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THE CENTRAL AFRICA REPORT



Detailed Report Focusing on Security, Domestic News and
Developments that Impact the Central African Region

*Angola – Cameroon – Central African Republic – Chad- Republic of Congo –
Democratic Republic of the Congo – Equatorial Guinea – Gabon – São Tomé and
Príncipe*

SEPTEMBER 8 - 21, 2014

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 - Crisis Response
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References are always available.

More information is found at www.msrisk.com

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The Central Africa Report ~ Summary

September 8 - 21, 2014



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Cameroon

On the Ground Reporting

- **19 September 2014** – According to sources, six people, including four civilians, were killed Thursday in the far north of Cameroon following two incursions by Boko Haram militants.
- **9 September 2014** – Cameroonian officials have disclosed that its soldiers have killed “more than 100” Boko Haram fighters during an attempted incursion by the Nigeria-based militant group.

Central African Republic

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- **12 September 2014** – Officials from the African peacekeeping force MISCA disclosed Friday that at least thirty people were killed and 40 others injured when a lorry packed with travellers crashed overnight.

International Developments

- **11 September 2014** – United States President Barack Obama has dispatched twenty US military personnel to the CAR in order to help reopen the American Embassy there.

Chad

Domestic News

- **19 September 2014** – On Friday, just one day after five Chadian peacekeepers operating under a United Nations peacekeeping mission in northern Mali were killed by a landmine, the Chadian government denounced the “discriminatory” treatment of its troops in Mali, accusing the UN peacekeeping mission of using them as a “shield.”
- **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.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On the Ground Reporting

- **17 September 2014** – Ten Congolese NGO’s disclosed Wednesday that the DRC still has a long way to go in order to meet its pledge under a peace agreement that was signed last year.
- **11 September 2014** – A senior opposition lawmaker in the DRC received a sentence Thursday of one year in prison for insulting the country’s president and government.
 - Officials at the World Health Organization (WHO) have disclosed that an Ebola outbreak in the DRC is believed to have killed 35 people of the more than 60 believed to have been infected with the deadly virus.

Domestic News

- **13 September 2014** – The DRC’s opposition has pledged to escalate its campaign against a possible third term for President Joseph Kabila after police used teargas to disperse a protest march in the capital on Saturday.

Republic of the Congo

On the Ground Reporting

- **11 September 2014** – On Thursday, a court in Republic of Congo convicted the former deputy chief of the intelligence services of plotting a coup, sentencing him to hard labour for life.

Central Africa Report ~ Security Summary

Angola – MS Risk advises against all but essential travel to certain regions of Angola. Specifically, we advise against all but essential travel to the provinces of Cabinda, Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul. There is currently a low threat from terrorism.

Cameroon – MS Risk advises against all travel to the North and Far North Regions of Cameroon.

Central African Republic – MS Risk advises against all travel to the Central African Republic

Chad - MS Risk advises against all travel to the following areas: areas within 30 kilometers (18 miles) of the border with Libya, Nigeria, Niger and the Central African Republic; areas bordering Lake Chad, including the regions of Kanem and Lac to the west of the towns of Mao and Bol; areas within 30 kilometers (18 miles) of Cameroon from Lake Chad as far as Léré; the regions of Sila, Wadi Fira, Ennedi and Tibesti; the region of Ouaddaï except the town of Abéché; the region of Borkou except within 30km of the town of Faya Largeau. MS Risk also advises against all but essential travel to all remaining parts of the country, including the towns of Faya Largeau in Borkou region and Abéché in Ouaddaï region. Currently, MS Risk does not have any travel advisory for the capital city, N'Djamena.

Republic of Congo - MS Risk currently advises against all travel to the Likouala province. This is due to a large influx of displaced people coming in from neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The UNHCR currently estimates that there are around 110,000 refugees in Likouala province. MS Risk also advises against all but essential travel to the Pool region. There is currently a low level of terrorism in the Republic of the Congo.

