



**MS | RISK**

## **West Africa Report**

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

**September 1 - 14, 2014**

## About MS Risk

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

References are always available.  
More information is found at [www.msrisk.com](http://www.msrisk.com)

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## Summary

September 1 - 14, 2014



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### Sahel Region

#### *Regional Reporting*

- **12 September 2014** – New data released by the World Health Organization (WHO) on Friday indicated that the worst-ever outbreak of the Ebola virus has now claimed more than 2,400 lives and infected twice the number.
- **11 September 2014** – Red Cross officials disclosed Thursday that they are planning to train more than 2,000 additional volunteers in a bid to step up its response to the deadly Ebola outbreak.
- **5 September 2014** – The European Union (EU) announced Friday that it will provide US \$183 million in funds to fight the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, a sharp increase over its previous aid, and which reflects the worsening of the outbreak.

- **3 September 2014** – African Union (AU) officials announced Wednesday that they will hold an emergency meeting next week aimed at developing a continent-wide strategy in order to deal with the Ebola epidemic.

### *International Developments*

- **9 September 2014** – Officials in Washington revealed Tuesday that the United States will contribute US \$10 million that will pay for medical workers and equipment to fight the deadly Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

## **The Gambia**

- **9 September 2014** – On Tuesday, Gambian customs officials confirmed that they have closed the country's borders to Guineans, Liberians, Nigerians and Sierra Leoneans, noting however that the border has not been closed with neighboring Senegal.

## **Ghana**

- **5 September 2014** – According to Ghana's Deputy Finance Minister Mona Helen Quarterly, the country hopes to reach an agreement on a potential assistance programme with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) by November, however which form the assistance could take is yet to be decided.

## **Guinea**

- **3 September 2014** – On Wednesday, Guinea's government confirmed that the Ebola virus has now spread to a previously unaffected region of the country.

## **Ivory Coast**

### *On the Ground Reporting*

- **2 September 2014** – Officials in the Ivory Coast have decided to open humanitarian corridors to neighboring states Guinea and Sierra Leone, both of which have been hard hit by the deadly Ebola virus, however officials have opted to continue to keep its main borders with the two states closed.
- **1 September 2014** – The headquarters of the party of former Ivorian president Laurent Gbagbo were attacked on Monday, with three people left injured.

### *Domestic News*

- **9 September 2014** – On Tuesday, the Ivory Coast's opposition parties suspended their participation in an electoral commission that was formed in a bid to prepare for the upcoming presidential elections in October 2015, citing their objection to the re-election of the commission's chairman.

### *International Developments*

- **11 September 2014** – On Thursday, officials at the International Criminal Court (ICC) confirmed that Ivory Coast's former president Laurent Gbagbo will face trial for crimes against humanity.

## **Liberia**

### *On the Ground Reporting*

- **11 September 2014** – FIFA officials have announced that a large football stadium in Monrovia will be converted to house two large Ebola treatment units.

- **8 September 2014** – World Health Organization (WHO) officials warned Tuesday that the Ebola virus is spreading exponentially in Liberia, with thousands of new cases expected to be reported in the next three weeks.
- **1 September 2014** – On Monday, Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf extended the stay-home order imposed on all non-essential government employees for another month.
  - Nurses at Liberia's largest hospital went on strike Monday, demanding better pay and equipment to protect them against the Ebola epidemic.

### *Domestic News*

- **14 September 2014** - On Sunday, Liberia's President dismissed ten senior government officials who defied an order to return to the West African nation in order to lead the fight against the deadly Ebola outbreak.
- **9 September 2014** – Following a new World Health Organization (WHO) assessment, indicating that the worst of the Ebola outbreak is yet to come, Liberia's defense minister warned Tuesday that the deadly virus is now threatening the very existence of the country as the virus is now spreading like "wild fire."

## **Mali**

### *On the Ground Reporting*

- **14 September 2014** – A spokesman for the UN mission in Mali disclosed Sunday that one peacekeeper has been killed and four others have been wounded near the volatile northern town of Kidal.
- **12 September 2014** – According to security sources, a suspected lieutenant of al-Qaeda-linked Algerian jihadist commander Mokhtar Belmokhtar has been arrested in the northern region of Mali.
- **2 September 2014** – Four United Nations peacekeepers were killed Tuesday when their truck was blown up in northern Mali.

### *Regional Reporting*

- **1 September 2014** - On Monday, a second round of peace talks between the Malian government and separatist militias will begin in Algiers.

### *International Developments*

- **12 September 2014** – The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has restarted talks on reviewing an aid programme for Mali and has resumed aid payments to the West African country, which were halted by the IMF and World Bank earlier this year.

## **Mauritania**

- **10 September 2014** – Officials in Mauritania disclosed Thursday that the country is pushing back its weekend to start on Saturday, instead of Friday, in a bid to move into line with the rest of the world.

## **Niger**

### *On the Ground Reporting*

- **6 September 2014** – A top court in Niger has given the green light for the arrest of the country's parliamentary leader, who is accused of being involved in an international baby-trafficking network.
- **4 September 2014** – The United Nations revealed Thursday that at least twenty-eight people have been killed, and more than 51,000 affected, by flooding in Niger after heavy rains in June inundated areas of the country.



- **3 September 2014** – The United States is preparing to redeploy drones already in Niger in a bid to increase operations in the Sahara region.

### *Domestic News*

- **1 September 2014** – The government of Niger, which is one of the world's poorest countries, has provoked anger with the recent purchase of a US \$40 million presidential jet.

## Nigeria

### *On the Ground Reporting*

- **13 September 2014** – Local residents reported Saturday that Boko Haram militants attacked a market outside the key northeast Nigerian city of Maiduguri.
- **12 September 2014** – Traditional elders in Borno state warned this week that Nigeria's militant Islamists have "completely surrounded" Maiduguri, noting that the military now needed to "fortify" the city, which has a population of more than two million, in order to prevent an assault "from all directions."
- **10 September 2014** – According to a spokesman for President Goodluck Jonathan, the head of state has ordered the removal of signs and banners that mimic the social media campaign to release more than 200 schoolgirls kidnapped in April.
  - Witnesses reported Wednesday that Nigeria's military has launched ground and air offensives against Boko Haram militants in a bid to recapture the northeastern town of Michika, which fell to the militant group this past weekend.
  - Nigeria's aviation authorities revealed Wednesday that there was no evidence to support recent US claims that one of its air marshals was attacked as he attempted to board a flight in Lagos.
- **9 September 2014** – The son of Nigeria's former President Olusegun Obasanjo has been shot and wounded in a battle with militant Islamists.
  - According to the country's police chief, twenty Nigerian police officers are still missing, three weeks after Boko Haram fighters attacked a training academy located outside the remote northeast town of Gwoza.
- **6 September 2014** – Thousands of fear-stricken residents in a number of towns and villages in Nigeria's northeastern Adamawa state have fled their homes after Nigerian troops failed to recapture a major town seized by Boko Haram militants.
- **5 September 2014** – Although Nigeria's military on Friday confirmed that the increasing attacks carried out by Boko Haram militants were now developing into a challenge to the country's sovereignty, officials however have rejected claims that the country's military was in denial about the seriousness of the growing threat.
- **3 September 2014** – Foreign ministers from Nigeria, and a number of neighboring states, met on Wednesday in order to discuss the Boko Haram threat as the militant group's recent seizure of land in the far northeast of the country has raised fears for regional security.
  - According to residents, Boko Haram militants have captured the town of Banki, which borders Cameroon, after government troops fled the area.
  - Officials announced on Wednesday that a seventh person has died from Ebola while another has been confirmed to have contracted the deadly virus.
- **2 September 2014** – After hours of fighting, which killed scores and displaced thousands of residents, several security sources reported Tuesday that Boko Haram insurgents have taken control of the second largest city in Borno state in northeastern Nigeria.
- **1 September 2014** – On Monday, Boko Haram militants launched a pre-dawn raid on Nigerian troops as they were preparing to launch a major offensive in a bid to retake a town that the group's leader declared part of his Islamic caliphate.

### *Domestic News*

- **7 September 2014** – A statement released by the Nigerian president's office on Sunday has indicated that Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan and his Chadian counterpart, Idris Deby Itno, will meet this week in order to discuss how to tackle the insurgency and arms smuggling that is occurring across their borders.
- **5 September 2014** – On Friday, Nigeria's former vice president Atiku Abubakar became the country's first high profile politician to announce his candidacy for next year's presidential elections.

### *International Developments*

- **4 September 2014** – United States officials are increasingly becoming concerned over Boko Haram's recent upsurge in violence and territorial gains in Nigeria, warning that the deteriorating situation threatened the future of Africa's largest country.

## Senegal

- **10 September 2014** – Senegal's health ministry revealed Wednesday that a Guinean student, who was Senegal's only confirmed case in the deadly Ebola outbreak, has recovered.
- **8 September 2014** – On Monday, Senegal's government confirmed that it has decided to open a "humanitarian corridor" to neighboring states affected by the Ebola outbreak.
- **2 September 2014** – On Tuesday, the son of former Senegalese president Abdoulaye Wade told an anti-corruption court that his prosecution was a conspiracy masterminded by the current leader in a bid to stop him for running in the upcoming presidential election.
- **1 September 2014** – Senegalese authorities on Monday continued to monitor everyone who came in contact with a student infected with Ebola who crossed into the country and who has lost three family members to the deadly disease.

## Sierra Leone

### *On the Ground Reporting*

- **10 September 2014** – Sierra Leonean officials disclosed Wednesday that they expect to uncover up to 20 percent more Ebola victims when the country imposes a nationwide curfew on the 19<sup>th</sup> of this month.
- **8 September 2014** - According to the international development secretary, Britain is to set up a medical center that will treat victims of the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone.
- **6 September 2014** – In a bid to contain the Ebola epidemic, a government spokesman disclosed Saturday that Sierra Leone will enforce a three day "complete shutdown" across the country later this month.

### *Domestic News*

- **10 September 2014** – Sierra Leone's Finance Minister revealed Wednesday that the Ebola crisis has had a devastating impact on the economy, with growth projections scaled back to single digits for the first time since the country's mining boom began in 2011.

### *International Developments*

- **12 September 2014** – Cuban officials announced Friday that they will deploy 165 health workers to help tackle the Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

# 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 an Ebola virus outbreak in Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. While Benin currently has no confirmed cases of the Ebola virus, MS Risk advises all travellers to remain cautious, including maintaining strict standards of hygiene and avoiding eating bush meat.

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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### Guinea-Bissau

There are currently no travel restrictions for Guinea-Bissau. An outbreak of the Ebola virus disease has been confirmed in Guinea, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Liberia. While there currently are no confirmed Ebola cases in Guinea-Bissau, the country has taken preventative measures, including closing all land borders with Guinea. MS Risk advises all travellers to Guinea-Bissau to take the necessary precautions, including maintaining strict standards of hygiene and avoiding eating bush meat.

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.

