West Africa Report

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

July 7 - 20, 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.

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 - Due diligence and investigations.
- Project Management
 - Interim security
 - Training
 - Special assignments
- Crisis Response
 - Crisis management
 - Business continuity management
 - Hostile operations support to commercial interests
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Summary

July 7 - 20, 2014



Sahel Region

- **15 July 2014** The death toll in West Africa's Ebola outbreak has risen to 603, with 68 new fatalities being reported mostly in Liberia and Sierra Leone.
 - On Thursday, French President Francois Hollande will embark on a trip to three former colonies in West Africa.
- 13 July 2014 France announced Sunday that its military offensive in Mali will now be replaced by an operation that will focus on the wider and largely lawless Sahel region, and will aim at combatting extremist violence, which is now threatening the entire area.
- **11 July 2014** World Health Organization (WHO) officials have indicated that high numbers of new cases of the Ebola virus are being reported in Liberia and Sierra Leone, with nineteen deaths occurring over three days this week.

Burkina Faso

• **16 July 2014** – Burkina Faso's top security official confirmed Wednesday that four people have been killed and dozens wounded after an illegal explosives cache blew up accidentally in Ouagadougou early Tuesday evening.



Gambia

• **16 July 2014** – As party of the Gambia's efforts to prevent the deadly Ebola virus from spreading into the country, Gambia's Ministry of Health and Social Welfare has set up a task force to control the border areas.

Ghana

On the Ground Reporting

• **7 July 2014** – A US citizen is currently being tested for the Ebola virus in Ghana, which has no confirmed cases of the virus in the current outbreak that is plaguing three West African countries.

Domestic News

- **16 July 2014** On Wednesday, Ghana's President John Dramani Mahama appointed a new defense minister in a cabinet reshuffle that also saw the dismissal of the agriculture and interior ministers.
- **9 July 2014** On Thursday, Ghana will host a two-day Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) summit, with the recent Ebola outbreak likely to be high on the agenda.

International Developments

• **11 July 2014** – Officials in Ghana announced Friday that some 200 Ghanaians, who travelled to Brazil to watch the World Cup football tournament, have applied to stay permanently, citing religious violence at home.

Guinea

- 11 July 2014 The World Health Organization (WHO) announced Friday that a regional center is currently being set up in Guinea, and it will be tasked with coordinating the response to what is now the worst-ever outbreak of the Ebola virus.
- 8 July 2014 According to new figures released by the World Health Organization on Tuesday, the number of people believed to have died from the Ebola virus in West Africa has increased to 518, adding that the total number of laboratory-confirmed, probable or suspected cases of Ebola in the region has now risen to 844.

Guinea – Bissau

• **14 July 2014** – Officials from the European Union (EU) confirmed Monday that after a three-year break, and following "free and credible" elections that were held in May, they will resume cooperation with Guinea-Bissau. A statement released Monday indicated that the EU "today suspended the measures limiting EU cooperation" with Guinea-Bissau.

Ivory Coast

- **17 July 2014** French President Francois Hollande began his West African tour Thursday with the first stop in the lvory Coast, an official visit to the country that aims to boost economic ties.
- 14 July 2014 A UN official indicated Monday that about 400 Ivorian refugees, who fled to Liberia during their country's 2010 2011 post-election violence, have been prevented from returning home over fears they may spread the Ebola virus.
- **7 July 2014** Over the last month, flooding and landslides during the Ivory Coast's rainy season have killed thirty-nine people, with the majority killed on June 19, when twenty-three people died in an overnight landslide that occurred in Abidjan.

Liberia

• 9 July 2014 – Over the past week, the World Health Organization has reported sixteen new cases of the Ebola virus in Liberia, adding that the epidemic has spread rapidly in Sierra Leone and Liberia, with the former recording thirty-four new cases while the latter recording sixteen new cases.

Mali

On the Ground Reporting

- **15** July 2014 France's Defense Ministry confirmed Tuesday that a French legionnaire has been killed in a suicide attack in northern Mali. This brings the number of soldiers killed in Mali since 2013 to nine.
- **7** July 2014 On Friday, Malian government officials confirmed that armed groups in northern Mali have begun to regroup, a move that is in violation of a recent truce signed between them and the government.

Domestic News

• **15 July 2014** – In what appears to be a gesture of goodwill on the eve of peace talks, the Malian government and Tuareg rebels have exchanged prisoners who have been held captive since May.

Regional Reporting

- **16 July 2014** As parts of Mali continue to be mired in conflict, the Malian government and armed groups from the northern region of the country began tough negotiations in Algiers Wednesday in a bid to reach an elusive peace deal.
- **10 July 2014** After holding talks with Burkina Faso's President, who has been mediating the conflict in Mali, Algeria's Minister has proposed that a regional meeting, aimed at tackling the ongoing conflict in Mali, be held next week.

International Developments

• **16 July 2014** – Mali and France have agreed to a military cooperation plan aimed at fighting against Islamist militants in the West African nation's northern desert region.

Niger

• **18 July 2014** – As part of his African tour, which began in the Ivory Coast on Thursday, French President Francois Hollande arrived in Niamey on Friday, where he will oversee the deployment of French troops in a new operation aimed at battling radical Islamist movements in the Sahel region.

Nigeria

On the Ground Reporting

- **18 July 2014** Many people are feared dead after suspected Boko Haram militants attacked the town of Damboa, throwing explosives into residential homes and shooting dead civilians who attempted to flee the area.
- 16 July 2014 On Wednesday, the relatives of some of the schoolgirls seized in a mass kidnapping by Boko Haram
 militants demanded that Nigeria's president meet everyone affected by the ordeal, noting that a hastily-arranged plan
 to meet only a select few was offensive.
 - Police officials reported late Wednesday that gunmen riding on motorcycles have kidnapped a German national in northeastern Nigeria.
- **15 July 2014** Nigerian police officials disclosed Tuesday that they have arrested a senior Boko Haram commander, known as "Chief Butcher" during a raid on an insurgent camp in the restive northeast.
 - A man alleged to be the co-mastermind of April's deadly bombing, that targeted a bus station on the outskirts

of Abuja, was extradited to Nigeria on Tuesday.

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- Despite hopes being raised that President Goodluck Jonathan would soon meet with the families of the more than 200 schoolgirls abducted from Chibok, a meeting he had pledged to Malala Yousafzai during their visit on Monday, the president on Tuesday accused activists of playing politics, stating that they had cancelled the meeting.
- 14 July 2014 Suspected Boko Haram militants bombed a key bridge located on a northeast Nigerian highway. The bombing will further limit access to base camps in the Sambisa Forest were scores of kidnapped girls are believed to be held captive.
 - Pakistani rights activist Malala Yousafzai has met with Nigeria's President Goodluck Jonathan in a bid to press for more action in order to free the more than 200 girls who are being held by Boko Haram militants.
 - At least 38 people have been killed following a raid carried out by suspected Boko Haram gunmen on a village in northeastern Nigeria, with sources indicating that a military aerial bombardment targeted fleeing residents who were mistaken for the insurgents.
- **13 July 2014** In a new video released Sunday, Boko Haram's leader has claimed responsibility for a bombing in the capital Abuja and an attack, which occurred hours later in Lagos, which local authorities have attempted to cover up.
- **12 July 2014** Nigerian police officials warned Saturday that more terrorist attacks are likely to occur in Abuja, where more than one hundred people have been killed in bombings that have occurred since April this year.
- 8 July 2014 According to sources, Nigerian authorities are believed to have covered up a bomb attack in the financial capital Lagos by claiming that a blast, which erupted near a major fuel department, was an industrial accident and not a terrorist attack.
- 7 July 2014 Security sources indicated Monday that more than sixty women and girls are reported to have escaped from captivity.
 - Meanwhile residents reported Monday that suspected Boko Haram militants, disguised in army uniforms, have killed seven people in an attack near the northeastern border with Cameroon.
 - A police spokesman confirmed Monday that Nigerian police have uncovered a plot to bomb a secondary school in northeastern Gombe, with officials stating that militants were planning to defuse a car laden with explosives that had been abandoned there.

Domestic News

- **16 July 2014** On Wednesday, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan sought approval from parliament to borrow up to US \$1 billion abroad to help the armed forces tackle the security threat posed by Boko Haram.
- **15 July 2014** The governor of Nigeria's northeastern Adamawa state, one of three areas that is currently under a state of emergency, was impeached Tuesday over corruption charges.
- 9 July 2014 On Wednesday, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan appointed four close allies as ministers, with
 sources indicating that two of them will likely attempt to increase the president's power base in the largely Muslim
 north, where opposition to him and his party is the strongest.