Democratic Republic of the Congo - MS Risk advises against all travel to eastern and north-eastern DRC, including Goma. The only exception to this is the town of Bukavu, to which MS Risk advises against all but essential travel. MS Risk currently advises against all but essential travel to the remainder of the DRC. There is currently a low threat from terrorism.

Equatorial Guinea - There are currently no travel advisories for Equatorial Guinea, however officials have sent up preventative measures in a bid to stop the Ebola outbreak from affecting the country.

Gabon - There are currently no travel advisories for Gabon.

São Tomé and Príncipe - There are currently no travel advisories for Sao Tome and Principe. However due to the current political situation, coupled with fears of a possible military coup, MS Risk advises all travellers to the country to remain vigilant and to monitor reporting on the political situation.

Angola

Security Summary ~ MS Risk advises against all but essential travel to certain regions of Angola. Specifically, we advise against all but essential travel to the provinces of Cabinda, Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul. There is currently a low threat from terrorism. We advise that all international companies and organizations operating throughout Angola have strict security rules and regulations for their staff.

Luanda

There is a high level of crime in Luanda. Muggings, particularly to steal mobile telephones and other valuables, as well as armed robberies can occur in any area at any time during the day and night. It is advised that you avoid wearing jewelry or watches in public places. Do not change or withdraw large sums of money in busy public areas.

Areas that are popular with foreigners are particularly targeted. You should avoid walking around Luanda, especially after dark.

Theft from slow-moving or stationary cars is common, especially in central Luanda. It is advised to keep valuables out of sight and do not use mobiles or laptops while in traffic. When driving, we wary if another car signals you to pull over. Thieves use the pretext of a minor traffic incident to get you out of your car in order to either steal the vehicle or rob you. A high proportion of the civilian population is armed.

If you choose to travel outside Luanda, and the provincial capitals, it is advised that you do so in the company of persons or organizations experience in local conditions as conditions can be difficult. There is a widespread of poverty, social exclusion and disease.



Cabinda Province

MS Risk advises against all but essential travel to Cabinda Province. There are regular violent incidents, including rape, murder and kidnappings that involve foreigners and Angolans. Groups claiming responsibility for these attacks have declared their intention to continue attacks against foreigners.

Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul

MS Risk advises against all but essential travel to the provinces of Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul. Angolan authorities are sensitive to the presence of foreigners in the diamond producing areas. Consequently all travellers to the region may be subjected to movement restrictions or detention by security forces.

The presence of diamonds also increases the threat of crime and banditry, particularly on roads that lead to and from these areas. Armed hold-ups do occur from time to time.

Cameroon

Security Summary ~ Following a deadly attack on a border police station, Cameroonian officials have partially closed a border crossing between Cameroon and Chad. Traffic has been authorized on the bridge, which straddles the Logoon River between Chad and Cameroon however local officials are warning that waiting times to cross the bridge may be long. Cameroon has closed, air, land and sea borders with countries affected by Ebola. This includes Nigeria. Flights and ships travelling from or via Ebola affected countries are banned. MS Risk advises all travellers to Cameroon to make sure your onward/return travel arrangements are flexible and to take account of these travel restrictions. These preventative measures have been taken in order to halt the further spread of Ebola.

MS Risk advises against all travel to within 40 kilometers (24 miles) of the border with Nigeria's Adamawa state and to within 40 kilometers (24 miles) of the border with Chad. MS Risk currently advises against all but essential travel to the rest of North and Adamaoua.



There have been a number of recent attacks in northern Cameroon, especially along the border with Nigeria. Officials have attributed these attacks and raids on villages to Boko Haram militants operating in Nigeria. On 27 July, attacks on Kolofata Town in Far North Province resulted in fatalities and a number of people taken hostage. Further such attacks are likely to occur in the coming weeks. MS Risk advises all travellers to Cameroon to avoid the northern regions of the country, specifically the areas that border with Nigeria as further attacks cannot be ruled out.

