countries affected by the deadly outbreak, will remain unchanged. The change comes after Sierra Leone’s press had criticized the government for reporting lower death rates than those reported by the WHO. The changes however now bring the WHO figures inline with those released by the Sierra Leone government. The latest Ebola outbreak has now been named by international organizations as the worst Ebola epidemic ever with 599 cases and 338 fatalities occurring in dozens of sites across the three countries, including in major cities and remote areas. Officials from Doctors Without Borders (MSF) have described the outbreak as “out of control,” adding that it had reports of cases in more than 60 sites and that its resources were now stretched to the limit. In light of the on going outbreak, which has worsened in recent weeks, the European Commission announced Tuesday that it was committing an additional 500,000 euros in funding in order to combat the outbreak. This latest funding brings its total contribution to 1.9 million euros.



South Suite, Ragnall House, 18 Peel Road
Douglas, Isle of Man, IM1 4LZ

24 hr Global Contact: +44 207 754 3555

www.msrisk.com

Directors

S.J. Bingham, V.K. Prentice, P.O.J Tracy

Registered in the Isle of Man No. 007435V