Regional Reporting

 10 July 2014 – According to a South African intelligence assessment, Nigeria faces a prolonged battle to end Boko Haram's ongoing insurgency despite a "hardline" campaign that has witnessed rights bases by both the state and the militants.

Senegal

• **7 July 2014** – Mohamed Dionne, 54, a close aid to Senegal's President, has been named the country's new prime minister, just two days after the resignation of his predecessor.



Security Summaries for West African States

Sahel Region – Page 9

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.

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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.

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

- 15 July 2014 The death toll in West Africa's Ebola outbreak has risen to 603, with 68 new fatalities being reported mostly in Liberia and Sierra Leone. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the new deaths were recorded between July 8 and 12, with officials noting that 52 of them occurred in Sierra Leone, 13 in Liberia and 3 in Guinea. Over this period, there were eighty-five new cases reported. The total number of laboratory-confirmed, probable or suspected cases of Ebola in the region has now risen to 964. While Guinea recorded the lowest number of new cases over this period, six, it remains to be the worst affected of the three nations. Since the outbreak began in January, Guinea has seen 406 cases and 304 deaths. Between July 8 and 12, Sierra Leone reported 49 new cases, taking its total to 386. Of those, 194 have been fatal. Liberia's reported thirty new cases, which effectively takes its case-count to 172. The country has a death toll of 105.
 - On Thursday, French President Francois Hollande will embark on a trip to three former colonies in West Africa. The official tour comes as his country puts the finishing touches to a military operation aimed at combatting extremist violence in the Sahel region. On Sunday, France's Defense Minister announced that the country will end its military offensive in Mali, effectively replacing it with a new operation, codenamed Barkhane, which will involve some 3,000 French troops and which will span the largely lawless Sahel region. However in a sign that tensions in Mali are far from over, on Monday the French Defense Ministry confirmed that a French legionnaire died in a suicide attack near the northern town of Gao, the ninth casualty that France has suffered in the West African nation.

According to the President's office, Hollande's upcoming visit will include stops in the Ivory Coast, Niger and Chad, which is where Barkhane's headquarters will be located. The French president will begin his African tour in Abidjan, the commercial capital of the Ivory Coast, which is currently on the economic rebound after experiencing a decade of unrest that was sparked by a failed coup in 2002. He will then visit Niger, which includes a stop at a French military base from which surveillance drones are deployed within the region. According to a source close to Hollande, because Niger is surrounded by restive areas - Nigeria to the south, Libya to the north, and Mali to the west - the president will "continue strategic talks on all these crisis areas surrounding the country and establish how we can collaborate to ensure better security in the region." In the Chadian capital N'Djamena, Hollande will visit the headquarters of Operation Barkhane, which apart from troops, will also mobilize drones, helicopters, fighter jets, armored vehicles and transport planes. France's new operation in the region was announced Sunday by French Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, who stated "the aim is to prevent what I call the highway of all forms of traffic to become a place of permanent passage, where jihadist groups between Libya and the Atlantic Ocean can rebuild themselves, which would lead to serious consequences for our security." As part of Barkhane, which is being implemented in partnership with Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, 3,000 troops will be deployed in the region however 1,200 French soldiers will remain in northern Mali, where the security situation continues to be fragile.

13 July 2014 – France announced Sunday that its military offensive in Mali will now be replaced by an
operation that will focus on the wider and largely lawless Sahel region, and will aim at combatting extremist

violence, which is now threatening the entire area. During television а interview Sunday, French Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian announced that President Francois Hollande "...wanted а reorganization of our troops in the Sahel zone." France's Serval offensive was launched in January last year and saw French troops deploy to aid Malian



soldiers in stopping al-Qaeda-linked militants and Tuareg rebels from descending further south and advancing on the capital Bamako. While France had initially planned to end operation Serval in May, and redeploy troops to the Sahel region to fight al-Qaeda-linked terrorist groups, renewed clashes between rebels and the army in the northeastern town of Kidal effectively forced officials in Paris to delay the pull out.

Although the French-led Serval operation, which saw eight soldiers die over a period of eighteen months, has widely been deemed a success by the international community, Le Drian indicated that the concern has now shifted to the vast Sahel region, noting the operation aims "to make sure there is no upsurge (in terrorism) as there are still major risks that jihadists will develop in the zone that goes from the Horn of Africa to Guinea-Bissau," adding "the aim is to prevent what I call the highway of all forms of traffics to become a place of permanent passage, where jihadist groups between Libya and the Atlantic Ocean can rebuild themselves, which would lead to serious consequences for our security." The new "counterterrorism" operation, which has been codenamed Barkhan, will launch in the coming days and is being implemented in partnership with five countries including Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. Some 3,000 French soldiers will take part in the operation in which 1,000 will remain in the northern regions of Mali while the rest will be deployed in the four other countries. Drones, helicopters, fighters jets, armored vehicles and transport planes will be used in the operation, with the headquarters stationed in the Chadian capital, N'Djamena.

11 July 2014 – World Health Organization (WHO) officials have indicated that high numbers of new cases of the Ebola virus are being reported in Liberia and Sierra Leone, with nineteen deaths occurring over three days this week. A statement released by the WHO this week indicated that Sierra Leone has 32 new cases and 15 deaths while Liberia reported 11 new cases and four deaths. The statement further noted that there had been two deaths and one new infection recorded between 6 – 8 July in Guinea and according to WHO officials, the transmission rate is now classified as low in the country however "the epidemic in Liberia and Sierra Leone remains precarious with high numbers of new cases and deaths being reported." The cases in Sierra Leone are centered in the Kailahun and Kenema districts while in Liberia, they are centered in the counties of Lofa and Montserrado. Since February, there have been a total of 539 deaths in West Africa. Regional leaders have also agreed to set up a fund in order to combat the spread of the deadly virus. At a summit of the regional body ECOWAS in Ghana on Thursday, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan pledged to contribute US \$3 million (£1.8 million) to the fund.



West Africa Report

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 Boulsa, 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.

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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.



On the Ground Reporting

 16 July 2014 – Burkina Faso's top security official confirmed Wednesday that four people have been killed and dozens wounded after an illegal explosives cache blew up accidentally in Ouagadougou early Tuesday evening. Thirty-eight people were injured, with medical sources indicating that seven people are in serious condition. While initial reports indicated that the location of the blast, which occurred near the home of a traditional leader who has joined the opposition, did spark rumors that the blast may not have been accidental, national security head Omar Batiolo has ruled out an attack, adding that the explosives had been intended for use in illegal mining operations. The blast damaged/destroyed twenty-one houses within a 100-meter (109 yard) radius.

Gambia

No Travel Restrictions



Security Summary

There is no travel advisory for Gambia, however MS Risk advises all travellers to avoid travel by road from The Gambia to the Casamance, in the southern region of Senegal. The Casamance region of south western Senegal remains affected by incidents involving presumed separatist groups and by incidents of banditry. An outbreak of the Ebola virus has been confirmed in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. While there have been no confirmed cases of the virus in The Gambia, as part of efforts to prevent the deadly virus from spreading into the country, Gambia's Ministry of Health and Social Welfare has set up a task force to control the border areas. MS Risk is currently advising all travellers to the country to maintain a high level of vigilance. There is an underlying threat from terrorism. Travellers to the country are warned to remain vigilant as attacks can take place at anytime and anywhere.

On the Ground Reporting

• 16 July 2014 - As part of the Gambia's efforts to prevent the deadly Ebola virus from spreading into the



country, Gambia's Ministry of Health and Social Welfare has set up a task force to control the border areas. According to officials, surveillance has been increased and strengthened at the border areas in a bid to monitor those going in and out of the country. While the Ebola outbreak is currently limited to Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, it is the worst ever out break and the first to occur in West Africa, with officials warning that the outbreak is likely to continue for months and that the deadly disease may spread to other countries. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the death toll from the Ebola outbreak has already risen to 603, with 85 new cases reported between July 8 - 12, indicating that the levels of transmission are high. While WHO Director-General Margaret Chan has stated that the situation is not out of control, a number of West African nations are taking the necessary precautions in a bid to prevent the virus from spreading further.

BURKINA FASO BENIN IVORY COAST GHANA TOGO Accra D Gulf of Gulnea

No Travel Restrictions

Ghana

Security Summary

An outbreak of the Ebola virus disease has been confirmed in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. There currently are no confirmed Ebola cases in the country however a US citizen in Ghana is being tested for the Ebola virus. In April, health officials confirmed that a girl suspected of having Ebola tested negative. MS Risk advises all travellers to Ghana 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.