With the kidnapping of two Italian priests and one Canadian nun during the early morning hours of 5 April 2014, MS Risk advises against all travel to the North and Far North regions of Cameroon. The threat of kidnapping and hostage taking remains high at this time, with further such incidents likely to occur. While officials in Nigeria have requested Cameroon to increase security along the shared border between these two countries, the border regions continue to be porous and remain a safe haven for Boko Haram militants seeking shelter from the ongoing military operation in northern Nigeria.

The killing of a Cameroonian police officer on 19 August has prompted officials in Cameroon to close its border with the Central African Republic (CAR). The death of the officer occurred after a number of Seleka fighters crossed over the border into Cameroon, where they were stopped by officers patrolling the border region. Despite being escorted over the border, the fighters returned and attacked the police. It is currently not known how long the border will be closed. Consequently MS Risk advises against all travel to the border regions with the CAR as it is highly likely that militant groups and pro-Seleka fighters may be patrolling the areas and may at times attempt to cross into Cameroon. 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. MS RISK advises against all travel to the Bakassi Peninsula as well as within 20km of the border with Nigeria in the Ndian Division of the South West Province. We also advise against all travel to within 40km of the border with Chad in the North and Far North Provinces. This is due to a heightened risk of banditry and armed poachers in Bouba Ndjidda National Park in the North Province. There is currently a travel advisory north of Maroula in the Far North Province resulting from the heightened threat of armed banditry and other threats associated with the borders of Chad and Nigeria. The Government of Cameroon is expected to cut fuel subsidies in the near future, which may cause strikes and civil unrest throughout the country. Finally, there have been attacks on commercial shipping vessels in the Gulf of Guinea, including the coastline of Cameroon around the port of Douala. Vessels travelling throughout this area have been advised to exercise extreme caution.

On the Ground Reporting

- **19 September 2014** – According to sources, six people, including four civilians, were killed Thursday in the far north of Cameroon following two incursions by Boko Haram militants. A police officer in the region disclosed Friday “Boko Haram appeared yesterday (Thursday) around 1900 (1800 GMT) at Assighassia,” adding “there followed an engagement between them and our soldiers. Two assailants were killed and one soldier was injured.” According to sources, around two hours later, more Boko Haram militants attacked the village of Ganse, located also in the far north of Cameroon, killing four civilians. In recent months, Boko Haram has increased its tempo of attacks in Nigeria, and has staged a number of attacks in Cameroon. In July, the nearby village of Kolofata was attacked by Boko Haram, with militants killing and kidnapping several people, including the wife of a vice-prime minister and traditional chief, who are still missing.

- **9 September 2014** – Cameroonian officials have disclosed that its soldiers have killed “more than 100” Boko Haram fighters during an attempted incursion by the Nigeria-based militant group. According to a statement released by government spokesman Issa Tchiroma Bakary, the Cameroonian army has dealt “a severe setback” to Boko Haram during clashes in the north of the country on Saturday. The statement, which has not been independently verified, disclosed that Boko Haram militants fired two shells on the town of Fotokol, which lies on the border with Nigeria in Cameroon’s northern tip, adding “there were no casualties reported on the Cameroonian side.” Boko Haram militants are now believed to have been pushed back towards the Nigerian border town of Gamboru Ngala, which is separated only by a footbridge from Cameroon, which they seized over a week ago.

Central African Republic

Security Summary ~ MS Risk advises against all travel to the Central African Republic (CAR). Despite French troops deploying into CAR in early December, the situation throughout the country has continued to deteriorate. There have been reports of rebel activity, banditry and hostage-taking across the country. The situation in the capital, Bangui, remains fragile with reports of continued isolated killings, looting and gunfire. There is also an underlying threat from terrorism. Attacks can be indiscriminate, including in places that are visited by foreigners. The official curfew in the CAR is from 8PM to 5AM.

Despite the French military intervention, Operation Sangaris, being launched in early December, security throughout the CAR remains unstable. MS Risk strongly advises you not to travel around Bangui after dark. At other times, it is advised that you take extreme

care, and travel in groups if possible. There are armed patrols at night in Bangui and you may encounter several roadblocks, both official and unofficial, that are likely to be manned by armed personnel. We advise that you take particular care when approaching these.