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**Togo**

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

## Sahel Region

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

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

### Security Summary

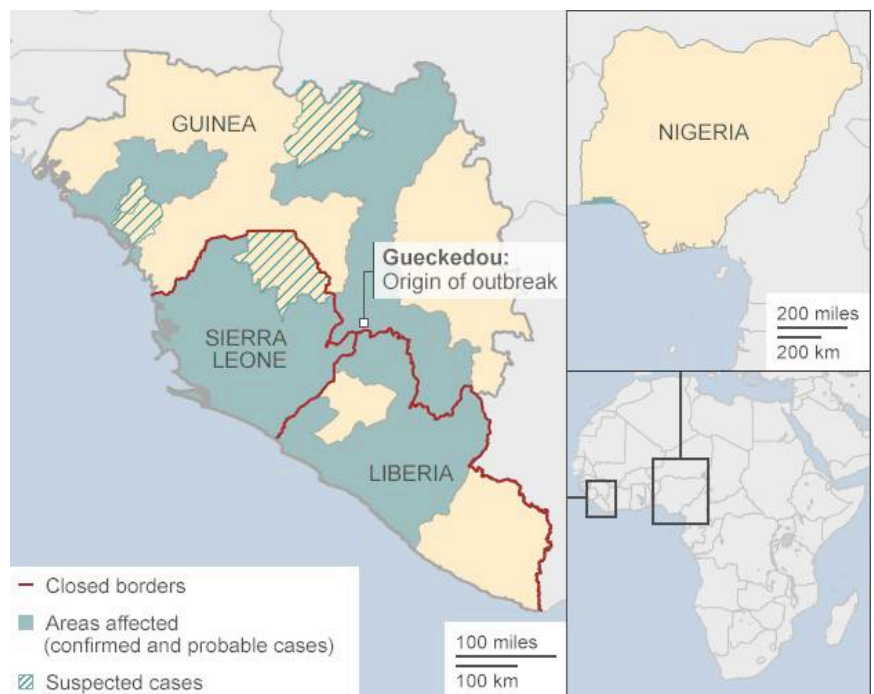
On 8 August the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the Ebola outbreak a public health emergency of international concern. The current Ebola outbreak affects Nigeria, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Some airlines have suspended flights to the affected countries due to the deteriorating public health situation. MS Risk advises all to carefully assess your need to travel to these countries. If you do decide to travel, we advise that you make sure you have adequate arrangements in place for onward travel/exit and have adequate emergency health provisions.

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

- **12 September 2014** – New data released by the World Health Organization (WHO) on Friday indicated that the worst-ever outbreak of the Ebola virus has now claimed more than 2,400 lives and infected twice the



number. According to Dr Margaret Chan, the head of the UN health agency, “as of 12 September, we are at 4,784 cases and more than 2,400 deaths,” noting “in the three hardest-hit countries, the number is moving faster than the capacity to manage them.” Dr Chan has warned that the spiraling epidemic now demands a stronger and faster response from the international community.

- **11 September 2014** – Red Cross officials disclosed Thursday that they are planning to train more than 2,000 additional volunteers in a bid to step up its response to the deadly Ebola outbreak. According to Alasan Senghore, head of the International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC) and Red Crescent Societies’ Africa Unit, “with dozens of new cases emerging daily, this outbreak is showing no signs of slowing down...if we are serious about stopping Ebola, we cannot afford to delay ramping up our response.” Since the outbreak began at the beginning of this year, IFRC officials have indicated that they have trained some 3,500 volunteers across the three hardest-hit countries – Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone – noting that they are now planning to increase that number to over 5,600. IFRC officials have also indicated that they have significantly increased their appeal for funds, to 30.2 million Swiss francs (US \$32.3 million) an increase of 24 million francs over its last estimate, in order to cover their activities in the three countries. These funds will allow the IFRC to reach 21.9 million people, more than double the number it had originally targeted, as it expands its operations into new districts and countries where they will focus heavily on communication and awareness raising. These funds will also cover the costs of a new 60-bed Ebola treatment unit in Sierra Leone’s hardest-hit Kenema district. Organization officials have also disclosed that they have launched an emergency appeal for 1.6 million Swiss francs in order to fund its operations in Nigeria, where Ebola has so far killed eight people, adding that they have also released funds in order to scale up their response in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which has also been hit by an outbreak of a separate strain of the Ebola virus, which has killed thirty-five people so far.
- **5 September 2014** – The European Union (EU) announced Friday that it will provide US \$183 million in funds to fight the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, a sharp increase over its previous aid, and which reflects the worsening of the outbreak. European Commission spokesman David Sharrock told reporters the package will provide “...funding for all the countries currently affected by the Ebola virus,” noting that the aid was necessary in order to boost measures aimed at stopping the “worst ever outbreak of the epidemic” from ravaging Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Nigeria. Sources have revealed that the aid is designed to boost overstretched health services, fund mobile laboratories for detecting the disease, safeguard the provision of food, water and sanitation as well as help the broader economy and strengthen overall public services. According to sources, about a third of the assistance will go towards strengthening the healthcare systems of the affected countries.
- **3 September 2014** – African Union (AU) officials announced Wednesday that they will hold an emergency meeting next week aimed at developing a continent-wide strategy in order to deal with the Ebola epidemic. According to the AU’s Executive Council, next Monday’s meetings, which will be held at the body’s headquarters in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa, will also “deliberate on the suspension of flights, and maritime and border closures, as well as stigmatization of the affected countries and their nationals,” adding “the council’s emergency meeting has been necessitated by the need to have a common understanding of the Ebola Virus Disease and current status of the response and to come up with a collective continental approach, taking into account the socio-political and economic impact of the disease.” The AU’s Executive Council also noted that concerns have been raised by some member states that decisions by other African nations to close borders and to halt flights “could have serious socio-economic and cultural effects, and could ultimately lead to increased suffering.” New statistics released by the World Health Organization (WHO) Wednesday indicated that more than 1,900 people have died in the Ebola outbreak. The latest toll

represents a significant increase from the 1,552 deaths and 3,069 cases that were reported by the WHO just days ago. **Update (8 September 2014)** – AU members disclosed Monday that travel bans imposed to stem the deadly Ebola epidemic should be lifted in order to ensure that the economic impact of the restrictions do not add to the continent's growing issues. According to AU Commission chief Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, "it was agreed that as African member states we should urge all member states to lift all travel bans, so that people can move between countries, and to trade and to open up the economic activities," noting "...it was also stressed that whilst the travel ban should be lifted, there should be proper screening mechanisms put in place, both at the countries where citizens will be departing and at the ports of entry, whether its airports, or land ports of entry or sea ports." In a bid to halt the spread of the virus, some affected countries have imposed quarantines on whole regions while countries currently unaffected by the outbreak have opted to halt flights to the affected countries. This move however has been sharply criticized by the WHO and other officials, who note that such border closures only hamper trade, resulting in the rise of food prices and prevent medical staff from reaching the affected areas. It currently remains unclear whether any of the countries that have closed their borders or have halted flights to the affected countries will reverse these bans.

## International Developments

- **9 September 2014** – Officials in Washington revealed Tuesday that the United States will contribute US \$10 million that will pay for medical workers and equipment to fight the deadly Ebola outbreak in West Africa. According to the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the funds will help finance a deployment by the African Union (AU) of doctors, nurses and other medical personnel to Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. The funds provided by USAID and the State Department will be used to transport to the affected region a contingent of about 25 doctors and 45 nurses, as well as other medical staff tasked with running Ebola treatment units, where patients are kept in isolation while they recover from the illness. The latest cash infusion will bring the funds that the US government has spent on combatting the outbreak to more than US \$100 million.

## 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.

There is currently an Ebola virus outbreak in Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. While there currently have been no confirmed cases of the Ebola virus in Burkina Faso, MS Risk advises all travellers to remain cautious, including maintaining strict standards of hygiene. As a precautionary measure, Burkina Faso's environmental ministry has banned all special hunting for bats, which is the main carrier of the deadly virus.

#### Threats and Concerns

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

#### Kidnapping Threats

There is a heightened risk that terrorist groups, including al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA), may cross the northern borders from Mali and Niger into Burkina Faso in order to carry out kidnaps. MS Risk therefore advises against all travel to the areas of Burkina Faso north of the town of Boulou, which is 25 km north of the capital of Ouagadougou. We particularly advise against all travel to the regions that border Mali and Niger.



Since 2008, over 25 Westerners have been kidnapped in the Sahel region, and a number of these hostages continue to be held. AQIM operates directly or through criminal gangs who carry out kidnappings on their behalf or pass on their kidnap victims in return for payment.

### *Crime*

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

### *MS RISK Guidance to Organizations 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.



# The 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.

Due to the current Ebola outbreak in West Africa, the Gambian government has closed its air borders to Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Nigeria, however the air border with Senegal remains open. The government has also announced that any international traveller who has been present in one of these four countries within 21 days of arrival in The Gambia will not be allowed to enter. Officials have not disclosed how long these closures will be in place. The Gambia current has no confirmed Ebola cases.

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

- **9 September 2014** – On Tuesday, Gambian customs officials confirmed that they have closed the country's borders to Guineans, Liberians, Nigerians and Sierra Leoneans, noting however that the border has not been closed with neighboring Senegal. According to Ebrima Kuruma, a health officer posted at the border with Senegal, government officials are now "...advising Gambians intending to travel to these countries to cancel their trips," noting that any Gambians who fail to heed the government's advice will not be allowed to return.

## Ghana

### No Travel Restrictions



### Security Summary

An outbreak of the Ebola virus disease has been confirmed in Guinea, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Liberia. There currently are no confirmed Ebola cases in Ghana. 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. Throughout 2014, there have been a number of cases of violent robberies involving foreign nationals who have been attacked and robbed while travelling in taxis after dark. There have also been incidents where an assailant has been concealed in the trunk of the taxi. Recently, a number of foreign nationals in Tamale have been attacked and robbed by machete wielding individuals. MS Risk advises all travellers to the Tamale area to travel by private car and to avoid walking on the roads, or using a motor scooter or bicycle after dark.

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.

### Domestic News

- **5 September 2014** – According to Ghana's Deputy Finance Minister Mona Helen Quarterly, the country hopes to reach an agreement on a potential assistance programme with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) by November, however which form the assistance could take is yet to be decided. In August, officials in Accra opened talks with the IMF on an assistance package in an attempt to fix the country's fiscal difficulties. An IMF team is scheduled to arrive in Ghana on 15 September. On the sidelines of an investment conference in London, Deputy Finance Minister Quarterly disclosed "by November, we should have agreed on how we are going forward, if it will be a programme, what level of programme it will be – whether a two or three year programme," noting "it would be nice to have the IMF in discussion on some of our short term challenges, the issues that we now have, and how to overcome them.... Their technical

advice and experience will be helpful, and if there are any areas that need financial assistance, balance of payments or so forth, that would be useful.” While gold, cocoa and oil exports have aided Ghana’s economic growth over the past few years, the country has also been troubled by fiscal problems, with inflation remaining high at just over 15 percent and the cedi recording a 40 percent fall since the start of the year.

## Guinea

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



### Security Summary

MS Risk currently advises all but essential travel to Guinea, except for those who are involved in the direct response to the Ebola outbreak.