On the Ground Reporting

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7 July 2014 – A US citizen is currently being tested for the Ebola virus in Ghana, which has no confirmed cases of the virus in the current outbreak that is plaguing three West African countries. According to Ghanaian health officials, the man has been quarantined at the private Nyaho clinic in the capital Accra. It is believed that in recent weeks, he had visited Guinea and Sierra Leone. In a statement released Monday, Ghana's healthy ministry stated that it has put in place "precautionary measures," adding that people should stay calm. Staff at the clinic where the patient is being treated have also been quarantined and have been provided with protective clothing. The clinic is awaiting the results of blood tests to see whether the patient, whom the ministry did not identify, has the Ebola virus. Officials at the US embassy in Accra have indicated that they have been informed that a US citizen was being tested for the deadly virus, however they have not released any additional details. The Ebola virus has so far killed more than 460 people since it was detected in Guinea in February of this year. The virus has spread to neighboring Liberia and Sierra Leone, with officials fearing that if it is not contained, there is a heightened risk that it will spread further throughout West Africa. While there have been no confirmed cases of the Ebola virus in Ghana, in April, the country's health authorities indicated that a girl suspected of having Ebola had tested negative.

Domestic News

- 16 July 2014 On Wednesday, Ghana's President John Dramani Mahama appointed a new defense minister in a cabinet reshuffle that also saw the dismissal of the agriculture and interior ministers. Although no reason was provided for the cabinet reshuffle, which is the first to take place since President Mahama took office in January last year after winning the country's December 2012 presidential elections, the president has recently been under increasing pressure to turn around an economy that was once regarded as Africa's top frontier markets but which is now burdened with high inflation and a wide government deficit. A presidential statement released Wednesday confirmed that Benjamin Bewa-Nyog Kunbour, majority leader in parliament and a former attorney-general, has replaced Defense Minister Mark Woyongo, who has been moved to the interior ministry. Fiifi Kwetey, minister of state, was named agriculture minister, effectively replacing Kofi Humado, while Ekwow Spio-Garbrah, a former head of Commonwealth Telecommunications Organization, was appointed Trade Minister. Sports Minister Elvis Afriyie-Ankrah, who was removed last month shortly after Ghana's football team was eliminated in the World Cup, has been reassigned to the president's office as the Minister of State. The key ministers of foreign affairs, finance and energy and petroleum have remained the same, with sources indicating that the President also realigned some parts of the government structure, and has merged some ministries.
- 9 July 2014 On Thursday, Ghana will host a two-day Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) summit, with the recent Ebola outbreak likely to be high on the agenda. A statement released by presidential spokesperson Ben Dotsei Malor indicated that the meeting, which will be chaired by



Ghanaian President and ECOWAS chairperson John Dramani Mahama, is also expected to discuss a recommendation for the introduction of biometric ID cards for citizens of the sub-region and the abolition of residence permit requirements for all citizens within the member states. Leaders are also expected to consider a report on ECOWAS's main activities and projects over the first half of 2014 and discuss the situation in Guinea-Bissau, where a new president was sworn in last month. Also among the leaders of the fifteen member states attending the meeting are the Presidents of Cameroon, Chad and Mauritania, along with the President of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

International Developments

• 11 July 2014 – Officials in Ghana announced Friday that some 200 Ghanaians, who travelled to Brazil to watch the World Cup football tournament, have applied to stay permanently, citing religious violence at home. The Ghanaian government however has indicated that its citizens have no legitimate claims to asylum. According to a federal police spokesman, "between July 3 and 10, 193 Ghanaians who entered Brazil, for the most part with a tourist visa, have asked for asylum in the police station at Caxias do Sul," a city in the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul. While the make-up of the group, including their religion and home region, remains unclear, sources have indicated that the group reportedly told Brazilian authorities that inter-religious violence between rival Muslim groups has made it unsafe for them to return to Ghana. Ghana's Deputy Information Minister Felix Kwakye Ofosu however has stated "the basis for the alleged request for the asylum is completely untrue," adding "you and I know that there is no known religious conflict raging in this country at the moment." He has also indicated that Ghanaian diplomats in Brazil have been instructed to work with local authorities in order to investigate the situation, noting that it would be "surprising and unfortunate" should anyone conclude that the asylum claim has merit. On the ground sources in Brazil have reported that the group has found shelter at a Catholic Church in the southern city of Caxias do Sul. Officials have indicated that some, and possibly all, members of the group travelled to Brazil as part of the government delegation to the World Cup. Over the past two decades, Ghana has been one of the most stable countries in West Africa and it is not known to have any significant religious violence.

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 injures 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

 11 July 2014 – The World Health Organization (WHO) announced Friday that a regional center is currently being set up in Guinea, and it will be tasked with coordinating the response to what is now the worst-ever outbreak of the Ebola virus. A statement released by the WHO indicated, "the sub-regional center will be responsible for ensuring effective use and deployment of limited and scarce, but highly critical resources based on prioritization and agreed objectives." According to the latest figures released by the WHO, the hemorrhagic fever that is sweeping though Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone has already left an estimated



539 people dead. Tracking and treating the deadly disease has been a challenge as rural populations are often highly mistrustful of foreign doctors and typically do not follow their advice. This has also been exacerbated by the continued following of traditional practices, which include touching the bodies at funerals. Last week, medical charity Doctors Without Borders (MSF) indicated that the outbreak was now "out of control," with more than sixty hotspots. While officials at MSF and the WHO have indicated that this outbreak is expected to continue for several months, the WHO did note Friday that transmission of the disease appeared to have slowed in Guinea, with only two new cases reported over the past week. A total of 309 people are confirmed or suspected to have died of Ebola in the West African nation, where the epidemic broke out in February of this year. Over the past week, the largest number of new cases and deaths attributed to Ebola were reported in Sierra Leone, where another thirty-two people fell sick and fifteen died. Liberia has a total of 142 cases, 88 of whom have died, while Sierra Leone has 337 cases, with 142 deaths.

8 July 2014 – According to new figures released by the World Health Organization on Tuesday, the number of people believed to have died from the Ebola virus in West Africa has increased to 518, adding that the total number of laboratory-confirmed, probable or suspected cases of Ebola in the region has now risen to 844. The UN health agency indicated that fifty new cases, twenty-five of them fatal, were reported by health authorities in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone between July 3 – 6. The latest WHO data also indicates that although there have been no new cases in Guinea reported between July 3 – 6, there had been two more deaths attributed to the deadly virus. Liberia reported sixteen new cases and nine deaths, which brings its overall count to 131 cases, with 84 fatalities, while Sierra Leone's figures showed thirty-four new cases and fourteen deaths. Sierra Leone's overall Ebola count is currently at 305, with a death toll at 127. The latest figures were released days after officials from the WHO, along with eleven West African health ministers, held talks last week in a bid to find a solution to combat the deadliest outbreak of the virus in history.



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.

International Developments

• 14 July 2014 – Officials from the European Union (EU) confirmed Monday that after a three-year break, and following "free and credible" elections that were held in May, they will resume cooperation with Guinea-Bissau. A statement released Monday indicated that the EU "today suspended the measures limiting EU cooperation" with Guinea-Bissau. The measure refers to the July 2011 suspension of direct aid to the government in response to a military take over. Monday's decision effectively opens the way for talks to occur between Brussels and Bissau, which will focus on resuming aid to the impoverished country, however according to an EU diplomat, the actual flow of funds "will take some time." A statement released by EU Development Commissioner Andris Piebalgs and EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton indicated that the decision will also enable the EU to back reconstruction efforts by the newly elected authorities "by helping them rapidly to ensure vital state functions and provide basic social services." In June, Guinea-Bissau's newly elected President Jose Mario Vaz took office, vowing to fight poverty and to restore stability. President Vaz is the first elected leader since the army mutinied in 2012, a move which effectively plunged 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.