Crime

Incidents of theft and robbery occur regularly. Armed gangs are known to operate in the outlying areas of Bangui. You are advised to take personal security precautions and be vigilant in public places at all times. Avoid carrying valuables or wearing jewelry in public. Do not walk alone at night and avoid any isolated or poorer areas.



On the Ground Reporting

- **15 September 2014** – A new UN mission, tasked with ending the on-going ethnic and religious bloodshed and helping bring back stability, has formally taken over peacekeeping operations in the. As of Monday, the 7,600-strong UN force, known by its French acronym, MINUSCA, takes over the smaller UN Security Council-mandated African deployment, MISCA, which has been stationed in the country since December, alongside 2,000 French soldiers. While MINUSCA will eventually be boosted to count 12,000 soldiers and police officers, its initial contingent is composed of many soldiers from MISCA's ranks. During a ceremony marking the new mission, the head of the UN's peacekeeping operations, Herve Ladsous, delivered a symbolic blue beret to the Cameroonian general heading MISCA, Martin Chomu Tumenta, who became commander of the MINUSCA force. A statement by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon indicated, "this transfer of authority marks the successful completion of MISCA's mandate and the beginning of MINUSCA's military and police action." The Secretary General also urged rival sides in the CAR "to put an immediate end to the violence" and to enable a political transition to stable, democratic rule. The CAR plunged into conflict after a coup carried out in March 2013 by a mainly Muslim rebel alliance, the Seleka, which overthrew president Francois Bozize and installed their own leader, Michel Djotodia, as head of state. While influential foreign leaders forced Djotodia to step down in January, after he was incapable of preventing widespread atrocities that were being carried out by rogue Seleka fighters, clashes between ex-Seleka rebels and Christian "anti-balaka" forces have continued, resulting in thousands of deaths and forcing thousands of others to seek refuge in neighbouring states. Humanitarian agencies have reported that the fighting has displaced more than a quarter of the CAR's 4.8 million population and only one Muslim district currently exists in Bangui. The groundwork for MINUSCA, which stands for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic in French, was established last April by UN Security Council Resolution 2149 and its task will be difficult and long-term. The crisis follows a long line of coups, army mutinies, rebellions and civil disturbances that have plunged most citizens into deep poverty despite the country's agricultural potential and its mineral wealth.
- **12 September 2014** – Officials from the African peacekeeping force MISCA disclosed Friday that at least thirty people were killed and 40 others injured when a lorry packed with travellers crashed overnight. According to a source from the peacekeeping operation, a truck "carrying close to 100 people" as well as luggage travelling in a convoy escorted by MISCA left the road and crashed into a ravine in the southwest region of Boali, some 95 kilometres (60 miles) northwest of the capital Bangui, on the main road to the Cameroonian border. The highway is used to transport food and supplies to the CAR's capital. Deputy prefect of Boali Mathurine Gbadin confirmed the incident, stating, "the vehicle was transporting cans of oil and there were a lot of people travelling on top.... It wanted to overtake another vehicle and plunged into a ravine." This is the second such incident to occur in recent weeks as civilians continue to flee the CAR in a bid to escape the on-going

violence. Last week, twelve people were killed and around 50 others injured in a similar incident that occurred in the southern Mbaiki region. The chronic lack of infrastructure has resulted in many travellers being forced on a regular basis to cram onto overloaded trucks that are often barely road-worthy.

International Developments

- **11 September 2014** – United States President Barack Obama has dispatched twenty US military personnel to the CAR in order to help reopen the American Embassy there. In late 2012, the US Embassy was temporarily shut down due to security concerns. While this force deployment is seen as a key step towards reopening the mission, the White House has not provided a timeline of when a full re-opening will occur. In a letter to Congress alerting officials of the deployment, President Obama confirmed that the force had arrived Wednesday and would be staying in the country until the security situation allows more transitional embassy guards and security personnel to arrive.