An outbreak of contagious hemorrhagic fever, which has been identified as the Ebola virus, has been confirmed in the Forest region of south-eastern Guinea and in the capital city. On 13 August 2014, President Alpha Conde declared that the deadly Ebola outbreak is now a health emergency. The announcement came after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the Ebola outbreak a public health emergency of international concern. Some airlines have suspended flights to the affected countries due to the deteriorating public health situation. MS Risk advises all to carefully assess your need to travel to Guinea. If you do decide to travel, we advise that you make sure you have adequate arrangements in place for onward travel/exit and have adequate emergency health provisions. Due to the Ebola outbreak, general medical facilities throughout the country are currently under particular strain. Dedicated healthcare facilities for Ebola can also be under pressure and many medical facilities expect to be paid up-front. Enhanced screening measures have been introduced for outbound passengers at Conakry airport. Delays are likely to be experienced at Guinea’s land border crossings, particularly those with Liberia and Sierra Leone. This is due to enhanced screening measures. Guinea-Bissau has closed its land borders with Guinea in a bid to prevent the deadly virus from spreading.

At least two deaths, several injuries and destruction of property were reported during riots that broke out in the eastern suburbs of Conakry on 18 February 2014. Since then, riots have continued throughout the capital city and in nearby towns. The riots and protests are a result of frequent power cuts. Further such violence is likely to continue over the coming weeks. Violence has broken out in Kankan, in the “Upper Guinea” region in the east of the country. At least three deaths have been reported since 14 December as well as a number of injuries and destruction of property. MS Risk advises all travellers to avoid this region of the country as further instability is likely to continue.

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

## On the Ground Reporting

- **3 September 2014** – On Wednesday, Guinea’s government confirmed that the Ebola virus has now spread to a previously unaffected region of the country. While Guinea, the first country where the current outbreak began in March, initially indicated that officials were containing the outbreak, authorities announced Wednesday that nine new cases had been found in the southeastern prefecture of Kerouane. The area, which is located 750 kilometers (470 miles) southeast of the capital Conakry, lies close to where the first case was detected, in Guinea’s forest region. According to Aboubacar Sikidi Diakie, head of Guinea’s Ebola task force, the nine confirmed cases were in the town of Damaro in the Kerouane region. A total of eighteen people are now under observation and a team has been sent to the region, with officials insisting that the outbreak was being contained.

## Ivory Coast

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



### Security Summary

An outbreak of the Ebola virus disease has been confirmed in Guinea, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Liberia. While there currently are no confirmed Ebola cases in the Ivory Coast, the country has taken preventative measures, including banning all flights from countries that have been affected by the outbreak. MS Risk advises all travellers to the Ivory Coast to take the necessary precautions, including maintaining strict standards of hygiene and avoiding eating bush meat.

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.





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## On the Ground Reporting

- **2 September 2014** – Officials in the Ivory Coast have decided to open humanitarian corridors to neighboring states Guinea and Sierra Leone, both of which have been hard hit by the deadly Ebola virus, however officials have opted to continue to keep its main borders with the two states closed. A statement released by the Ivory Coast's National Security Council, which is headed by President Alassane Ouattara, disclosed "we decided to open humanitarian, economic and medical corridors with Guinea and Sierra Leone in light of our commitment to World Health Organization recommendations." While the statement, which was broadcast on state television, did not provide a specific date for when the decision will come into effect, it did note that the council plans to pursue a policy of "shared assistance" with Ebola-hit countries. As a preventative measure against Ebola, authorities in the Ivory Coast closed the country's borders with Sierra Leone and Guinea on 23 August. Currently the Ivory Coast has not reported any cases of Ebola infection, however the government continues to pursue an aggressive public-awareness campaign and has adopted a number of preventative and safety measures.
- **1 September 2014** – The headquarters of the party of former Ivorian president Laurent Gbagbo were attacked on Monday, with three people left injured. According to the Frank Anderson Kouassi, spokesman for the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI), confidential documents, including financial registers, were stolen as a group of around twenty youths "literally trashed" Mr. Gbagbo's former offices. On the ground sources have reported that rooms at the headquarters were littered with scattered documents, smashed computers and printers, broken glass and upturned furniture. One party official has suggested that the perpetrators may have been youth FPI activists, stating, "its an internal thing, we have no illusions.... Although we do not exclude any hypothesis." The FPI is currently split over its participation in the new Independent Electoral commission, which is responsible for organizing next year's presidential elections. Mr. Kouassi has disclosed that a closed-door party meeting over the weekend had "almost degenerated into a fight" after repeated arguments. Laurent Gbagbo was president of the Ivory Coast from 2000 until he was arrested in Abidjan in 2011. He is currently in custody awaiting trial at the International criminal Court (ICC) on charges of crimes against humanity.

## Domestic News

- **9 September 2014** – On Tuesday, the Ivory Coast's opposition parties suspended their participation in an electoral commission that was formed in a bid to prepare for the upcoming presidential elections in October 2015, citing their objection to the re-election of the commission's chairman. Daniele Boni Claverie, the spokeswoman for the Alliance of Democratic Forces (AFD), which consists of twelve parties, has indicated, "we can't accept that the chairman of the CEI (independent electoral commission) should again be Yousouf Bakayoko." According to Ms Boni Claverie, Bakayoko's role was "a symbol that must change because it brings back painful memories for the country," which was long been divided in two after a rebellion against former president Laurent Gbagbo in 2002. Bakayoko, a member of the Ivory Coast Democratic Party (PDCI) in the ruling coalition has headed the poll commission since 2010. His re-election on Saturday was marred by a partial boycott as some opposition politicians questioned the key role the CEI played under Bakayoko during the 2010 elections, when it declared Alassane Ouattara the winner, an outcome that gained international support but which was violently contested in the Ivory Coast.



## International Developments

- **11 September 2014** – On Thursday, officials at the International Criminal Court (ICC) confirmed that Ivory Coast's former president Laurent Gbagbo will face trial for crimes against humanity. Defense lawyers initially sought to appeal against the trial, which was first confirmed in June, on the grounds that during pre-trial hearings, the court had failed to correctly evaluate evidence that was provided by the prosecution. A statement released by The Hague-based court on Thursday revealed "Preliminary Chamber I rejected the defense's request to appeal against the decision relative to the confirmation of the charges," noting that the defense had come up with no "concrete issue (...) that could have had an essential impact" and see the charges dropped. The ICC has not set a date for the trial of Gbagbo, who has been charged with four counts of crimes against humanity, allegedly committed at the end of his 10-year rule when he refused to accept defeat in the November 2010 presidential elections. For a period of five months, clashes between his supporters and those of President Alassane Ouattara, who was proclaimed winner of the vote by the country's electoral commission, led to the death of at least 3,000 civilians. In April 2011, Gbagbo, 69, was arrested by pro-Ouattara forces who had the backing of officials in France and at the United Nations. The following November, he was transferred to The Hague, effectively becoming the first ex-head of state to face prosecution at the ICC. Gbagbo has maintained that he was ousted in favor of Ouattara as part of a plot that was carried out by France. He and his aides are accused of "ordering, seeking, encouraging or contributing in any other way" to murders, rapes, inhuman acts and persecution. The ICC has also detained onetime student leader and militant activist Charles Ble Goude, who served Gbagbo as right-hand man during his turbulent rule. Ble Goude is also suspected of crimes against humanity, like former first lady Simone Gbagbo, whom the Ivorian authorities have so far refused to turn over to the international tribunal.

## Liberia

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



### Security Summary

MS Risk currently advises all but essential travel to Liberia, except for those who are involved in the direct response to the Ebola outbreak.

On 8 August, the World Health Organization (WHO) released a statement following a meeting of the International Health Regulation Emergency Committee, declaring the Ebola outbreak a public health emergency of international concern. Cases of the Ebola virus have been confirmed in a number of areas of Liberia, including in the capital city. A nationwide curfew has been announced, with no movement allowed between the hours of 11 PM and 6 AM.

While there are currently no travel restrictions for Liberia, on July 27, the government announced that all borders of Liberia have been closed, with the exception of major entry points including the Roberts International Airport, James Spriggs Payne Airport, Foya Crossing, Bo Waterside Crossing and Ganta Crossing. The Liberia Airport Authority has also introduced enhanced screening measures for both inbound and outbound travellers at airport facilities. In August, British Airways announced that they were suspending flights to Liberia and Sierra Leone until the end of this year. This is due to the deteriorating public health situation. Some other airlines have also suspended flights to Liberia. MS Risk advises all to carefully assess your need to travel to Liberia. If you do decide to travel, we advise that you make sure you have adequate arrangements in place for onward travel/exit and have adequate emergency health provisions. Due to the Ebola outbreak, general medical facilities throughout the country are currently under particular strain. Dedicated healthcare facilities for Ebola can also be under pressure and many medical facilities expect to be paid up-front. The Liberian Airport Authority has introduced enhanced screening measures for both inbound and outbound travellers at airport facilities. 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

- **11 September 2014** – FIFA officials have announced that a large football stadium in Monrovia will be converted to house two large Ebola treatment units. A statement released by the international football federation indicated that it was cooperating with the World Health Organization (WHO) in a bid to transform the Antoinette Tubman Stadium in Liberia's capital city for use in the fight against the on-going Ebola epidemic. According FIFA president Sepp Blatter, the stadium, which FIFA had donated to Liberia's Football Association, will "serve as the site for two urgently needed large-scale Ebola treatment units." Nearly 2,300 people have died since the West Africa Ebola outbreak emerged earlier this year. Liberia, which has so far reported 1,200 deaths, has borne the brunt of the outbreak in recent months, with officials in the country warning that health officials are now short of space at the few Ebola treatment sites that are operating across the country.
- **8 September 2014** – World Health Organization (WHO) officials warned Tuesday that the Ebola virus is spreading exponentially in Liberia, with thousands of new cases expected to be reported in the next three weeks. A statement released by the UN's health agency indicated that conventional methods to control the outbreak were "not having an adequate impact," noting that organizations combatting the outbreak now need to scale-up their efforts "three-to-four fold. In one of Liberia's regions, Monserrado county, 1,000 beds are needed for infected Ebola patients however only 240 are currently available. This has lead to people being turned away from treatment centers, which in turn has made it easier for the deadly virus to spread. Officials have noted that transmission of the virus throughout the country is "already tense," noting that taxis, which are being used to transport infected patients, appear to be "a hot source of potential virus transmission." While five countries are currently affected by the Ebola outbreak, three of them – Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone – are at the heart of the outbreak, with Liberia experiencing the brunt of it with almost 1,100 deaths. Officials currently do not completely understand why this country is the worst affected, and finding the answer to this will be a critical part in tackling the outbreak. Currently, officials are investigating a number of sources that may be impacting the spread of the disease in Liberia. This includes variations in burial practice amongst the three countries, which can include touching the body and eating a meal near it. Questions are also lingering about the degree of trust civilians have in the authorities and how the risk of Ebola is being communicated. Last month, riots erupted in the capital city's West Point neighborhood, with some reports now suggesting that violence erupted after protesters believed that Ebola was a hoax. Another aspect that has affected the on-going fight to contain the virus has been the country's healthcare system. Prior to Ebola spreading throughout the country, Liberia had one doctor per 100,000 people. Now 152 health workers in Liberia have been infected and 79 have died. There is also a severe lack of hospital beds available for patients. In the capital Monrovia, there are 240 beds, however experts say they require more than 1,000. Patients without a bed have no choice but to go back home, where they spread the virus further after coming in contact with family members and locals.