On the Ground Reporting

- 17 July 2014 French President Francois Hollande began his West African tour Thursday with the first stop in the Ivory Coast, an official visit to the country that aims to boost economic ties. France is the main trading partner of its former colony, which is the world's leading cocoa producer and which hosts hundreds of French companies. Hollande was met at the airport of the commercial capital Abidjan by Ivorian President Alassane Ouattara, with whom he has established good relations with since being elected two years ago. After shortly briefing with the president, Hollande later went on to hold talks with about forty French barons of industry who also travelled to Abidjan. Amongst them were the chairman of Bouygues group, Martin Bouygues, and senior management representatives from Alstom and Suez-Environment. Ivorian authorities have reported that 800 French firms are active in the country, of which 160 represent large groups, working in sectors that range from transport and construction to banking. According to French statistics, these companies employ almost 35,000 people while their combined annual turnover accounts for more than 30 percent of Ivory Coast's gross domestic product. The French president is also scheduled to meet with officials of the Ivorian Patriotic Front (FPI), the party founded by Gbagbo who is now detained by the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague on four counts of crimes against humanity. France plans to sign a cooperation agreement covering the judiciary, worth some 25 million euros, with the aim of helping Ivorian courts to work more efficiently in tackling outstanding cases. On Friday and Saturday, the French President is set to visit Niger and Chad for talks that will likely be dominated by security issues as France earlier this week announced a plan to deploy a new anti-terrorist force of 3,000 troops in the Sahel, a mission that will effectively extend military action against armed Islamic extremists in the region. Hollande is accompanied by his ministers of defense and foreign affairs, Jean-Yves Le Drian and Laurent Fabius.
- 14 July 2014 A UN official indicated Monday that about 400 Ivorian refugees, who fled to Liberia during their country's 2010 – 2011 post-election violence, have been prevented from returning home over fears

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they may spread the Ebola virus. According to UN refugee agency official Mohamed Toure, a convoy of returning refugees was turned away as they attempted to cross the border on Friday. He further stated that the decision by the Ivory Coast was "unacceptable," adding, "this is a violation of domestic and international law." However the Ivorian government has indicated that they have taken the necessary measures in order to prevent the spread of the deadly virus from spreading into the Ivory Coast, where so far there have been no confirmed cases. On Monday, Ivorian government spokesman Bruno Kone stated "everyone needs to show some understanding," adding "we face the greatest pandemic our region has seen for a long time. We cannot be lax in this area." In June, after a break of several months, repatriations of refugees resumed again. According to the UNHCR, seven convoys carrying more than 2,600 Ivorian refugees crossed into the Ivory Coast between 4 and 27 June. However, according to Toure, on Friday, "we were given Ebola as a reason, even though the UNHCR offered to carry out medical screening of the refugees, but they refused." Although convoys of people are currently being refused entry into the Ivory Coast, government officials have indicated that individuals are allowed access to pass through the border as many people farm land on both sides of the border.

7 July 2014 – Over the last month, flooding and landslides during the lvory Coast's rainy season have killed thirty-nine people, with the majority killed on June 19, when twenty-three people died in an overnight landslide that occurred in Abidjan. Last weekend, five people were killed when flooding hit villages near Gran Lahou, which is located west of the capital city, while hundreds of houses were destroyed in the town itself, with many of them because of landslides. Abidjan has seen a number of flooding-related deaths in recent years, with the majority of affected victims living in poor housing and infrastructure areas that back onto land which gives way under heavy rains. A month of almost-continuous rain has caused precipitation in the country to rise above normal levels however over the past few days, the situation has improved. In June 2009, twenty-one people died in the city while seven lost their lives in 2008 and eleven were killed in 2011.

Liberia

No Travel Restrictions



Security Summary

Cases of the Ebola virus have been confirmed 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

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

• 9 July 2014 – Over the past week, the World Health Organization has reported sixteen new cases of the Ebola virus in Liberia, adding that the epidemic has spread rapidly in Sierra Leone and Liberia, with the former recording thirty-four new cases while the latter recording sixteen new cases. Officials at the WHO have indicated that since last week, there have been fifty new Ebola cases in both countries adding that Guinea reported no new cases during that period. As of July 7, there have been a total of 844 Ebola cases in the three countries, including 518 deaths. The death toll in Liberia has mainly affected three of the



country's fifteen political subdivisions: Lofa, Montserrado and Margibi Counties. President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has called on the citizenry to look at the outbreak as a national public health emergency and has warned close family members and other relatives keeping victims of the Ebola virus in homes and prayer centers that they are now at risk of arrest and prosecution. In a televised address to the nation last month, President Sirleaf stated "let this warning go out, anyone found or reported to be holding suspected Ebola cases in homes or prayer houses will be prosecuted under the laws of Liberia."

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

MS RISK

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

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

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

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

Kidnapping

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

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

MS RISK

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 sever this threat will emerge, all affected organizations are recommended to review their current operations and contingencies which is 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 operating 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

- 15 July 2014 France's Defense Ministry confirmed Tuesday that a French legionnaire has been killed in a suicide attack in northern Mali. This brings the number of soldiers killed in Mali since 2013 to nine. A statement released by the Defense Ministry indicated that Serbian-born Dejvid Nikolic, 45, who held French nationality and was part of the Genie 1st regiment, "fell victim to a suicide attack" about 100 kilometers (60 miles) from the northern town of Gao on Monday. A suicide bomber in a car targeted French troops who were on a security mission in the Al Moustarat region north of Gao. Seven soldiers were injured in the attack and Nikolic died of his wounds on Monday evening. He had been a legionnaire for more than twentyfive years and served in several hot spots, including Afghanistan and Lebanon. He had also worked in Africa, notably in Gabon and Djibouti. The Defense Ministry stated that his currently mission was his eight abroad. News of the death of the French soldier comes just days before President Francois Hollande is due to travel to West Africa as France prepares to redeploy some of its troops from Mali to the wider and largely lawless Sahel region in a bid to combat extremist violence. Update (17 July 2014) - A spokesman for the al-Mourabitoun armed Islamist group, which was formed by jihadist Mokhtar Belmokhtar, has claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing that killed a French soldier earlier this week. In a video posted Thursday, the spokesman, who identified himself as Abu Assem Al-Muhaji, stated that the attack in the region of Al Moustarat, located north of Gao, was "a response to French claims that they had annihilated the Mujahedeen." Al-Mourabitoun was formed last year from the fusion of tow Islamist groups operating in northern Mali: The Mulathameen brigade, led by Belmokhtar, and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA).
- 7 July 2014 On Friday, Malian government officials confirmed that armed groups in northern Mali have • begun to regroup, a move that is in violation of a recent truce signed between them and the government. A government statement released by Mali's state-owned news agency indicated "corroborating information details military gatherings and even advances by troops from armed groups in certain locations in the north," adding "such acts are unacceptable because they violate the ceasefire agreement of May 24" between the Malian government and armed groups. The truce was brokered after fighting erupted between the army and militants in the northeastern desert town of Kidal. According to officials in Bamako, the mobilizations in the north come "a few days ahead of the opening of inclusive talks planned in Algiers from July 16." The talks were announced late Wednesday by Algerian Foreign Minister Ramtane Lamamra during a visit to Burkina Faso and are aimed at restoring stability in the north. On the ground sources have also reported that fighting broke out on Friday between two of the movements due to participate in the upcoming discussions. According to Mohamed Ould Mataly, who represents one wing of the Arab Movement of Azawad (MAA), the Tuareg rebel National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) was attacking "our positions." Mohamed Ag Rhissa, spokesperson for the MNLA in Kidal, confirmed, "...clashes are taking place between Anefis and Tabankor." Lt. Col. Diarran Kone, a defense ministry adviser also confirmed that clashes had taken place, adding that the Malian army was not involved. The latest incidents are likely to further increase the already high tensions, with further clashes between the two groups likely to occur in the coming days. They also highlight the on going fragility of Mali's security and relations between the government and northern rebel groups. Update (13 July 2014) - Sources have disclosed that more than thirty people were killed in desert clashes in northern Mali just days before the start of internationally brokered peace talks. On Sunday, an army source indicated that thirty-seven people had been killed in clashes that began Friday in the northern desert area between Gao and Kidal. The army has blamed the recent violence on infighting between separatists, adding that those killed were from the

main Tuareg separatist group MNLA and from a group of northern Malian Arabs, known as MAA. The latest clashes come just days before peace talks between Malian government officials and Tuareg rebels, which are due to start in Algeria on Wednesday. This will be the first meeting between the two groups since clashes erupted in the Tuareg stronghold town of Kidal in May. The fighting resulted in the death of some fifty Malian soldiers.

Domestic News

MS | RISK

• 15 July 2014 – In what appears to be a gesture of goodwill on the eve of peace talks, the Malian government and Tuareg rebels have exchanged prisoners who have been held captive since May. Malian army officials confirmed Tuesday that forty-five Malian soldiers and police, captured during clashes at the end of May and held by the rebels in the north of the country, have arrived at Bamako airport. Forty-one Tuareg rebels, who had been captured during patrols of the north by government security forces and held prisoner in the capital city, replaced them on the plane. Security Ministry official Aliou Toure confirmed the exchange, stating, "in total today the Malian government and armed groups in the north have released 86 prisoners on both sides, in the context of an easing of tensions." All prisoners released are said to be in healthy condition. The exchange had been agreed as part of negotiations between the two sides ahead of talks, which are set to begin Wednesday in Algeria's capital Algiers. While the two sides agreed to a ceasefire in May, on the ground sources have reported that there is minimal optimism that any quick progress will take place at Wednesday's gathering.