Chad

Security Summary ~ Chad has cancelled all incoming flights from or via countries affected by Ebola, including Nigeria, as a prevention measure against the spread of the deadly virus to Chad. Chad has also cancelled all flights from or via Ghana. MS Risk advises all travellers to Chad to make sure your onward/return travel arrangements are flexible and to take account of these travel restrictions.

MS Risk advises against all travel to the following areas: areas within 30 kilometers (18 miles) of the border with Libya, Nigeria, Niger and the Central African Republic; areas bordering Lake Chad, including the regions of Kanem and Lac to the west of the towns of Mao and Bol; areas within 30 kilometers (18 miles) of Cameroon from Lake Chad as far as Léré; the regions of Sila, Wadi Fira, Ennedi and Tibesti; the region of Ouaddaï except the town of Abéché; the region of Borkou except within 30km of the town of Faya Largeau. MS Risk also advises against all but essential travel to all remaining parts of the country, including the towns of Faya Largeau in Borkou region and Abéché in Ouaddaï region. Currently, MS Risk does not have any travel advisory for the capital city, N'Djamena.

MS Risk advises that you should only undertake travel to those parts of the country to which we advise against all but essential travel if:



- *You are confident that you have in place adequate security precautions to protect you from violent crime;*
- *The correct Chadian authorities are aware of your journey;*
- *You have in place the right permits if required;*
- *And you hold comprehensive travel insurance.*

There is currently a low threat from terrorism.

Armed robberies, particularly from cars, in residential areas of N'Djamena are common, with foreigners sometimes being targeted. MS Risk advises all travellers to the capital city to remain vigilant and to take care particularly in the capital. Keep doors locked and windows closed at all times. Do not carry any large sums of money, jewelry, or other valuables. Avoid isolated or less developed areas of the city and do not travel alone at night.

There have been a number of kidnappings in eastern Chad involving Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) workers and business people. Further such kidnappings are likely to occur. MS Risk advises all travellers to this region of Chad to be vigilant and take care at all times.

Nearly 350,000 Sudanese and Central African refugees and 100,000 internally displaced persons (IDP) are living in and around camps in eastern Chad. Although the Joint Border Force between Sudan and Chad has partially stabilized the situation, banditry and violent crime in eastern Chad continues to exist. Consequently the border between Chad and Sudan is subject to closures with minimal notice.

The area bordering Libya is also subject to closure and is heavily land-mined. The northern regions of Borkou, Ennedi and Tibesti continue to be unsafe.

Domestic News

- **19 September 2014** – On Friday, just one day after five Chadian peacekeepers operating under a United Nations peacekeeping mission in northern Mali were killed by a landmine, the Chadian government denounced the “discriminatory” treatment of its troops in Mali, accusing the UN peacekeeping mission of using them as a “shield.” The incident, which occurred Thursday, brought to ten the number of Chadian soldiers in the MINUSMA peacekeeping force killed in three incidents over the past two weeks in the northern Malian district of Kidal. A statement released by the Chadian administration disclosed, “the Chadian government regrets that its contingent continues to maintain its position in northern Mali and doesn’t get any leave. Worse still, our contingent is experiencing enormous difficulties securing adequate logistics, transport and food.” According to the statement, the Chadian troops are being “used as a shield for the other forces of MINUSMA positioned further back.” The Chadian government has also revealed that it will give the UN mission a week in order to carry out necessary changes to offer better

protection to Chadian troops, warning, “after this time, Chad deserves the right to take appropriate action.” Chad deployed 2,000 soldiers to Mali in 2013 as part of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA), which was at the forefront of a French-led military intervention to oust Islamist rebels. In the initial stages of the battle, Chad lost at least 38 men, with the heaviest fighting taking place in the northeastern Ifoghas mountain. In July last year, the MINUSMA peacekeeping force replaced AFISMA however there have been minimal solutions implemented to change some major issues. Complaints about pay and conditions have been a recurring feature of the Chadian’s tenure in Mali. In September last year, a group of 160 Chadian MINUSMA troops deserted their posts in the northeastern town of Tessalit in a dispute over pay and conditions.