- **1 September 2014** – On Monday, Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf extended the stay-home order imposed on all non-essential government employees for another month. The president has also assured those government employees affected by the orders that they will continue to receive their salaries during the period of their absence from work. On July 30, in a special statement to the nation on additional measures in the fight against Ebola, President Sirleaf announced that all non-essential staff would begin a 30-day compulsory leave on 1 August, noting that the strategy was aimed at containing the spread. Sources now reporting that the measure remains necessary in order to decongest government work places as efforts continue to contain the spread of the Ebola virus, which has had devastating consequences on the country.
  - Nurses at Liberia's largest hospital went on strike Monday, demanding better pay and equipment to protect them against the Ebola epidemic. John Tugbeh, spokesman for the strikers at Monrovia's John F. Kennedy hospital, has disclosed that the nurses will not return to work until they are supplied with "personal protective equipment (PPE's)," which are the hazmat-style suits that guard against infections disease. The spokesman further noted that since the beginning of the Ebola outbreak, healthcare workers have not received any protective equipment and are therefore at high risk. The surgical section at JFK hospital is the only trauma referral center in Liberia and a long-term strike will severely damage the country's capabilities in responding to the Ebola crisis. In July, the hospital was temporarily closed over the infections and deaths of an unspecified number of health workers who had been treating Ebola patients. It currently remains unclear how large the striking group is and whether contingency plans have been put in place at the hospital. The Ebola virus is transmitted through contact with infected bodily fluids and has killed more than 1,500 people in four countries since the start of the year. Almost 700 of them have occurred in Liberia. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), a high proportion of the deaths, almost a tenth, have been amongst health workers, with officials now warning that the outbreak is set to get worse, predicting up to 20,000 cases, before it is fully brought under control.

## Domestic News

- **14 September 2014** - On Sunday, Liberia's President dismissed ten senior government officials who defied an order to return to the West African nation in order to lead the fight against the deadly Ebola outbreak. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf had told ministers to return to Liberia within a week, an announcement that was part of a state-of-emergency announcement on August 6 aimed at helping fight "for the survival of our state." A statement released by her office Sunday confirmed "President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has dismissed 10 government officials with immediate effect," noting "these government officials showed insensitivity to our national tragedy and disregard for authority." Amongst the ten senior government officials dismissed by the president is Victoria Sherman-Lang, the deputy minister for economic affairs at the ministry for justice and Wheatonia Dixon-Barnes, the deputy minister for administration and public safety at the ministry of justice. Five members of various boards, who left the country without proper excuse, have also been told that their salaries and other benefits will no longer be valid. In August, the president announced that she had dismissed ministers and senior government officials who defied an order to return to the West African nation however no further details on the dismissal were released.
- **9 September 2014** – Following a new World Health Organization (WHO) assessment, indicating that the worst of the Ebola outbreak is yet to come, Liberia's defense minister warned Tuesday that the deadly virus is now threatening the very existence of the country as the virus is now spreading like "wild fire." After

predicting an “exponential increase” in infections across West Africa, WHO officials are now warning that Liberia, which has so far accounted for half of all fatalities, could initially only hope to slow down the contagion, but not stop it. In the wake of this assessment, Liberia’s Defense Minister Brownie Samukai told a meeting of the UN Security Council on Tuesday “Liberia is facing a serious threat to its national existence,” adding that the disease is “now spreading like wild fire, devouring everything in its path.” While the WHO has indicated that its goal in Senegal and Nigeria was “to stop transmission completely,” in other locations, such as Monrovia where there is a wide community transmission, the WHO is “...aiming at two-step strategies...first, to reduce the transmission as much as possible and, when it becomes controllable, we will also try to stop it completely.” The WHO however has warned that in the case of Liberia, “...at this point in time we need to be pragmatic and try to reduce it in the initial steps.”

# 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 Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Nigeria. While there currently are no confirmed reports of Ebola cases in Mali, MS Risk advises that you take caution, maintain strict standards of hygiene and avoid eating bush meat.

MS Risk advises against all travel to Bamako. We also advise against all travel to the rest of Mali, especially to



the northern regions of the country. Although Bamako is generally calm, the situation throughout the rest of the country is still volatile.

If you are in Bamako, MS Risk advises you to maintain a high level of vigilance, to keep a low profile and to stay alert to the local political developments. We also advise that you avoid sensitive areas, including military installations and large gatherings of people. Night time checkpoints continue to operate in Bamako, largely controlling access to military and government facilities. Checkpoints are in place from approximately 9PM until dawn.

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

### *Terrorism*

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

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

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

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

### *Kidnapping*

In the past, a number of Westerners have been kidnapped by terrorists in Mali and in the Sahel region. Since 2008, over 25 Westerners have been kidnapped in the Sahel. Victims have included tourists, NGO workers and diplomats of a variety of nationalities, primarily European. These attacks have on occasion resulted in the murder of the hostages. The recent kidnapping of a French citizen in the western region of the country has come as a shock as the area where he was taken has been perceived as being stable and under governmental control. In the past, kidnap threats have typically emanated from the Azawad region in the north and east part of the county, as such this incident in the west has caused great concern. MS Risk

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

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

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

#### *Local Travel*

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

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

#### *MS RISK Guidance to Organizations in Mali:*

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

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

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

## On the Ground Reporting

- **14 September 2014** – A spokesman for the UN mission in Mali disclosed Sunday that one peacekeeper has been killed and four others have been wounded near the volatile northern town of Kidal. According to Olivier Salgado, on Sunday a UN vehicle struck a land mine near Aguel'hoc, killing a Chadian soldier. While there was no immediate claim of responsibility for Sunday's explosion, previous mines have been blamed on Islamic extremists linked to al-Qaeda. The area has been the scene of a number of mine explosions, including one that killed four UN peacekeepers earlier in this month.
- **12 September 2014** – According to security sources, a suspected lieutenant of al-Qaeda-linked Algerian jihadist commander Mokhtar Belmokhtar has been arrested in the northern region of Mali. A source from the United Nations peacekeeping mission has disclosed that rebel groups in the northeastern separatist stronghold of Kidal arrested Meherig Jafar and have handed him over to Malian authorities via the French army. A Malian police source has described Jafar as a "big fish" who was wanted in his home country of Algeria, adding that when the militant was arrested, he was found with letters calling for jihad and pictures showing him alongside Belmokhtar. Belmokhtar was a leader of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), which, along with a number of other armed Islamist groups, took advantage of a military coup in 2012, occupying northern Mali prior to being driven out by French and African forces. In 2013, Belmokhtar split from AQIM to form his own group, the Signatories in Blood, and masterminded a deadly raid against Algeria's In Amenas gas plant in which 38 hostages were killed in a four-day siege. He was initially believed to have been killed in Mali however in April, security sources revealed that he has moved into Libya where he remains active.
- **2 September 2014** – Four United Nations peacekeepers were killed Tuesday when their truck was blown up in northern Mali. The incident comes just one day after negotiations were launched between the government and six-armed rebel groups. While the talks, which are being held in the Algerian capital, are aimed at clinching a lasting peace agreement for Mali, the will likely be overshadowed by this latest incident. According to UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric, "four peacekeepers from Chad are reported to have been killed. Fifteen others have been wounded, including six who are reported to be seriously injured," adding that the peacekeeper's vehicle "hit an explosive device" in the northeastern desert region of Kidal. Sources have reported that the group of Chadian peacekeepers was returning from Kidal when their truck blew up about 30 kilometers (20 miles) outside the city. According to a source in the UN peacekeeping mission, "it is too early to know exactly what happened," adding "we still do not know exactly if it was a mine that the vehicle hit, or if it was an explosive device that was thrown against the vehicle." UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, who expressed his "deepest condolences" to the families of those killed, has condemned the attack. In a statement released late Tuesday, Ban indicated that he was "deploy saddened" by the deaths, noting however that they would "not alter the determination of the United Nations to support the Malian people in their search for peace." While no group has claimed responsibility for the incident, al-Qaeda, which is known to operate in the country, has recently taken responsibility for several attacks that have targeted UN peacekeepers. This year, fifteen peacekeepers have been killed in Mali, including those who died on Tuesday.

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## Regional Reporting

- **1 September 2014** - On Monday, a second round of peace talks between the Malian government and separatist militias will begin in Algiers. The talks are aimed at ending a conflict that has continued over this past year despite the country's efforts to return to a democracy. The two groups signed an interim agreement in June last year, which effectively paved the way for nationwide elections, however since President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita was elected to power, negotiations have stalled and northern Mali has seen a spike in violence by Islamist and separatist militants. According to sources, the talks will be based on a "roadmap" that was agreed to by the different sides in July. The talks will be overseen by a "college of mediators," which includes Algeria, the African Union (AU) and the 15-member regional bloc ECOWAS. A "college of facilitators" will be made up of delegates from France, Niger, Nigeria and the European Union. While former Prime Minister Modibo Keita, who is the president's envoy at the talks, has disclosed "this time in Algiers, participants will get to the bottom of their problems and, it is to be hoped, come to an agreement," Mali's Prime Minister Moussa Mara has suggested that despite the government willing to make concessions, a "red line" has been set, noting that Mali's territorial integrity and secular status will not be up for discussion. While there currently is no set deadline, negotiations between the Malian government and separatist militias are expected to last weeks with the claim for special legal status expected to be the main sticking point. In the weeks prior to these talks, rival factions amongst the rebels, including members of the MNLA, HCUA, the Arab Movement of Azawad (MAA), the coalition of the People of Azawad, which is a subdivision of the MNLA, along with a vigilante movement in the region, met in Burkina Faso's capital city, Ouagadougou, in order to sign a broad policy agreement that effectively ensures they will speak with one voice in Algiers. According to sources, the signatories of the document are requesting "special legal status" for their homeland in northern Mali, adding that they want official recognition of the "legitimacy of the struggle of Azawad/northern Mali for 50 years to enjoy a special status in line with the geographical, economic, social, cultural and security realities." Although these armed groups once fought each other in northern Mali, it now appears that they are increasingly willing to unite together in order to achieve their goals and to negotiate with the Malian government. In May of this year, clashes erupted between the Malian army and a coalition of rebels from the High Council for the Unity of Azawad (HCUA) and the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), resulting in at least fifty soldiers being killed in the region of Kidal. Although a ceasefire, which was achieved by Mauritanian leader and AU chief Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, has since been in place, the Malian government has expressed alarm over the "concentrations of armed groups" that are present in the desert region.