Regional Reporting

 16 July 2014 – As parts of Mali continue to be mired in conflict, the Malian government and armed groups from the northern region of the country began tough negotiations in Algiers Wednesday in a bid to reach an elusive peace deal. Speaking shortly before the talks began, Malian Foreign Minister Abdoulay Diop stated that his government was prepared to go "as far as possible" within its "red lines" in order to reach a peace deal with the main Tuareg rebels and to "forge an understanding between Malians." Speaking to reporters, Diop further indicated "the government is ready to go as far as possible within the red lines that have been drawn," adding that those red lines include "respect for territorial unity, the unity of Mali and the republican form of the Malian state." However hours before the launch of the talks, Algerian officials noted that the armed groups will be negotiating from a position of strength as they effectively control more than half of the vast Sahel country. According to one diplomat, after inflicting a "major defeat" on the Malian army in the Tuareg region of Kidal, the rebel movements now occupy nearly two-thirds of the country and come to Algiers "in a position of strength." In May, at least fifty soldiers killed after clashes erupted between the Malian army and a coalition of rebels from the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) and the High Council for the Unity of Azawad (HCUA). A ceasefire obtained by Mauritanian leader, and African Union (AU) chief Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz has been in place since and although separatist demands have been officially dropped by those rebel Tuareg groups attending the talks, they are still demanding greater autonomy, which includes special status for northern Mali. Former Malian Prime Minister Modibo Keita, who is the president's envoy at the talks, has indicated that the upcoming negotiations will take place in three phases, stating that the different sides will begin by agreeing to a "road map" for the negotiations before beginning the talks themselves, which will end with the signing of a "final peace agreement."

- MS | RISK
- 10 July 2014 After holding talks with Burkina Faso's President, who has been mediating the conflict in • Mali, Algeria's Minister has proposed that a regional meeting, aimed at tackling the ongoing conflict in Mali, be held next week. Speaking to reporters late Wednesday in Ouagadougou, Algerian Foreign Minister Ramtane Lamamra stated "we offer to launch the initial phase of an inclusive inter-Malian dialogue on July 16 in Algiers, in the presence of ministers from countries in the region," adding "our role is...to enable Malians themselves to speak directly to each other and envisage the most appropriate solutions to help them." Algeria, which has also experienced fighting armed extremism, has become increasingly involved in diplomatic efforts that are aimed at bringing peace to Mali. The North African nation also shares a long border with the sub-Saharan state. While Burkina Faso's President Blaise Compaore, whose country lies to the south of Mali, was appointed mediator by the Economic Community of West African States in 2012, shortly after the conflict erupted in Mali, Algeria has lately taken the lead in peace talks between the Malian government and Tuareg groups. Late in May, fresh fighting erupted in northern Mali and saw the army pitted against armed groups, including the Tuareg separatist National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), as well as Arab forces. During the deadly offensive, the MNLA seized control of their traditional Tuareg bastion in Kidal, one of the three main towns in the desert north, 1,5000 kilometers (900 miles) northeast of the capital Bamako. On May 23, the current chairman of the African Union (AU), Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, brought about a ceasefire between the Malian government and the armed movements, which has held so far.

International Developments

• 16 July 2014 – Mali and France have agreed to a military cooperation plan aimed at fighting against Islamist militants in the West African nation's northern desert region. At the start of a two-day visit to the former French colony, French Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian signed the agreement alongside his Malian counter part Bah N'Daw. Speaking shortly afterwards to reporters in Bamako, Le Drian noted "this treaty will strengthen military cooperation between Mali and France in the fields of intelligence, training and information-sharing to ensure security on Malian territory and in the Sahel." The announcement of the military cooperation agreement comes just days after Paris announced that it was winding down operation Serval after eighteen months, adding that the operation will be replaced with a wider counter-terrorism operation, codenamed Barkhane, that will involve Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger and which will focus on security in the Sahel region. Around 3,000 French soldiers will take part in the operation, 1,000 of whom will remain stationed in northern Mali where a suicide bomber killed a French legionnaire earlier this week. An attack, which further underlined Mali's fragile security situation. Le Drian, who is on his eight visit to Mali in eighteen months, is due to meet with Colleagues of Dejvid Nikolic, the French legionnaire killed in a suicide attack near the city on Monday.



Mauritania

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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



Security Summary

Summary

Due to the current Ebola outbreak in Guinea, with 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.

Niger

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

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



Security Summary

MS Risk advises against all travel to the following parts of Niger: all areas of the country north of the city of Abalak, including the Air Massif region; the province of Agadez (including the road linking Assamakato Agadez and the city of

Agadez); areas of Tahoua province north of the city of Tahoua, including the city itself; the area of Tillaberi province north of Niamey, including the road from Niamey to Gao and the road from Niamey to Menaka; areas within 40 km of the border with Nigeria in Diffa, Zinder and Maradi provinces. MS Risk advises against all but essential travel to the rest of Niger, including the capital city of Niamey. There remains a high threat from, including kidnapping, in Niger. On 1 June 2013, three guards were killed and twenty-two inmates escaped from the main prison in Niamey during an attack by suspected Islamist militants. Travellers in Niamey should continue to monitor developments and be alert to announcements and remain vigilant at all times. On 23 May 2013, a military barracks in the town of Agadez and a uranium processing facility near the town of Arlit, approximately 150 miles north of Agadez, were attacked. A number of people were



killed and injured. The terrorist group which claimed responsibility for the two attacks has publicly threatened to carry out further attacks in Niger. On 14 May 2013, the Government of Nigeria declared a state of emergency in its northern states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. Both Borno and Yobe border southern Niger. Consequently there is a risk that instability may spill over the border from Nigeria to Niger. There is a high threat of kidnapping from terrorist groups including AQIM and MOJWA. These groups have kidnapped Westerners in Niger and in the wider Sahel region, including in Niamey and the north and west of Niger. Further kidnappings are likely to occur. There is a threat of retaliatory attacks in Niger, due to the country's participation in the French-led intervention in Mali. Levels of crime are high, especially in the capital city

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

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

On the Ground Reporting

18 July 2014 – As part of his African tour, which began in the Ivory Coast on Thursday, French President
Francois Hollande arrived in Niamey on Friday, where he will oversee the deployment of French troops in a
new operation aimed at battling radical Islamist movements in the Sahel region. Shortly after his arrival,
Hollande hosted high-level talks that covered security and development. Sources have also indicated that
President Hollande's agenda will include discussions on the exploitation of Niger's uranium, which is mined
by French Group Areva, which last month signed a new agreement with the government of Niger. The
President will also visit a detachment of the French Army in Niamey, where intelligence drones will be
launched.

Nigeria

Avoid ALL travel to part(s) of country

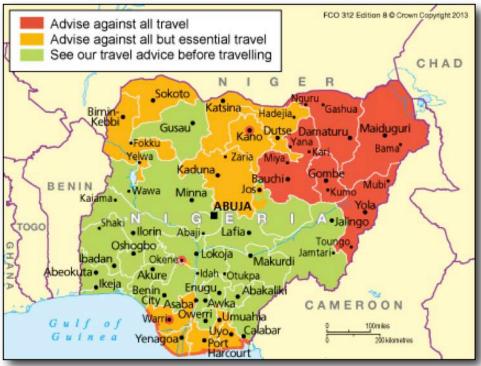
Avoid all but essential travel to part(s) of the country



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. On 16 July 2014, a German national was kidnapped near Gombi, in northeastern Nigeria. While no group has claimed responsibility for the kidnapping, officials in the region are blaming Boko Haram.