- **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.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Security Summary ~ Authorities in the DRC have confirmed cases, including deaths, of Ebola in Equateur province. Outbreaks of Ebola have occurred in this region of Africa in the past and the current cases are not related to the on-going Ebola outbreak in West Africa. MS Risk advises against all travel to eastern and north-eastern DRC. The only exception to this is the towns of Bukavu and Goma, to which MS Risk advises against all but essential travel. MS Risk currently advises against all but essential travel to the remainder of the DRC. There is currently a low threat from terrorism. The security situation in eastern DRC remains unstable.

The security situation in eastern DRC, including Goma, remains unstable. Any foreigners in North Kivu, including Goma, are currently advised to keep their security situation under review. During fighting in the region in recent months, shells landed on Goma, causing a number of civilian deaths and injuries. There was also shelling around the border with Rwanda and explosions in the town of Gisenyi on the Rwandan side of the border. Further shelling may occur. You are therefore advised to avoid travelling alone and at night.

In the Katanga Province, there has been unrest and reports of fighting which occurred on 7 January 2014. The current situation remains tense across the province, particularly around the town of Pweto. MS Risk therefore advises all travellers to the region to exercise a high level of caution.

There were shooting incidents in Kinshasa on 30 December 2013. The incidents occurred around the national TV and radio station RTNC, the airport and the main army barracks and Ministry of Defence at Ngaliema. There were also reports of fighting in Lubumbashi, Katanga Province and in Kindu, Maniema Province. While



the situation in Kinshasa now appears to be returning to normal, the situation remains to be fragile and security forces continue to be on alert.

On the Ground Reporting

- **17 September 2014** – Ten Congolese NGO's disclosed Wednesday that the DRC still has a long way to go in order to meet its pledge under a peace agreement that was signed last year. The accord, which was signed in February 2013 by the DRC and ten other African countries, aimed to bring peace to the DRC's eastern region after it was destabilized by a series of wars with foreign-backed insurgents. Under the UN-brokered deal, the government in Kinshasa agreed to reform its security forces, judiciary and democratic system after almost three months of talks with regional leaders. Congolese rebel group M23 agreed to lay down its arms in November last year after a 20-month insurgency, a move which raised hopes for peace in the resource-rich region where millions have been killed as a result of nearly two decades of conflict. However according to a recent report released by the country's ten NGO's, and led by Voix des Sans-voix (Voice of the Voiceless) – one of the DRC's largest human rights charities - "much remains still to be done" in order to meet these pledges. According to the report, Kinshasa has made "undue delays...to setting up legislative and appropriate judicial bodies able to punish serious crimes," adding that vital reforms to the military, including ending endemic corruption, paying salaries and punishing the perpetrators of crimes, including murder, rape and pillage, have not been carried out. The NGO's have also called on the government to hold "irreproachable" elections after the highly disputed 2011 vote, which saw President Joseph Kabila cruise to victory. While a majority of the report focuses on the DRC, the ten NGO's also called on neighbouring Rwanda and Uganda, which are home to an estimated 2,000 former M23 rebels and which the UN accuses of stoking conflict in the DRC, to fulfil their part of the deal, noting that fugitive rebels "continue...to sour relations between the three countries and pose a serious threat to peace and security for the region." Officials in Kinshasa however have made some "considerable efforts" in implementing their commitments and continue to work "with diligence" towards completing other commitments. Francois Muamba, who oversees the body which was created to monitor the implementation of the Addis Ababa accord, pointed out a new scheme aimed at demobilizing and integrating rebels that continue to proliferate in the eastern region of the of the country. The programme is expected to cost US \$85 million over a four-year period.
- **11 September 2014** – A senior opposition lawmaker in the DRC received a sentence Thursday of one year in prison for insulting the country's president and government. Richard Mpinda, one of his lawyers, confirmed "the Supreme court Thursday evening sentenced Jean-Bertrand Ewanga to one year in prison for offending the head of state, members of the government and parliament," calling the trial "a parody of justice." Mr Ewanga, the general secretary of the Union for the Congolese Nation (UNC) party, was arrested on 5 August at his home in Kinshasa, just one day after a rally was held opposing any extension of presidential terms. On 4 August, thousands of

people demonstrated in the capital city in protest over suspicions that the rulers of the central African state intend to amend the constitution in a bid to enable President Joseph Kabila to stay in power beyond 2016, when he is due to step down after completing two five-year elected terms. During the rally, Mr Ewanga had declared “for us, he must go” by 2016, when presidential elections are due to take place. He was arrested the following day and charged with incident hared, tribalism and contempt of the supreme magistrate.