## International Developments

- **12 September 2014** – The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has restarted talks on reviewing an aid programme for Mali and has resumed aid payments to the West African country, which were halted by the IMF and World Bank earlier this year. The two organizations initially froze nearly US \$70 million in financing after the IMF expressed concern in May over the Malian government's purchase of a US \$40 million presidential jet and a separate loan for military supplies. At the time, these large purchases undermined the confidence of donors in the country's newly elected government. However on Friday, a senior official in Mali's finance ministry disclosed that an IMF mission had begun talks in Bamako on Thursday morning, with an agreement expected within two weeks. The official also indicated that the government had reached some understandings with IMF officials, noting, "we have made adjustments, to remove or freeze

expenditure on some other items to ensure that the purchase of the aircraft would not lead to additional debt.” Last year, Mali secured over US \$4 billion in donor pledges, all aimed at rebuilding the country after the 2012 coup and take over by militant groups. While French troops managed to scatter the militant fighters, slow progress has left Mali’s President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita struggling to retain the popular support that swept him to power last year. Furthermore, the issue over the jet and the defense deals have led to criticism, with some stating that the era of questionable purchases, which shrouded the administration of ousted president Amadou Toumani Toure, had not come to an end.

# 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, Liberia, Nigeria 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. Mauritanian authorities have decided to deny entry to citizens arriving from those African countries that have been affected by the current Ebola outbreak.

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 Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. Both Adamawa and Borno border Cameroon's far North, North and Adamaoua provinces. It is possible that military operations there might have an impact across the border in Cameroon.

## On the Ground Reporting

- **10 September 2014** – Officials in Mauritania disclosed Thursday that the country is pushing back its weekend to start on Saturday, instead of Friday, in a bid to move into line with the rest of the world. According to Labor Minister Seyidna Ali Ould Mohamed Khouna, the northwest African country is making the move to “make up for the delay to our economy, our companies and our public administration,” which has been created by stopping a day earlier than most countries. The Labor Minister disclosed that the working week will now run from 8:00 AM until 5:00 PM from Monday to Friday, adding “the new weekend will reinforce competitiveness into our economy and our companies in their dealings with the outside world and will reduce the damage that the weekend was doing to our economy.” Since it gained its independence from France in 1960, Mauritania, which is an almost entirely Muslim nation of 3.8 million, has changed its weekend a number of times. When the country initially gained its independence, Sunday was chosen as the day off however in the early 1980's then-president Mohamed Khouna Ould Haidall switched it to Friday, the Muslim holy day. In 2001, Maaouiya Ould Taya introduced the two-day weekend, which began on Saturday, however since then, it has been switched back to Friday at least three times. Previous changes have resulted in criticism from religious and opposition groups and in anticipation of a possible backlash to Thursday's announcement, Mohamed Khouna announced that this time civil servants would be allowed to finish at midday for Friday prayers.

# 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

- **6 September 2014** – A top court in Niger has given the green light for the arrest of the country's parliamentary leader, who is accused of being involved in an international baby-trafficking network. Hama Amadou, who is seen by many as the leading challenger to President Mahamadou Issoufou in the upcoming 2016 presidential elections, "discreetly" left the country last week, with sources reporting he currently is in Belgium. While he has indicated that the charges are politically motivated, and a breach of his parliamentary immunity," Niger's Constitutional Court ruled Thursday that the political bureau of parliament, which has lead efforts to investigate Amadou, was "competent" to authorize his arrest. Late last month, Niger's public prosecutor, Boukary Sally Ibrahim disclosed "if the court confirms the legal character of this authorization, the judge will summon Hama Amadou," adding "if he finds that he is not present, he will issue a warrant," that could lead to an international arrest warrant. In late June, seventeen people, twelve of them women, were arrested on suspicion of being involved in a baby-trafficking ring between Benin, Niger and Nigeria. One of Amadou's wives is amongst the seventeen people held in custody. In late August, Agriculture Minister Abdou Labo was remanded in custody.
- **4 September 2014** – The United Nations revealed Thursday that at least twenty-eight people have been killed, and more than 51,000 affected, by flooding in Niger after heavy rains in June inundated areas of the country. According to new data released by the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Niamey, the weather has destroyed more than 4,500 homes and more than 250 acres (100 hectares) of fields and gardens. The new figures are sharply higher than the last UN estimates, which were released August 12 and which indicated that twelve people had died and 27,000 had been affected by the flooding. The floods, with the exception of the eastern desert region, which is home to more than 80,000 refugees who have fled violence in neighboring Nigeria, have affected most of the country. In mid-August, Niger's government launched an appeal for aid for those affected by the rising waters. Floods are an annual issue in Niger as seasonal rains often cause streams and rivers to burst their banks, resulting in homes being swept away and crops being destroyed. In 2012, floods in Niger killed dozens of people and affected some 500,000 civilians, causing an estimated US \$191 million in damages.
- **3 September 2014** – The United States is preparing to redeploy drones already in Niger in a bid to increase operations in the Sahara region. In 2013, Washington deployed a number of unarmed surveillance drones to Niger, in a move that illustrated growing cooperation between the US and France in their bid to combat militant groups in the Sahara region. The move followed a French-led military operation that targeted militant groups in northern Mali. Currently, the American drones are supported by some 120 US military personnel who are operating in close cooperation with the French, who are based near Niger's capital Niamey where they fly unmanned aircraft, including two Reaper drones. However under the new plan, which is still being assessed by the US military, the American contingent will relocate to the desert city of Agadez, which is located some 750 kilometers (470 miles) northeast of Niamey. According to Benjamin

Benson, spokesman for the US military's Africa Command, "geographically and strategically, Agadez presents an attractive option...given its proximity to the threats in the region." US officials have not revealed how many aircraft, either unmanned or manned, would operate from the Agadez airfield. A senior Nigerian military officer has confirmed, "Niger has given its total consent" to establishing the base in Agadez, adding, "the goal is to secure our borders against jihadist infiltrations. Libya, for example, is gripped by turmoil and so surveillance must be reinforced there." Equipped with weapons looted from Libyan government arsenals, militant fighters took advantage of a Tuareg uprising and military coup in Mali that effectively enabled them to seize the country's vast northern desert region in 2012. Although French troops and regional allies later succeeded in driving them back, al-Qaeda-linked groups continue to operate across the loosely governed zone that has porous borders that straddle Algeria, Libya, Mali, Mauritania and Niger.

## Domestic News

- **1 September 2014** – The government of Niger, which is one of the world's poorest countries, has provoked anger with the recent purchase of a US \$40 million presidential jet. The country's Defense Minister Karidjo Mahamadou confirmed the purchase on Monday, stating that it would help improve the "influence of our illustrious republic." During an interview on state television, the minister indicated that the Boeing 737-700 was received Sunday afternoon after it was paid for with "around 20 billion CFA francs" in government money. The plane will replace the current Boeing 737, which was purchased in the 1970's by the country's former president Seyni Kountche. While aviation experts have indicated that the old plane "no longer meets international standards," the country's opposition has been highly critical of the purchase. Ousseini Salatou, spokesman for the Nigerian opposition coalition noted, "with out country facing a new famine and with further serious flooding this year, the state decides to spend billions on a prestige purchase." Opposition lawmaker Amadou Ali has also accused the Niger government of having "cheated" the public by hiding the funds used to purchase that plane in the military equipment budget. Despite having vast uranium and newly-discovered petroleum deposits, Niger ranks at the bottom of the United Nations' Human Development Index, with more than sixty percent of the population living below the poverty line. Although the government attributes the ranking in part to the country's birth rate, which is the highest in the world, the country ranks poorly across a range of indicators.



## Nigeria

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

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



## Security Summary

### Summary

On 8 August, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the Ebola outbreak a public health emergency of international concern.



Some airlines have suspended flights to the affected countries due to the deteriorating public health situation. MS Risk advises all to carefully assess your need to travel to Nigeria. If you do decide to travel, we advise that you make sure you have adequate arrangements in place for onward travel/exit and have adequate emergency health provisions. Due to the Ebola outbreak, general medical facilities throughout the country are currently under particular strain. Dedicated healthcare facilities

for Ebola can also be under pressure and many medical facilities expect to be paid up-front. The Nigerian government has introduced new protocols for arriving at all airports, including Ebola screenings. 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.

#### *Boko Haram's Islamic State*

Over the past several weeks, Nigeria has been rapidly losing control of large areas of the northeast to Boko Haram, which is attempting to carve out an Islamic State. With reports surfacing on 12 September 2014 that the militant group has

“completely surrounded” the city of Maiduguri, if the Nigerian military fails to carry out military operations to secure the area and reinforce the capital city, it is highly likely that Borno state, along with some areas of neighboring Adamawa and Yobe states, will fall to the militant group in the coming weeks. Boko Haram appears to be carrying out a two-pronged assault, from the northeast to the southeast, with militants likely to be reinforcing the captured areas prior to taking over Maiduguri. Boko Haram was founded in Maiduguri in 2002, making the state capital a high value target for them. Boko Haram have seized territory along at least two of the main approaches to the capital city, while their control of towns and settlements to the south and near the border with Cameroon have effectively cut off the Nigerian military, preventing them from responding quickly and carrying out operations to recapture the area. In recent weeks, Boko Haram militants have destroyed several key bridges, including one on the road from Biu to Maiduguri, a bridge near Gamboru Ngala that links Nigeria to Cameroon, a bridge in Potiskum that links Maiduguri and Damaturu to Abuja and a bridge in Yobe that links to the southern areas of Borno and Adamawa. Some of the destroyed bridges were strategically linked to Maiduguri and have now made it difficult for the Nigerian military to reinforce Maiduguri and other towns in Borno state.



Further out, in Borno, Boko Haram are believed to have seized Gamboru Ngala, Dikwa, Gwoza and Marte. Bama has also been reported captured by the militants however the Nigerian military and some locals have contested these reports. Damboa, which was seized in July, has since been reported to have been retaken. In Adamawa state, Madagali has been captured while in Yobe, Buni Yadi has been taken. Other communities in the northeastern region of Nigeria, which are



believed to have been seized or heavily contested, include Banki, Kerawa, Ashigashiy, Ngoshe, Pulka and Goniri. Further seizures of towns in the area, and which border Cameroon, cannot be ruled out at this time.

Despite Boko Haram's recent takeover of a large area of Nigerian territory, actions similar to the recent lightning advance achieved by IS militants in Iraq, Nigeria's military has continued to deny the severity of the threat. On Friday, Nigeria's defence ministry dismissed "alarmist" reports pertaining to Maiduguri, stating, "Security Arrangements for the Defence of Maiduguri has been upgraded to handle any planned attack." If Boko Haram are successful in taking over Maiduguri, the fall of the state capital will mean a significant symbolic and strategic victory for the militant group, effectively enabling them to control a major city and an international airport, a victory that has not yet been seen in the militant group's five-year insurgency.

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. Over the past few weeks there have been a number of explosive attacks in Damaturu, Kano, Jos, Kaduna, Abuja and Lagos. Further such attacks are highly likely to occur. MS Risk currently advises all travellers in Nigeria to avoid public places, especially where crowds gather.

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

- **13 September 2014** – Local residents reported Saturday that Boko Haram militants attacked a market outside the key northeast Nigerian city of Maiduguri. According to eyewitnesses, about 50 gunmen on motorbikes stormed the weekly market in Ngom village, located some 20 kilometers (12.5 miles) from the Borno state capital, at about 1:00 pm (1200 GMT) on Friday. Friday's attack came hours after fierce fighting erupted between the militants and the Nigerian army in the town of Konduga, located 35 kilometers from Maiduguri. According to the Nigerian army, Boko Haram fighters were forced out of the area, lost equipment and suffered heavy casualties. Local government sources have not confirmed Friday's casualties however ears are mounting about a possible attack on Maiduguri after the influential Borno

Elders' Forum of retired military and civilian officials warned that Boko Haram had effectively surrounded the city. The military however has dismissed these claims, stating that they are "alarmist," however Friday's attack in Ngom has indicated that the rebels are nearby.