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

- 18 July 2014 Many people are feared dead after suspected Boko Haram militants attacked the town of Damboa, throwing explosives into residential homes and shooting dead civilians who attempted to flee the area. Eyewitnesses reported Friday that half the town was burnt down, including the main market. The latest attack to target the northern region of the country began Thursday night, with local residents reporting that fighting lasted until the early hours. Damboa, located 85 kilometers (53 miles) from the state capital Maiduguri, is now said to be deserted as many people have fled to the state capital Maidugur, seeking shelter in the palace of the area's top cleric, Umar Garbai El-Kanemi, also known as the Shehu of Borno. An official in Damboa's local government confirmed the attack, stating "the insurgents attacked the town from 6:30 PM (1730 GMT) on Thursday to the early hours of today," adding "they killed many people. Women and children fled into the bush....Those who could not flee surrendered and were killed by the insurgents." On July 6, the militants attacked a police station and an army camp in Damboa, chasing the security forces out of the town, which has been one of the hardest-hit areas during Boko Haram's five-year uprising. At the time, Nigeria's defense ministry indicated that the army had repelled that attack, adding that at least fifty insurgents were killed, however local residents have noted that since that attack, the town has been defended by local vigilante groups. Boko Haram's violent campaign to establish an Islamic state has killed thousands of people in recent years.
- 16 July 2014 On Wednesday, the relatives of some of the schoolgirls seized in a mass kidnapping by Boko Haram militants demanded that Nigeria's president meet everyone affected by the ordeal, noting that a hastily-arranged plan to meet only a select few was offensive. It has been more than three months since Boko Haram militants seized 276 girls from a secondary school in the northeastern town of Chibok. Facing increasing criticism over his government's handling of the incident, President Goodluck Jonathan has yet to meet with the parents of the hostages, or with the fifty-seven girls who managed to escape. Despite pledging to Pakistani education activist Malala Yousafzai during a meeting earlier this week that he would meet with the families of the abducted girls, a meeting scheduled for Tuesday was called off at the last minute, with the president's office indicating that the families had been manipulated by activists who are exploiting the hostage crisis in a bid to damage Jonathan politically ahead of next year's presidential elections. This has sparked anger in the Chibok community, with leaders stating that if the president truly wanted to make appeals for his disappointing response to the abducted girls. In May, Jonathan had scheduled to visit Chibok however he called off the visit at the last minute without providing any explanation.
 - Police officials reported late Wednesday that gunmen riding on motorcycles have kidnapped a German national in northeastern Nigeria. Adamawa police spokesman confirmed the incident, which occurred during the early morning hours in the town of Gombi, stating, "security agents are working

assiduously to track down the kidnappers and free the hostage." A German foreign ministry spokesman has indicated that he "was aware of the case" however the official declined to comment further. Residents in Gombi, located 100 kilometers (62 miles) from Yola, the capital of Adamawa state, have identified the hostage as an instructor at a government-run technical training center, disclosing that he was attacked by about twenty gunmen outside his home in the Anguwa Faransa neighborhood, the French quarters of the city, as he left for work. One local resident reported "the kidnappers were riding on 10 motorcycles, two on each, and laid ambush around the house of the German expatriate." No immediate claim of responsibility has been confirmed, however initial blame has fallen on Boko haram. While the militant group is opposed to schools teaching a so-called Western curriculum, and has in the past launched attacks targeting students and teachers, Ansaru, an offshoot of Boko Haram, has claimed responsibility for the kidnapping of at least eight foreigners in northern Nigeria since 2012. While the group has been largely dormant for more than a year, this latest kidnapping may signify that the group is ready to target foreigners in the region in a bid to fund the on going insurgency. The 2013 abduction, and subsequent release of a French family of seven, including four children, across Nigeria's northeastern border in Cameroon is believed to have netted Boko Haram a ransom payment of several million dollars.

• **15 July 2014** – Nigerian police officials disclosed Tuesday that they have arrested a senior Boko Haram commander, known as "Chief Butcher" during a raid on an insurgent camp in the restive northeast.

According to а statement released by police officials, Mohammed Zakari, 30, was arrested on Saturday "following the massive onslaught by security forces on the activities of the insurgent group" at Balmo Forest in Bauchi state. The statement further indicated that Zakari was implemented in "the slaughter seven recent of people, including women and children." While Zakari was not widely known to be a prominent Islamist leader, the group's command structure is seen as fractured, with reports indicating that there а number of autonomous cells operating across the north, which are headed by individuals who may not report to the group's recognized leaders. According to local police officials, Balmo Forest is one of several bases that is scattered across the





bushlands of the northeast and which is used by the militant group. Bauchi has experienced a number of deadly attacks throughout the militant group's five-year insurgency.

- A man alleged to be the co-mastermind of April's deadly bombing, that targeted a bus station on the outskirts of Abuja, was extradited to Nigeria on Tuesday. Nigerian police officials confirmed Tuesday that Aminu Sadiq Ogwuche was extradited from Sudan, adding "the terror fugitive who had long since been arrested in Sudan following an international red notice issued for his arrest." Interpol "Red Notices" are typically issued for wanted persons with a view to seeking their extradition. According to a source in Khartoum, Ogwuche arrived in the Sudanese capital late last year in order to study Arabic at the International University of Africa. He moved to Nigeria earlier this year. He was detained on May 13 as he attempted to get a visa from the Turkish embassy in central Khartoum. The attack in Nyanya, a suburb of Abuja, was claimed by Boko Haram and killed at least seventy-five people, making it the deadliest bombing to have occurred in the Nigerian capital.
- Despite hopes being raised that President Goodluck Jonathan would soon meet with the families of the more than 200 schoolgirls abducted from Chibok, a meeting he had pledged to Malala Yousafzai during their visit on Monday, the president on Tuesday accused activists of playing politics, stating that they had cancelled the meeting. While President Jonathan had been scheduled to meet with twelve parents and five girls, who had escaped shortly after being captured, a statement released by the presidency accused the activists, who started the #BringBackOurGirls campaign, of using the hostages plight in order "to play politics." Some of the president's allies are now claiming that the group is working with Jonathan's political opponents and that they are exploiting the kidnapping in order to further embarrass the government. However the Bring Back Our Girls campaign leader, Hadiza Bala Usman, has indicated that the activists had simply "requested that the meeting with the president be shifted until next week to allow for a larger representation," adding that it had been hastily organized following talks between the president and Pakistani education rights activist Malala Yousafzai.
- 14 July 2014 Suspected Boko Haram militants bombed a key bridge located on a northeast Nigerian highway. The bombing will further limit access to base camps in the Sambisa Forest were scores of kidnapped girls are believed to be held captive. According to Abbas Gava, spokesman for the Nigerian Vigilante group, on Saturday night gunmen destroyed most of the bridge on the road between Maiduguri and Biu, adding "the bridge has now collapsed and it is impossible for vehicles to cross over the bridge from either side." This is the fourth major bridge to be destroyed in the area in recent months.
 - Pakistani rights activist Malala Yousafzai has met with Nigeria's President Goodluck Jonathan in a bid to press for more action in order to free the more than 200 girls who are being held by Boko Haram militants. The meeting comes just one day after the militant's leader reiterated in a new video that he is prepared to negotiate a prisoner swap for them. Malala, who survived a Taliban assassination attempt in 2012 and has become a champion for access to schooling, was in Abuja on her 17th birthday in order to mark three months since Boko Haram abducted 276 girls from a secondary school in Chibok, in the northeastern region of Nigeria. At least 219 of the girls taken on April 14 are still missing. On Monday, she met with President Jonathan in the Nigerian capital city, and urged him to meet with the families of the kidnapped girls. The meeting came one day after the young activist met with relatives of the girls, and expressed solidarity with them. Sources have confirmed that the president has yet to meet with the relatives of the missing girls, adding that it is highly unusual that he has not spoken to them. The source further noted that the military has also



failed to debrief some of the girls who managed to escape from captivity. While the president had planned to go to Chibok in May to commiserate with the targeted community, he cancelled the visit at the last minute without any explanation. However in a statement released shortly after his meeting with Malala, President Jonathan indicated that he would meet with the parents "to personally comfort them and reassure them" that the government was doing "all within its powers to rescue their daughters." The statement further indicated that the notion that the government has not been doing enough to find and rescue the girls was "very wrong and misplaced," adding "terror is relatively new here and dealing with it has its challenges. The great challenge in rescuing the Chibok girls is the need to ensure that they are rescued alive." The president's government has faced strong criticism for not doing enough to curb violence by Boko Haram, with this criticism increasing in the wake of the kidnappings.