- Officials at the World Health Organization (WHO) have disclosed that an Ebola outbreak in the DRC is believed to have killed 35 people of the more than 60 believed to have been infected with the deadly virus. According to the UN health agency, the outbreak in the DRC is concentrated in one county, noting that all of the 62 people believed to have contracted Ebola so far have been linked to one initial case. Isolation units have been set up in each of the four affected villages, which are located in a remote region of the country’s northwest. The DRC, which is the site of the world’s first recorded Ebola outbreak, has over the years had a number of flare-ups of the disease. Officials however have disclosed that the current outbreak is of a different strain of Ebola and is not related to the on-going epidemic that is currently taking place in West Africa.

Domestic News

- **13 September 2014** – The DRC’s opposition has pledged to escalate its campaign against a possible third term for President Joseph Kabila after police used teargas to disperse a protest march in the capital on Saturday. Provincial authorities in Kinshasa also refused to authorize a march in the capital city, which was organized by a coalition of leading opposition groups, arguing that they had already permitted another rally on Saturday and would not be able to secure both areas. Vital Kamerhe, president of the Union for Congolese Nation (UNC) opposition party disclosed that police fired teargas at protesters near Kinshasa’s central train station, adding that several protesters were injured while others were arrested by police. According to the opposition, anti-government protests were also suppressed in at least three other towns, including Bukavu in South Kivu province and Masi-Manimba in the west, with one official reporting that in Butembo, in the eastern province of North Kivu, police fired teargas and threw stones at protesters. Opposition supporters have also voiced their anger after the General Secretary for the UNC opposition party, Jean-Bertrand Ewanga, was sentenced to one year in prison for insulting President Kabila at a protest held in August. Authorities have accused Mr Ewanga of inciting tribal tensions after he demanded at the rally that the president return to Rwanda once his second term was completed in 2016. This statement repeated an opposition accusation that the President was born in the DRC’s eastern neighbour. Allies of the president however have increasingly grown vocal in their calls for an amendment to the constitution to remove a limit on the presidential mandate to two five-year terms. Kabila took office in 2001 shortly after the assassination of his father, then-president Laurent Kabila, before winning election for the first time five years later. The suppression of the protests is likely to further inflame tensions between Kabila’s government and the opposition.

While the international community has spent billions of dollars and has deployed a 21,000-strong UN peacekeeping mission in the wake of a 1998 – 2003 civil war, stability has remained elusive and dozens of armed groups continue to operate in the country's mineral-rich eastern region.

Republic of the Congo

Security Summary ~ MS Risk currently advises against all travel to the Likouala province. This is due to a large influx of displaced people coming in from neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The UNHCR currently estimates that there are around 110,000 refugees in Likouala province. MS Risk also advises against all but essential travel to the Pool region. There is currently a low level of terrorism in the Republic of the Congo.

Although crime levels are low in Brazzaville and Pointe Noire, MS Risk advises all travellers to take sensible precautions in order to safeguard yourself and your belongings. We advise travellers to not walk in the streets after dark or to carry large amounts of money or valuables. The chance of being targeted by criminals is higher in the rural areas of the country. On 16 December 2013, there were reports of fighting and sporadic gunfire in Brazzaville. This is believed to have been an isolated incident as a result of resistance during a military arrest.