- **12 September 2014** - Traditional elders in Borno state warned this week that Nigeria's militant Islamists have "completely surrounded" Maiduguri, noting that the military now needed to "fortify" the city, which has a population of more than two million, in order to prevent an assault "from all directions." A statement issued by the Borno Elders Forum (BEF), which represents influential people in the state, including former government ministers and civil servants, has reported that Boko Haram militants have "annexed" areas that were about 50 kilometers (30 miles) from Maiduguri. The BEF has also disclosed that they are "...convinced that the Federal Government of Nigeria has not shown sufficient political will to fight Boko Haram and rescue us from the clutches of the insurgents which may ultimately lead to the total annihilation of the inhabitants of Borno," noting "the insurgents have rendered impassable almost all the roads leading to Maiduguri."
  - Nigeria's military on Friday claimed to have routed Boko Haram militants near the Borno state capital Maiduguri. Army spokesman Tlmoth Anthiga disclosed that the militants launched a "massive" attack on the town of Konduga, located about 35 kilometers (22 miles) from Maiduguri at 0430 GMT Friday. According to the spokesman, "after about three hours of fierce fighting, Nigerian troops routed the Boko Haram fighting force of over 100 terrorists," adding that the militant group suffered heavy casualties.
- **10 September 2014** – According to a spokesman for President Goodluck Jonathan, the head of state has ordered the removal of signs and banners that mimic the social media campaign to release more than 200 schoolgirls kidnapped in April. Reuben Abati has disclosed that the President shared the view that the #BringBackGoodluck2015 signs, which apparently back his re-election next year, were "offensive and repugnant," adding "President Jonathan wholly shares the widely expressed view that the signs, which were put up without his knowledge or approval, are a highly insensitive parody of the #BringBackOurGirls hashtag." The posters, which have been seen around the capital city, "appear to make light of the very serious national and global concern for the abducted Chibok girls." The spokesman has also disclosed "the President assures all Nigerians and the international community that his administration remains fully engaged with efforts to rescue the abducted girls and that he will not knowingly promote any actions that will fly in the face of the seriousness of their plight and the anguish of their families." The #BringBackOurGirls campaign on Twitter, which has been backed by ordinary people and celebrities across the world, forced Nigeria's government to act after Boko Haram militants kidnapped the teenagers from the remote northeastern town of Chibok. The campaign also prompted a series of street protests worldwide and contributed to international help from countries including the United States, France and Britain in a bid to locate the girls and to bring them home safely. Despite Nigeria's military announcing that they know where the girls are being held, the insurgents are still holding 219 of the teenagers. President Goodluck Jonathan and his government have been severely criticized over what many Nigerians have called a lack of effort to rescue the girls. Many now believe that Jonathan's yet unconfirmed bid to seek re-election in next year's presidential polls will be severely impacted by his government's failure to stop Boko Haram's five-year insurgency, and will likely cost his re-election bid should he officially announce to run.
  - Witnesses reported Wednesday that Nigeria's military has launched ground and air offensives against Boko Haram militants in a bid to recapture the northeastern town of Michika, which fell to the militant group this past weekend. Residents of nearby towns and villages reported seeing hundreds of troops aided by military jets that targeted Boko Haram positions in Michika in Adamawa state. On the

ground sources have reported that a huge military contingent has been deployed in Mararrabar Vimtim village, located 20 kilometers (13 miles) outside Michika, aimed at preventing any militants from escaping and heading towards the main commercial hub of Mubi. In recent days, there has been a mass exodus from Mubi after Boko Haram militants captured Michika. Security fears have also prompted the indefinite closure of the Adamawa State University in Mubi.

- Nigeria's aviation authorities revealed Wednesday that there was no evidence to support recent US claims that one of its air marshals was attacked as he attempted to board a flight in Lagos. On Monday, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) disclosed that the marshal, who was on duty, had been attacked with a syringe on Sunday and was currently undergoing treatment in Houston, Texas. The report was confirmed by US State Department deputy spokeswoman Marie Harf, who told reporters in Washington "we can confirm reports that an unknown assailant injected a substance into the arm of a US federal air marshal at the airport in Lagos, Nigeria," adding that US law enforcement agencies were collaborating with their Nigerian counterparts in order to investigate the incident. The incident raised concerns that the syringe could have carried some form of the Ebola virus, as Nigeria is one of the West African countries currently affected by the deadly outbreak, however FBI officials have indicated that the marshal is not in any danger though they have not disclosed what he may have been injected with. In a statement released Wednesday, a spokesman for the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), Yakubu Dati, indicated that officials were aware of the reports and had been in contact with US diplomats. The statement further disclosed that a security team from the US Mission in Nigeria had reviewed security camera footage from the Lagos airport of the air marshal however it noted, "preliminary observation from the CCTV footage did not show evidence of such an occurrence."
- **9 September 2014** – The son of Nigeria's former President Olusegun Obasanjo has been shot and wounded in a battle with militant Islamists. According to the former leader's aide, Muhammad Keffi, Lt Col Adeboye Obasanjo was injured as the army fought to recapture the northeastern town of Michika, in Adamawa state, from Boko Haram. Keffi has indicated that Lt Col Obasanjo, an army engineer leading a platoon of army troops, was "getting better," after Monday's incident. The military has disclosed that "scores of insurgents" were killed in the battle however independent sources have not confirmed these reports. Lt Col Obsanjoa has been involved in a number of attempts to end the five-year insurgency. In May, he held exploratory talks in a bid to open discussions with the militant group in order to obtain the release of more than 200 schoolgirls who were kidnapped in April. The soldiers' father was elected president in 1999, an election that effectively marked a return to civilian rule after military dictatorship. He held office until 2007. He had previously served as military leader from 1976 until 1979.
- According to the country's police chief, twenty Nigerian police officers are still missing, three weeks after Boko Haram fighters attacked a training academy located outside the remote northeast town of Gwoza. Speaking to reporters on Tuesday, Inspector General Suleiman Abba disclosed that police will "not relent in the efforts of tracing them." While police officials initially reported that thirty-five officers were missing after the attack on 21 August, Inspector General Abba revealed Tuesday that some had since returned, declining to provide further details. Boko Haram militants attacked the police academy near Gwoza in Borno state two weeks after they seized the town and declared it part of an Islamic caliphate. They went on to capture Bama, which is located 50 kilometers (30 miles) to the north, on September 1, killing scores of people. The government, which has faced criticism for its failure to effectively confront the militants, disclosed Tuesday that it was fighting back successfully, with government spokesman Mike Omeri disclosing to reporters "only this morning it was reported

that the military is in total and firm control of Bama,” noting “consistent effort is ongoing to ensure that firm control is taken of areas that are being challenged by insurgent actions.’ Over the past few weeks, conflicting reports have emerged over what areas are controlled by the military and which have been lost to Boko Haram militants.

- **6 September 2014** – Thousands of fear-stricken residents in a number of towns and villages in Nigeria’s northeastern Adamawa state have fled their homes after Nigerian troops failed to recapture a major town seized by Boko Haram militants. Locals reported Saturday that residents of the towns of Madagali, Gulak and Michika, and nearby villages, fled their homes Friday through Saturday following an advance by Boko Haram. On the ground sources have reported that many of the residents have fled to the mountains and to the town of Mubi after troops retreated from Madagali where they made a failed attempt to force the militants out and to recapture the town. Defense headquarters spokesman Major General Chris Olukolade has declined to comment on Boko Haram’s continued seizure of more towns in the region however one resident in Mubi has reported that the town “...is now flooded with people from Michika, Madagali, Gulak, Uba and other villages who have been trooping in since last night.” Boko Haram militants have in the past targeted Mubi, which is the commercial hub of the state. In June, at least forty people were killed when an explosion targeted a soccer pitch after a match. In October 2012, at least forty students of a polytechnic college in the town were shot dead in attacks on student hostels. Both attacks were blamed on Boko Haram.
- **5 September 2014** – Although Nigeria’s military on Friday confirmed that the increasing attacks carried out by Boko Haram militants were now developing into a challenge to the country’s sovereignty, officials however have rejected claims that the country’s military was in denial about the seriousness of the growing threat. Defense spokesman Chris Olukolade disclosed “it is not only the pride and reputation of the military that is at stake but that of the entire nation,” adding “all steps are being taken to ensure the success of the counter-insurgency operations, especially at this crucial time when our sovereignty is being challenged.” Olukolade’s comments come just one day after the United States indicated that it was increasingly concerned by the upsurge in violence and by the militant group’s recent territorial gains in Nigeria’s far northeastern region. On Thursday, US Assistant Secretary of State Linda Thomas-Greenfield indicated that the deteriorating security situation threatened Nigeria’s future and was a “sober reality check.” While a number of officials warned this week that the Nigerian government is on the brink of losing control of the northeast, after Boko Haram reportedly seized the town of Bama, which is located near the Borno state capital Maiduguri, Nigeria’s military high command has continued to deny that the insurgents have taken over towns and that hundreds of soldiers have deserted their posts. It has also dismissed as “empty” claims made by Boko Haram’s leader, Abubakar Shekau, that the captured town of Gwoza, also in Borno state, was now part of an Islamic caliphate.
- **3 September 2014** – Foreign ministers from Nigeria, and a number of neighboring states, met on Wednesday in order to discuss the Boko Haram threat as the militant group’s recent seizure of land in the far northeast of the country has raised fears for regional security. The one-day meeting of representatives from Benin, Cameroon, Chad and Niger also included officials from Canada, Britain, France, the United States, the African Union and the United Nations. According to Nigeria’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the talks are aimed at “reviewing progress” of earlier meetings held in London and Paris as well as the Africa Summit, which was held in the United States last month, adding that the meeting will examine “the extent of foreign assistance, including efforts by the Nigerian government, in the continued fight to...rout the Boko Haram insurgency.” After the April mass kidnapping of more than 200 girls from their school in northeastern Nigeria, regional powers vowed to play a greater role in combatting the militants. At the time, international



powers deployed intelligence and surveillance specialists, along with equipment, to Abuja in a bid to trace the missing teenagers, in which 219 are still being held captive. However nearly five months later, Western diplomats have confirmed that minimal progress has been achieved despite earlier claims from Nigeria's military indicating that they had located the girls. The situation in northern Nigeria has worsened in recent weeks as Boko Haram has managed to take control of swathes of territory in northeastern Nigeria, with the country's military seemingly being unable to combat them. Unconfirmed reports have indicated that the militants have now taken control of Bama, the second largest city in Borno state. Many now believe that by seizing territory, Boko Haram is attempting to encircle the state capital, Maiduguri, in a bid to create a hardline Islamic state. If swift action is not taken, Nigeria could face a quick takeover of a large area of its territory that is reminiscent to similar quick advances achieved by IS in Iraq. Furthermore, if the Nigerian military loses control of Borno to Boko Haram, it is highly likely that parts of neighboring Yobe and Adamawa will also fall to the militant group, with Boko Haram also likely setting its sights on towns located in Cameroon, near the border with Nigeria. In recent weeks, Boko Haram fighters have increasingly been active in Cameroon. On Tuesday, Cameroon's army claimed to have killed more than forty Boko Haram fighters who had attempted to storm a strategic border crossing from Nigeria.