- At least 38 people have been killed following a raid carried out by suspected Boko Haram gunmen on a village in northeastern Nigeria, with sources indicating that a military aerial bombardment targeted fleeing residents who were mistaken for the insurgents. According to local residents, the attack on the Christian farming village of Dille in Askira Uba district, located 200 kilometers (125 miles) from the regional capital Maiduguri, occurred late Sunday through Monday and resulted in the burning of the entire village, including three churches. Sources have indicated that around 11:00 PM (2200 GMT) Sunday dozens of gunmen in all terrain vehicles and on motorcycles stormed the village, which is located near the Sambisa forest where insurgents are known to maintain camps, firing indiscriminately and throwing grenades and explosives into homes. Locals went into the bush where they passed the night however when they tried to return to their homes Monday morning, the attackers opened fire on them from the hills over looking the village where they had taken cover. The attack followed an earlier raid on Buttuku village in neighboring Adamawa. Local sources have also reported that panicked residents, who attempted to take a bus out of the village, were mistaken for fleeing insurgents by military fighter jets that are deployed in the area in order to repel the attackers. While the military and police in Maiduguri have not commented on this incident, a military source did confirm the Boko Haram raid and the deployment of two fighter jets, which repelled the attacks and killed "many." No other details however have been released.
- 13 July 2014 In a new video released Sunday, Boko Haram's leader has claimed responsibility for a • bombing in the capital Abuja and an attack, which occurred hours later in Lagos, which local authorities have attempted to cover up. In the new 16-minute video, Boko Haram chief Abubakar Shekau also voices his support for the extremist Sunni Islamic State (ISIS) militants who have taken over large areas of territory in Syria and Iraq, and mocks the social media and protest campaign Bring Back Our Girls, which emerged shortly after the militant group kidnapped more than 200 schoolgirls from the remote northeastern town of Chibok. Speaking during the video, Shekau confirms "we were the ones who detonated the bomb in filthy Abuja," a reference to the June 25 attack on a popular shopping center located in the heart of the capital city, which killed at least twenty-two people. He further adds, "a bomb went off in Lagos. I ordered the bomber who went and detonated it," adding "you said it was a fire incident...well, if you hide it from people, you can't hide it from Allah." The militant group's leader makes reference to a large explosion that rocked the Apapa port district of Lagos on June 25. While authorities initially blamed the incident on a cooking gas explosion, stating that there were no casualties in the incident, the Nigerian government has since conceded that it was too soon to determine if the Lagos blast was a bombing, adding that investigations are ongoing. Sources however believe that the Lagos attack was likely carried out by a local militant cell with either loose or no ties to Boko haram's core leadership, which is located in the northeast of Nigeria. Prior to



the June 25 attack, Lagos had not been hit by the Islamist militants. If confirmed by officials, an escalation of violence in the city will likely have devastating consequences for the government of President Goodluck Jonathan, who has already been under tense criticism over his handling of the insurgency and the abduction of 200 schoolgirls in April. It will also demonstrate the Boko Haram militants are now capable of carrying out deadly attacks anywhere in the country.

- 12 July 2014 Nigerian police officials warned Saturday that more terrorist attacks are likely to occur in Abuja, where more than one hundred people have been killed in bombings that have occurred since April this year. Police officers are now claiming that they have "credible intelligence reports" of suicide attacks being planned on the city's transport system, with terrorists also plotting to detonate improvised explosive devices that have been concealed in bags, cans and luggage. Police officials are urging people in Abuja to remain vigilant at all times, adding security forces are working to "deal with the threat." On April 14, Boko Haram claimed responsibility for a bombing that occurred in the main bus station in Nyanay, which is located on the outskirts of Abuja. That attack killed seventy-five people. A car bomb in the same area two weeks later killed nineteen and left eighty others injured while twenty-one people were killed on June 25 at a crowded Abuja shopping center. All of these attacks have been blamed on Boko Haram. While the militant group's five-year insurgency had previously only focused on northern Nigeria, the on going military operation has effectively pushed the militants out of the main city centers and into the surrounding villages, with some militants reportedly moving further south towards Abuja and Lagos.
- 8 July 2014 According to sources, Nigerian authorities are believed to have covered up a bomb attack in
 - the financial capital Lagos by claiming that a blast, which erupted near a major fuel department, was an industrial accident and not a terrorist attack. On June 25, the explosion ripped through an area of Nigeria's largest city. The explosion occurred just hours after a Boko Haram car bombing in the administrative capital Abuja, which killed twenty-one people and which sharply increased fears that the group's deadly campaign was spreading out of northern Nigeria and into the central and southern areas of the country. The blast in Lagos, which occurred in the Apapa district, on a main road feeding Nigeria's busiest port in an area that also houses most of the city's fuel depots, was

The Lagos car bomb blast

blamed by officials on a cooking gas cylinder, which exploded. No casualties have been reported. However on the ground sources have indicated, "this was definitely an incident involving the use of high explosives," with one source stating "the type of blast effects and fragmentation pattern you would get from a gas explosion are quite different." Senior foreign diplomats have also indicated that the blast was deliberate and not an accident, and have attributed the official denials to fears over the potential effects that a confirmed first attack on Lagos, which drives the country's economy, may have on the entire country. While the first suggestions of an attack in Lagos appeared on social networking sites after 8:30 PM (1930 GMT) on June 25, they failed to gain wider attention mainly because of government denials coupled with

the deadly bombing in Abuja. Although denials, or no comments, from the Nigerian government are not uncommon, especially involving Boko Haram, questions continue to linger about the Apapa incident as Lagos has so far escaped the violence that has affected northern Nigeria. Lagos is home to some 20 million people as well as major overseas companies in key sectors such as gas and oil. The city is also seen as a major gateway to trade within the wider West African region. While there have been no claims of responsibility for the attack, since June 25 the Lagos state government has ordered tighter security at key fuel and infrastructure installations. It has also increased state hospitals' capacity to deal with mass casualty emergencies, with state health commissioner Jide Idris stating that these measures included blood stocks and purchasing new ambulances along with putting all emergency units on stand-by. He however noted that these measures were only being carried out because of the current countrywide state of alert.

- 7 July 2014 Security sources indicated Monday that more than sixty women and girls are reported to • have escaped from captivity. Reports have indicated that more than sixty women and girls have escaped from the Nigerian Islamist group Boko Haram. They are believed to be from a group of sixty-eight women who were kidnapped last month near the town of Damboa in north-eastern Borno state. Boko Haram is still holding more than 200 schoolgirls who were abducted in April of this year. Security sources have indicated that the women escaped when the militants went to attack a military base near Damboa on Friday. The Nigerian military has reported that its troops killed more than fifty rebels during clashes that occurred that night. Due to on going insecurities in the region, coupled with poor access to the area, the number of women who managed to escape from Boko Haram remains unclear. However a local vigilante has reported receiving an alert from his colleagues indicating that about sixty-three abducted women and girls had made it back home late on Friday. Meanwhile frustration continues to grow as more than 200 schoolgirls kidnapped in Chibok, Borno state, on April 14 are still being held captive. Activists of the Bring Back Our Girls movement attempted to march towards the presidential palace in Abuja on Sunday however they were turned back by security forces. According to one activist, Aisha Yesufu, "it's 83 days today that the girls have been abducted....We have been coming out for 68 days and nobody has really listened to us." Nigeria's overstretched and under-resourced military has been incapable of fighting Boko Haram's insurgency, which has already killed thousands over the past five years.
 - Meanwhile residents reported Monday that suspected Boko Haram militants, disguised in army uniforms, have killed seven people in an attack near the northeastern border with Cameroon. Sources have indicated that the gunmen, five of whom were killed in the attack, razed a police station and a military camp during the late Sunday attack. Abor Grema, a resident of the targeted Krenuwa village in Marte district has reported "the gunmen split into three groups and launched simultaneous attacks on the military camp, the police station and other buildings in the village," adding that six residents were shot dead during Sunday's raid while a member of a local vigilante group was also killed. Marte was one of the areas in Borno State where Boko Haram militants chased out the government last year. That prompted President Goodluck Jonathan to declare a state of emergency in the region, which was followed by the launch of the on going military offensive, which is aimed at ending the five-year insurgency. Escalating violence along the border region between Nigeria and Cameroon, coupled with Boko Haram carrying out attacks within Cameroon, have prompted local officials to call for a more coordinated regional effort against the insurgents. Nigeria has long stated that Boko Haram fighters are known to flee across Cameroon's porous borders in order to evade capture after carrying out attacks on Nigerian soil. While Cameroonian officials have deployed additional soldiers to monitor the border region, Boko Haram militants have continued to successfully carry out attacks in the region.