MS Risk also advises against all but essential travel to the Pool Region. This is due to sporadic rebel activity and armed banditry in the area. There is a very low risk of rebel attacks in the coastal town of Pointe Noire however travellers in vehicles and trains have been robbed by armed criminal gangs around the Pool region. Road travel in the Pool region requires a permit from the Congolese army.

On the Ground Reporting

- **11 September 2014** – On Thursday, a court in Republic of Congo convicted the former deputy chief of the intelligence services of plotting a coup, sentencing him to hard labour for life. Col. Marcel Ntsourou, the former deputy secretary-general of the National Security Council and once considered ally of the president, was convicted on charges including possessing war-grade

weapons, committing assassinations, and plotting a coup last year. A lawyer for his defence however has dismissed the verdict, stating that it is unfair and that the court ignored the argument that he was acting in his own defence. Ntsourou's fall from grace began in 2012 after a mysterious fire at an arms depot. The fire set off a massive explosion of war-grade weapons and flattened a one-square-mile area of the capital, killing more than 100 people. While in September, he was convicted of being an accomplice in the explosion, which was suspected of being the starting point of a coup attempt, and was sentenced to five years in prison, he later received a suspended sentence. The government however sought to have that sentence converted into prison time. In December last year, when police officers arrived to search Ntsourou's home, his bodyguards fought a day-long street battle in Brazzaville, forcing schools and shops to close. After heavy fighting, which left dozens dead, Ntsourou was taken into custody. The Brazzaville criminal court sentenced 54 others to forced labour for terms of up to 15 years. Ntsourou's wife, along with 58 others, was acquitted.

Equatorial Guinea

Security Summary ~ While there are currently no travel advisories for Equatorial Guinea, officials in the country have cancelled all incoming and outgoing flights to and from Sao Tome et Principe, Cameroon, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Republic of Congo, Benin, Togo, Nigeria and Gabon as a preventative measure against the spread of Ebola to Equatorial Guinea. Equatorial Guinea currently has no confirmed cases of the deadly virus. Additionally, permission for vessels travelling to and from west, central or east Africa to berth or depart from Malabo port has been suspended. Equatorial Guinea has also suspended issuing visas for those intending to travel to the country from central and west Africa.

Compared with other countries in the region, the level of violent crime is low; however there are regular reports of petty theft which has affected both visitors and expatriates. MS Risk advises all travellers to avoid walking around Malabo and Bata at night and to avoid travelling by road after dark. Although the political situation has been calm in recent years, you should be aware that political events can lead to an increased presence of police, military or security forces on the streets.

Consequently you should avoid any political rallies, demonstrations or large public gatherings. There is a low threat from terrorism; however you should be aware that attacks can occur at any time and place, including those frequented by expatriates and foreign travellers.



Gabon

Security Summary ~ There is currently no travel advisory for Gabon. Gabon has closed land, air and sea borders with countries affected by Ebola. This includes Nigeria. Flights and ships travelling from or via Ebola affected countries are banned. MS Risk advises all travellers to ensure that onward/return travel arrangements are flexible. These preventative measures have been taken in order to stop the spread of Ebola to Gabon. There is currently a low threat from terrorism.

Crime is on the rise in Gabon, particularly in Libreville and Port-Gentil. There have been robberies, armed attacks and rapes. Consequently MS Risk advises you to take sensible personal security precautions and maintain a high level of vigilance in public places. Avoid isolated or poorer areas of towns and walking alone at night. There have been a number of car-jackings in Libreville. There have been armed robberies of commercial shipping in the Gulf of Guinea.



São Tomé and Príncipe

Security Summary ~ There are currently no travel advisories for Sao Tome and Principe. However due to the current political situation, coupled with fears of a possible military coup, MS Risk advises all travellers to the country to remain vigilant and to monitor reporting on the political situation.

Crime rates in Sao Tome and Principe are generally low however burglaries and armed robberies do occur. It is advised that you safeguard all valuables and cash.

Although Sao Tome and Principe is generally peaceful, economic difficulties and political rows over the handling of investments in the islands' development occasionally lead to civil unrest. MS Risk advises all travellers to avoid any demonstrations or large gatherings.