- According to residents, Boko Haram militants have captured the town of Banki, which borders Cameroon, after government troops fled the area. While the Nigerian military has not yet commented on the latest town to reportedly fall to the insurgents in recent weeks, residents from Banki reported that government troops abandoned their posts as the militants advanced on the small border town on Tuesday. Fears are now increasing that the militant group will soon target Maiduguri, Borno's state capital, with many warning that the rapid territorial gains may lead to a break-up of the country.
- Officials announced on Wednesday that a seventh person has died from Ebola while another has been confirmed to have contracted the deadly virus. The latest death was a patient who died at the isolation ward in the oil city of Port Harcourt, where a doctor died on August 22 after treating a Liberian man who had brought the disease into the country in late July. The other five deaths occurred in the country's financial capital, Lagos. Four were healthcare workers who had treated the Liberian man, who also died. According to Health ministry spokesman Dan Nwomeh, eighteen people, including the deceased, have now been confirmed as having the virus in Nigeria – 14 in Lagos and four in Port Harcourt, which is located 435 kilometers (270 miles) away. A total of forty-one people are currently under surveillance in Lagos while 255 are being observed in Port Harcourt. Another 320 people have been discharged in Lagos after being under surveillance for twenty-one days, which is the virus' incubation period. Eight people who contracted the virus have been discharged from hospital after being successfully treated.
- **2 September 2014** – After hours of fighting, which killed scores and displaced thousands of residents, several security sources reported Tuesday that Boko Haram insurgents have taken control of the second largest city in Borno state in northeastern Nigeria. According to on the ground sources, on Monday the militants launched an attack on the town of Bama, which is located 70 kilometers (45 miles) from the Borno state capital of Maiduguri. While eye witnesses reported that the militants were initially repelled, they came back in greater numbers overnight, taking control of the military barracks. Thousands of civilians have fled the town on foot, with many of them walking all the way to Maiduguri. Several sources have reported that there were heavy casualties on both sides, with some sources indicating that about seventy militants were killed. The military however has not yet officially comment on the claims that they have lost a key city to the militant group. If confirmed, the capture of Bama would be an extremely significant development, and will likely raise concerns that Boko Haram's next target is Maiduguri, the state capital. It would also be the



largest town under Boko Haram's control. Two months after Islamist militants in Iraq and Syria declared the area they seized an Islamic caliphate, Boko Haram now appears to be following in IS' footsteps as its leader has laid claim to territory it says it controls in parts of northern Nigeria. **Update (3 September 2014)** – Local vigilante groups reported Wednesday that the northeastern town of Bama remains under the control of the Borno state government, contradicting reports that Boko Haram militants had seized much of it. According to on the ground sources, the attack on Bama began on Monday, and on Tuesday residents and several security sources reported that the insurgents had controlled much of the city. Nigeria's military has remained silent since the attack began while Boko Haram has not released any comments. If confirmed, the seizure of the town would effectively bring the militants closer to Maiduguri, with mainly believing the state capital is the group's next target. Such fears have prompted the state government to extend a curfew already in place. Previously starting at 10 PM, the curfew will now begin at 7 PM until 6 AM. The United Nations refugee agency (UNHCR) has reported that over the past ten days 9,000 people have fled the fighting, crossing the border into Cameroon. Additionally, more than 700,000 people have been displaced externally and internally by the conflict.

- **1 September 2014** – On Monday, Boko Haram militants launched a pre-dawn raid on Nigerian troops as they were preparing to launch a major offensive in a bid to retake a town that the group's leader declared part of his Islamic caliphate. According to on the ground sources, scores of Boko Haram fighters stormed the town of Bama at 4 AM (0300 GMT) as soldiers readied for an attack on the nearby town of Gwoza, which was seized by the militant group on August 7. A source further disclosed that the strike was "obviously a pre-emptive attack on troops that are deploying in Bama in preparations for a large-scale offensive to retake areas under the control of the terrorists," adding that the insurgents suffered heavy casualties and were forced to withdraw. The fighting has forced hundreds of residents to flee, adding to the already high numbers of displaced people who have been forced out of their homes across Nigeria's northeastern region because of the violence. Bama is located 70 kilometers (45 miles) by road from the Borno state capital Maiduguri, which was the militant group's spiritual home until they were pushed out by the military when a state of emergency was declared last year. In recent weeks Boko Haram has seized a number of towns and villages in southern Borno and near the border with Cameroon. This change in tactics has led to claims that the militant group is planning to encircle Maiduguri and make it the center of a hardline Islamic state. Boko Haram has taken over at least three major towns in Borno, and at least one each in neighboring states of Adamawa and Yobe. While exact details of the extent of its territorial claims have been difficult to verify, Nigeria's military has maintained that the country's sovereignty remains intact and has dismissed Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau's declaration that Gwoza was being incorporated into his caliphate, stating that his claims were "empty." Furthermore, the apparent ease with which Boko Haram militants can mount attacks, coupled with testimonies of displaced residents, strongly suggests that the Nigerian army is increasingly unable to curb the insurgent's activities. In part this may be attributed to a lack of adequate weapons. Nigerian soldiers have on a number of occasions indicated that they lack the weapons to fight the better-armed insurgents, who have in the past used high-powered rocket-propelled grenades and even armored personnel carriers. Last month, some troops stationed in Maiduguri refused to deploy to Gwoza in an apparent mutiny that was denied by the military high command. At the time, the troops indicated that they would not deploy until they were better equipped. In a statement released Monday, Nigeria's government has maintained that it "has the will, the resources and the strategies" to defeat Boko Haram, noting however that "it will take time."

## Domestic News

- **7 September 2014** – A statement released by the Nigerian president's office on Sunday has indicated that Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan and his Chadian counterpart, Idris Deby Itno, will meet this week in order to discuss how to tackle the insurgency and arms smuggling that is occurring across their borders. According to the statement, President Jonathan will travel to Ndjamena on Monday where he will hold talks with President Deby, who is also the chairman of the African Union's Peace and Security council. The two presidents are also set to discuss how to implement an agreement, signed by Chad, Cameroon, Niger and Nigeria in Paris earlier this year, and to work together against "insurgents and terrorists," adding "their talks are expected to lead to the strengthening of the Paris accord on joint border patrols, intelligence sharing and the prevention of the illicit movement of terrorists, criminals, arms and ammunition across shared borders." The one-day meeting follows a discussion between the two heads of state that occurred last week on the sidelines of the African Union (AU) summit in the Kenyan capital Nairobi. At the meeting, African leaders agreed that the continent must work together in order to end the "scourge" of terrorism, amidst fears of a growing extremist threat in Africa.
- **5 September 2014** – On Friday, Nigeria's former vice president Atiku Abubakar became the country's first high profile politician to announce his candidacy for next year's presidential elections. A statement released by spokesman Garba Shekhu disclosed that a formal declaration will be made on September 24, with the country's Election Commission revealing that primaries for the parties' candidates will begin in October. Abubakar, who was deputy to Olusegun Obasanjo from 1999 until 2007, is seeking to be the main opposition All Progressives Congress's (APC) candidate for the presidential vote, which is set to take place on 14 February 2015. He comes from the northeastern state of Adamawa and was previously in government as a member of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), however in February, he announced that he was joining the APC as the PDP of President Goodluck Jonathan "cannot be redeemed" as it had not improved governance or tackled corruption. At the time, Abubakar indicated that Nigeria needs "...leadership focus on our people, on creating jobs and providing security. That's why I am joining the APC." The PDP, which has remained in power since Nigeria returned to civilian rule in 1999, faces a strong challenge from the opposition at next year's elections particularly because the APC's ranks over the past few months have been strengthened by the defection of powerful state governors and lawmakers, many of them from the Muslim-majority north who are unhappy that President Jonathan may run again. Many claim that the president, a southern Christian who has yet to reveal his intentions for next year's elections, has reneged on a promise to serve only one term as the country's leader. Abubakar previously made two unsuccessful bids for the presidency in 2007 and 2011.

## International Developments

- **4 September 2014** – United States officials are increasingly becoming concerned over Boko Haram's recent upsurge in violence and territorial gains in Nigeria, warning that the deteriorating situation threatened the future of Africa's largest country. During a visit to Abuja, US Assistant Secretary of State Linda Thomas-Greenfield stated that US officials "...are very troubled by the apparent capture of Bama and the prospects of an attack on and in Maiduguri, which would impose a tremendous toll on the civilian population." Ms Thomas-Greenfield, who leads Washington's African Affairs team, told delegates at a bilateral meeting on regional security that the upsurge in violence "constitutes a serious threat" to Nigeria, noting that "all of these developments are deeply disturbing, and increasingly dangerous with each passing

day.” With the recent declaration of an Islamic caliphate by Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau, Ms Thomas-Greenfield warned that the stakes are now extremely high, with some experts warning that the Nigerian government risks losing control of the northeast and that the violence could spread across the borders. While Boko Haram has been waging a violent insurgency, that has claimed thousands of lives since 2009, in recent weeks, the militant group has changed its tactics, opting to attack and hold large areas of territory in Nigeria’s far northeast. On Monday, the militants reportedly took control of Bama, which is located 70 kilometers 945 miles, from the Borno state capital, Maiduguri, however the Nigerian military has disputed these claims. Prior to the capture of Bama, the militants also seized control of Gamboru Ngala, Buni Yaide in Yobe State and Madagali in Adamawa state, with Nigerian troops seemingly unable to combat the growing threat. Over the past few weeks, hundreds of soldiers have abandoned their posts, with some crossing the border into Cameroon. Nigeria’s military however has maintained that the troops did not flee, but were instead conducting “tactical maneuvers” that forced them to cross the frontier.

# Senegal

## No Travel Restrictions



## Security Summary

On 29 August, Senegal's health minister confirmed that a Guinean in Senegal had been diagnosed with Ebola. On 22 August 2014, Senegal's government reclosed the border with Guinea in a bid to prevent the Ebola virus from entering the country.

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 Skirring (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.

## On the Ground Reporting

- **10 September 2014** – Senegal's health ministry revealed Wednesday that a Guinean student, who was Senegal's only confirmed case in the deadly Ebola outbreak, has recovered. Speaking to reporters, Pape Amadou Diack, director of health at the ministry disclosed, "we conducted two sets of tests. He no longer has the virus...." In a statement released Monday, Health Minister Awa Marie Coll Seck disclosed that 67 people who had possible come into contact with the student were currently under surveillance in Dakar, noting that none of them were displaying any signs of infection. In August, Senegal became the fifth country affected by the West African outbreak after a student crossed the border just days prior to officials

closing it on August 21. On Monday, officials in Dakar announced that they will open a “humanitarian corridor” in a bid to re-establish access for aid workers from Senegal to the remaining countries affected by the virus. The outbreak, which began in Guinea at the start of this year before it spread to Liberia, Sierra Leone and Nigeria, has so far claimed 2,296 lives amongst 4,293 cases.