 A police spokesman confirmed Monday that Nigerian police have uncovered a plot to bomb a secondary school in northeastern Gombe, with officials stating that militants were planning to defuse a car laden with explosives that had been abandoned there. During a press conference, Fwaje Attajiri indicated that following a tip-off, police experts found twelve improvised explosives concealed in a car that was abandoned on the premises of the state-run Pilot secondary school. He further noted "the explosives had the capacity of causing maximum damage and would have caused huge casualty had they detonated in the school with a high student population," adding that an investigation had been launched in order to establish who was behind the foiled attack. The spokesman however refused to indicate whether Boko Haram militants were to blame. The militant group has in the past carried out a number of deadly attacks that have targeted schools located in the northeastern region of Nigeria. As a result of such attacks, Gombe, which has been previously hit by Boko Haram extremists, was forced to close its schools three weeks ahead of vacations in March following fears that the militant group would carry out attacks. Similarly in Borno state, officials closed public secondary schools and sent over 120,000 students home in March. Over the past year, the militants have killed more than 100 students in attacks that targeted schools in nearby Yobe state. In April, the insurgents abducted more than 200 schoolgirls in the town of Chibok in Borno state, drawing global outrage. Officials in northern Nigeria have voiced their concerns that the ongoing insurgency will have an impact on the education of young students in the region.

Domestic News

16 July 2014 - On Wednesday, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan sought approval from parliament to • borrow up to US \$1 billion (£580 million) abroad to help the armed forces tackle the security threat posed by Boko Haram. In his statement to Parliament, which was read to deputies by the leaders of the Senate and House of Representatives, the President stated "you are no doubt cognizant of the on-going and serious security challenges which the nation is facing as typified by the Boko Haram terrorist threat," adding "for this reason, I seek the concurrence of the National Assembly for external borrowing of not more than \$1 billion." The president noted that this loan would be used to upgrade the equipment, training and logistics of the security forces and that such a loan could include a "government to government arrangement," however he did not name any specific foreign country. Nigeria's parliament is expected to debate the issue at a time when Boko Haram's five-year insurgency has gained international attention. Furthermore, his request is likely to raise some questions as Nigeria's 2014 budget already includes nearly US \$6 billion in security spending while the government is facing allegations put forth by former central bank governor, Lamido Sanusi, who has stated that billions of dollars of oil revenues are failing to reach the national treasury. While Nigeria's military is currently receiving training, advise and intelligence support from allies, including Britain, France, Israel and the United States, it is still struggling to counter the almost daily raids, frequent kidnappings and targeted bomb attacks carried out by Boko Haram militants. President Jonathan's government has also been accused of not doing enough to protect civilians from such attacks. Update (18 July 2014) - Nigeria's National Assembly has broken up for a two-month recess, effectively meaning that approval for the loan will have to wait until at least September. Once Parliament is back in session, both the lower and upper houses will debate the loan request. It will then pass the request to the committee and then back to the chamber for approval. If however the chambers differ on the request, a joint committee will be formed in order to reach an agreement on the amount the loan should be set at. Sources in Nigeria have indicated that the loan would likely have not been approved prior to the National Assembly breaking for annual recess as it is an issue that would have taken at least several days to debate prior to approval being gained.

- 15 July 2014 The governor of Nigeria's northeastern Adamawa state, one of three areas that is currently • under a state of emergency, was impeached Tuesday over corruption charges. Murtala Nyako has denied the allegations while his party, the All Progressives Congress (APC), has vowed to fight the decision in court. The deputy governor, Bala James Ngillari, the next in line to run the state, resigned shortly prior to the approval of the impeachment motion. Pending an election, which must be held within ninety days, state assembly speaker Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri will serve as interim governor. Nyako's political problems began last year when he was amongst a group of power governors who guit President Goodluck Jonathan's ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) in order to join the opposition APC. He has also fiercely criticized President Jonathan's decision to include Adamawa in the states that were placed under emergency rule in May 2013, arguing that Adamawa had been minimally touched by Boko Haram's violence and claiming that the state of emergency had been imposed as an attempt by the president to sideline a rival. While the Islamist violence in Adamawa has been less intense in comparison to neighboring Borno state, the state has seen a series of lethal attacks, which have been blamed on Boko Haram, including a massacre that targeted university students. As Nyako's dispute with President Jonathan continued to escalate, the 25member Adamawa state assembly, which is dominated by the PDP, launched a corruption probe, that included examining claims that the governor had lavishly spent public funds while hosting senior APC leader Muhammadu Buhari.
- 9 July 2014 On Wednesday, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan appointed four close allies as • ministers, with sources indicating that two of them will likely attempt to increase the president's power base in the largely Muslim north, where opposition to him and his party is the strongest. The ministerial positions had been left vacant since a government reshuffling occurred last year. Ibrahim Shakaru, a popular twoterm ex-governor of the Kano, was appointed minister of education. Kano is a stronghold of the opposition All Progressives Congress (APC) party and it is the most important northern battleground for Jonathan's People's Democratic Party (PDP). Abdul Bulama, a former science lecturer from Yobe state, was named the new minister of science and technology. Yobe, which is one of three states currently under the state of emergency, is also an opposition APC stronghold. Steve Oruh, who comes from the oil producing Niger Delta, which is also President Jonathan's home region, is the new minister for the Niger Delta while Adebayo Adeyeye was named minister of state for works. Jonathan and the ruling PDP are currently facing unpopularity ahead of the upcoming 2015 elections, which are likely to be the most closely fought since the end of military rule in 1999. President Jonathan has also been beleaguered by a number of defections of senior figures, coupled with criticism of his government's failure to defeat Boko Haram. This criticism has worsened in the wake of the abduction of more than 200 schoolgirls from a remote northeastern village in April.

Regional Reporting

MS RISK

 10 July 2014 – According to a South African intelligence assessment, Nigeria faces a prolonged battle to end Boko Haram's ongoing insurgency despite a "hardline" campaign that has witnessed rights bases by both the state and the militants. A National Defense Force Intelligence division briefing, delivered to visiting Chinese Defense Minister Chang Wanquan on Tuesday, offered a blunt assessment of Africa's crises, which including Nigeria's on going fight against Boko Haram and its offshoot Ansaru. According to the briefing, the Nigerian government in Abuja faces a "prolonged armed insurgency" with little prospect for

resolution, adding that the "security situation in Nigeria is expected to deteriorate." The report also indicated, "prospects for conflict resolution are likely to remain bleak - government persists in a hardline counter-insurgency response to the crisis that has degenerated into human rights abuses by the state and militants alike." Over the past five-years, thousands have been killed as a result of Boko Haram's insurgency, which has long been a worry for regional governments. Following the April kidnapping of more than 200 schoolgirls from the remote northeastern town of Chibok, in Borno state, the insurgency has gained worldwide attention and has resulted in increasing criticism of the Nigerian president. In recent months, deadly bombings and killings have become an almost daily occurrence. In the wake of three car bombings in Abuja, and a similar attack in Lagos, in which officials are currently investigating to confirm whether it was an accident or a terrorist attack, there are now heightened fears that Boko Haram is spreading throughout the country. While security experts have indicated that the overstretched and underresourced Nigerian military is now incapable of fighting an effective counter-insurgency against a militant group that is believed to have ties to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and rights groups, including Amnesty International (AI), have accused the Nigerian authorities of carrying out hundreds of extrajudicial killings and disappearances every year the Nigerian government has repeatedly rejected these accusations. In examining other on going security issues in Nigeria, the South African intelligence agency also warned Chinese officials of a "threat of increased militancy in the Niger Delta," the oil-producing region of Nigeria, as well as the rising threat of piracy off the country's coast. According to the intelligence report, "attacks are launched primarily from Nigeria, with the aim of stealing from vessels," adding "levels of violence are higher..." in the Gulf of Guinea then in piracy cases off the coast of Somalia. The report also provided a security overview of several other African regions, including the "ongoing lawlessness" and "widespread humanitarian crisis" in the Central African Republic, adding that Christian anti-balaka groups and "rogue elements" made up of members of former armed forces were "becoming increasingly organized" but with no clear political objective. Meanwhile in Somalia, the Defense Intelligence report stated that it believed that the end of a partial suspension of a UN arms embargo would "assist in developing the security sector," however it warned that there is a "risk of weapons finding their way to al-Shabaab or other hostile militias."

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

7 July 2014 – Mohamed Dionne, 54, a close aid to Senegal's President, has been named the country's new prime minister, just two days after the resignation of his predecessor. Dionne will be the third prime minister to serve under President Macky Sall after former banker Abdoul Mbaye and Aminata Toure, a former justice minister. His appointment was confirmed by a presidential decree that was read on state TRS radio and television. Aminata Toure was removed from the position last Friday, less than a week after her ruling party was beaten in local elections. While prior to the elections, the APR controlled only a few towns and was



hoping to reinforce its local support bases, a number of the ruling party's members running in the local polls were defeated in their strongholds, a blow for the Alliance for the Republic party that was headed by Toure. Toure was the second woman prime minister in Senegal after Madior Boye, who headed the government between March 2001 and November 2002.



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