- **8 September 2014** – On Monday, Senegal’s government confirmed that it has decided to open a “humanitarian corridor” to neighboring states affected by the Ebola outbreak. According to a statement released by Senegal’s Health Ministry, “a humanitarian corridor will be opened soon to allow humanitarian organizations help regional states hit by the deadly Ebola virus.” The Senegalese government’s decisions to open a humanitarian corridor comes just a week after the Ivory Coast opened a similar corridor to its Ebola-hit neighbors. A number of humanitarian organizations have repeatedly called on Senegal to establish a humanitarian corridor, with some wanting the strategically positioned country to become a regional base for providing humanitarian assistance to the affected West African countries. The Senegalese government however has yet to respond to this request. On August 21, the Interior Ministry disclosed its plans to close Senegal’s border with Guinea over fears of Ebola transmission. Senegal currently has only one confirmed case of Ebola
- **2 September 2014** – On Tuesday, the son of former Senegalese president Abdoulaye Wade told an anti-corruption court that his prosecution was a conspiracy masterminded by the current leader in a bid to stop him for running in the upcoming presidential election. During his father’s presidency, Karim Wade, 45, held several high-profile portfolios in his father’s administrations. Wade is alleged to have illegally acquired companies and real estate worth almost US \$240 million during his time as minister in his father’s government. At the time, it was widely suspected that he was being groomed to take over the presidency however current President Macky Sall ended the 12-year rule of Wade’s father in the 2012 presidential elections, which were marred by widespread violent unrest. The Wades’ opposition party, the Senegalese Democratic Party, is now accusing the president of conducting a “witch hunt” against its hierarchy since he came to power. Karim Wade is now describing himself as a “political prisoner,” denouncing the “grotesque and whimsical nature” of the charges against him. Prosecutors however are claiming that the money Wade made is Monaco and Singapore, which are both tax havens. His defense however claims that almost half the money in question is in a Singapore account that does not belong to him, adding that the total amount of money attributed to Wade is closer to US \$2.7 million, a sum they say he earned legitimately as a European trader before he entered government.
- **1 September 2014** – Senegalese authorities on Monday continued to monitor everyone who came in contact with a student infected with Ebola who crossed into the country and who has lost three family members to the deadly disease. On Monday, President Macky Sall confirmed that everything was being done in order to prevent any further cases of the disease in Senegal. Last week, officials confirmed that the university student is Senegal’s first Ebola case. According to Guinea’s Health Ministry, the 21-year-old left Guinea on August 15, just days after his brother died of the disease, which he apparently caught in Sierra Leone. According to officials at the World Health Organization (WHO), the student, who was travelling by road, managed to cross into Senegal despite the border closure. He arrived in Dakar, the capital city, on August 20, and stayed with relatives on the outskirts of the city. The health agency has reported that on the August 23, he went to a medical facility seeking treatment for fever, diarrhea and vomiting, which are not only symptoms of Ebola, but also of many other diseases. The patient however did not disclose to doctors that he had been in contact with Ebola infected patients and instead was treated for malaria until he was checked into a Dakar hospital on August 26. The spread of the disease to Senegal, now the fifth country to be affected, has raised fears that the disease could spread even farther afield. Public health experts have

also warned that shutting borders and banning flights is not the answer, a fact that was seen in this case as the patient was able to enter the country despite officials closing all borders. The Ebola outbreak in West Africa has killed more than 1,5000 people in Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.



## Sierra Leone

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



### Security Summary

MS Risk currently advises all but essential travel to Sierra Leone, except for those who are involved in the direct response to the Ebola outbreak.

On 30 July, President Koroma declared a State of Public Emergency over the current Ebola outbreak. A number of measures have been implemented throughout the country. The government has closed all schools and banned public gatherings in Kailahun district. All vehicles and their passengers entering and leaving Kailahun district must undergo screening by the authorities at checkpoints. 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. A planned nationwide house-to-house government visit programme has been declared. It is currently scheduled for 3 days from 19 to 21 September. During this time, all those in Sierra Leone will be required to remain in their homes/accommodation. MS Risk advises all travellers to the country to make sure that you are well prepared in advance and have access to adequate provisions, including food and water, during this time.

There is currently no travel advisory for Sierra Leone. Violent incidents have taken place under cover of crowds in the streets of Freetown. Over the weekend of 25 – 27 July, there were reports of demonstrations and local disturbances occurring in Kenema and Freetown. These events were related to the Ebola outbreak. Further such demonstrations and disturbances cannot be ruled out. MS Risk advises all travellers to Sierra Leone to follow local news reports, be alert to any developments and void all large crowds and demonstrations as they may turn violent. There are also occasional small riots between rival groups of youths in the central and eastern areas of Freetown. If you encounter such an incident, you should leave the area immediately. There is a low threat from terrorism. There is a possibility that retaliatory attacks may be carried out in Sierra Leone. This is due to the country's participation in the intervention in Mali. During the rainy season, May to October, roads can become extremely difficult, even for off-road vehicles. On 9 August a bridge in the capital city of Freetown collapse due to a landslide caused by heavy rain. At least six people were killed in the accident. MS Risk therefore advises all travellers in the country to exercise due caution when travelling by road throughout the season.

### On the Ground Reporting

- **10 September 2014** – Sierra Leonean officials disclosed Wednesday that they expect to uncover up to 20 percent more Ebola victims when the country imposes a nationwide curfew on the 19<sup>th</sup> of this month. During a news conference in Freetown, Steven Ngaoja, head of the center, disclosed that “isolation centers, including schools equipped with beds, will be set up as we envisage a five percent to 20 percent

surge during the exercise, which is aimed at breaking the chain of transmission.” Several days ago, the government announced a four-day shutdown, effectively confining the population of six million to their homes except for essential business. During this period, more than 20,000 volunteers will go door-to-door to remove bodies and to take those patients who have not yet gone to hospital. The Ebola outbreak has killed almost 2,300 people in West Africa, with Sierra Leone reporting some 500 deaths from almost 1,400 cases it has registered since the first infection was confirmed in May. According to health ministry spokesman Yahya Tunis, the government has set aside US \$1.3 million in order to cover the costs of the shutdown, most of which has been donated by the United Nations Children’s Fund.

- **8 September 2014** - According to the international development secretary, Britain is to set up a medical center that will treat victims of the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone. The 62-bed center, which will be located near the capital Freetown, is scheduled to open in eight weeks and will be constructed and operated by military engineers and medical staff. International development secretary Justine Greening disclosed Monday “the scale of the problem requires the entire international community to do more to assist the affected countries which is why the UK is working with the Government of Sierra Leone to build a new medical treatment facility near their capital Freetown,” adding “when it is up and running it will enable the UK to provide medical care for local and international health workers as well as treatment for the wider population.” The UK government has also indicated that in the long term, charity Save the Children may manage the center, which will have twelve beds that are dedicated for local and international medical volunteers.
- **6 September 2014** – In a bid to contain the Ebola epidemic, a government spokesman disclosed Saturday that Sierra Leone will enforce a three day “complete shutdown” across the country later this month. The measure, which will come into force on September 19, effectively means that pedestrians and vehicles on non-essential business will be barred from business for a period of seventy-two hours, with government spokesman Abdulai Bayratay disclosing “this will be strictly adhered to without exception.” According to Mr Bayratay, authorities in Freetown will use this 72-hour quarantine period to give medical staff access to patients who have yet to be transferred to treatment centers, noting “health workers as well as health-related NGO personnel will make house-to-house checks on homes for likely Ebola sufferers that relatives have hidden.” The government spokesman also disclosed that the shutdown will be aided by the arrival of several new ambulances and up to thirty military vehicles, adding that such procedures could be repeated in the future if officials see that they are successful and required. The quarantine plan was announced shortly after the World Health Organization (WHO) revealed Friday that the death toll from Ebola had topped 2,000. According to the UN health body, the virus has claimed 2,097 lives out of 3,944 people infected in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. **Update (7 September 2014)** – According to medical charity Doctors Without Borders (MSF), Sierra Leone’s proposed countrywide “lockdown,” which is set to begin on 19 September, will not help the country control the Ebola outbreak and instead could lead to the disease spreading further as cases are concealed. A statement released by MSF disclosed “it has been our experience that lockdowns and quarantines do not help control Ebola as they end up driving people underground and jeopardizing the trust between people and health providers,” adding “this leads to the concealment of potential cases and ends up spreading the disease further.” A government spokesman has indicated that the quarantine period will be increased and will occur over a four day period instead of the previously announced three day period.

## Domestic News

- **10 September 2014** – Sierra Leone's Finance Minister revealed Wednesday that the Ebola crisis has had a devastating impact on the economy, with growth projections scaled back to single digits for the first time since the country's mining boom began in 2011. Speaking to reporters in Freetown, Finance Minister Kaifala Marah disclosed that growth had slowed to an annual rate of seven percent since the country registered its first Ebola case in May, noting "the Ebola outbreak has reduced the country's economy from a projected 11.3 percent to seven percent as more money is continuously put into the fight." Prior to the Ebola epidemic, the World Bank had forecast that Sierra Leone's economy would expand by 14.1 percent this year, up from 13.3 percent in 2013. Sierra Leone's economic growth has been hindered as the Ebola outbreak has forced a number of businesses to close, airlines have started to avoid the country, prices have soared while revenue has dropped. Marah stated "technically we are in a blockade and we have found ourselves in a critical situation where we will have to keep government running." Although Sierra Leone, which is one of the world's poorest countries where half the population lives on less than US \$1.25 a day, continues to recover from an eleven-year civil war, which concluded in 2002, in recent years its economy has boomed, with the country's gross domestic growth at 15.2 percent in 2012, effectively making it the fastest growth in sub-Saharan Africa. This growth in GDP was largely driven by the country's rapidly expanding mining sector. Sierra Leone has mineral riches including diamonds, gold, bauxite, titanium ore and magnetite iron-ore, which has attracted massive investment, however poverty remains widespread.

## International Developments

- **12 September 2014** – Cuban officials announced Friday that they will deploy 165 health workers to help tackle the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. According to officials, doctors, nurses and infection control specialists will travel to Sierra Leone in October and will remain in the country for a period of six months. The announcement comes as the World Health Organization revealed Friday that new cases in West Africa are increasing faster than the region's capacity to manage them. On Friday, Dr Margaret Chan, director of the WHO disclosed that she is "...extremely grateful for the generosity of the Cuban government and these health professionals for doing their part to help us contain the worst Ebola outbreak ever known," noting "Cuba is world-famous for its ability to train outstanding doctors and nurses and for its generosity in helping fellow countries on the route to progress." Through a global medical programme, doctors have been deployed to a range of countries, spanning from Algeria to South Africa, with many now considering Cuba's medical help as a central feature in the country's international relations. In 2010, hundreds of Cuban medical workers were sent to Haiti during the earthquake and the country also trains thousands of overseas medical students, many of whom return to their home nations to work.



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