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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*

OCTOBER 20 – NOVEMBER 2, 2014

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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

October 20 – November 2, 2014



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Cameroon

On the Ground Reporting

- **26 October 2014** – Cameroon’s defence ministry disclosed Sunday that the country’s troops have killed 39 Boko Haram militants in clashes with the fighters who were carrying out three raids on Cameroon’s territory.

Central African Republic

On the Ground Reporting

- **29 October 2014** – According to a spokesman for the UN mission in the CAR, UN peacekeepers have freed 67 hostages who had been seized by militia groups.
- **23 October 2014** – UN peacekeepers reported Thursday that new attacks in the CAR have killed at least thirty people and left several dozens wounded.

Domestic News

- **22 October 2014** – The CAR's interim president has announced that the country is planning to create a rapid intervention unit that will eventually be tasked with helping rebuild the CAR's army and dealing with persistent inter-religious clashes.

International Developments

- **22 October 2014** – Cambodia has deployed its first batch of 216 military personnel who will join the UN peacekeeping operation in the CAR.

Chad

On the Ground Reporting

- **24 October 2014** – Despite recent kidnappings and on-going clashes, believed to be carried out by Boko Haram militants, officials in Chad disclosed Friday that they believe Nigeria's agreement with Boko Haram to free more than 200 kidnapped Nigerian schoolgirls would go ahead, revealing that the key to the agreement was a prisoner exchange.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On the Ground Reporting

- **2 November 2014** – At least eight people were killed overnight in new violence that erupted in the eastern region of the DRC.
- **30 October 2014** – Ugandan rebels have killed at least fourteen people in the Beni region in the DRC's restive eastern area.
- **28 October 2014** – Dozens are feared dead after flooding hit the eastern region of the DRC. According to local officials, more than 700 homes, a school and church were reportedly destroyed around Bushushu village in South Kivu province after heavy rain set off landslides.
 - On Tuesday, the DRC's Interior Minister revealed that Ugandan rebels, who are suspected of killing at least 80 people in the northeastern DRC earlier this month, have been depleted and are now adopting new guerrilla tactics in a bid to survive.
- **25 October 2014** – The World Health Organization (WHO) announced Saturday that the DRC could be declared Ebola-free in late November if there are no more new cases reported.
- **22 October 2014** – On Wednesday, Congolese troops and UN peacekeepers fired live rounds in a bid to disperse hundreds of protesters outside a UN base in the eastern town of Beni.
- **20 October 2014** – The United Nations confirmed Monday that a surveillance drone from the UN peacekeeping mission deployed in the DRC crashed in the eastern region of the country, adding that no injuries were sustained in the accident.

Equatorial Guinea

Domestic News

- **23 October 2014** – According to state media reports, Equatorial Guinea's President has granted an amnesty for political crimes as part of efforts to convince exiled politicians and other opposition figures to join talks, which are set to take place next month.

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 ~ 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. 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.

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

- **26 October 2014** – Cameroon's defence ministry disclosed Sunday that the country's troops have killed 39 Boko Haram militants in clashes with the fighters who were carrying out three raids on Cameroon's territory. A statement released by the ministry revealed that the fighting, which occurred Friday in the far north of Cameroon near the border with Nigeria, with the militants targeting the village of Glawi and "killing four Nigerian refugees and wounding one Cameroonian, before being pushed back by defence forces which pursued them until the borders." Dozens of militants were also reportedly killed by Cameroonian troops. The statement further disclosed that another two groups of Boko Haram militants entered Cameroon at around the same time, but were "immediately intercepted and neutralised by our defence forces who destroyed three 4x4 vehicles equipped with machine guns, killing 27 assailants." While Boko Haram has waged a five-year insurgency in neighbouring northeastern Nigeria, in recent weeks, the militant group has increased its attacks on villages located on the Cameroonian side of the border, proving that border continues to be porous and an easy escape route for militants fleeing military operations despite the two countries recently pledging to increase monitoring of the area. Last week, Cameroon's defence ministry disclosed that its troops had killed 107 militants during fighting, which also killed at least eight Cameroonian soldiers. In the wake of the recent release of 27 Chinese and Cameroonian hostages, kidnapped in May and July on Cameroon's territory by suspected Boko Haram militants, Cameroon's President Paul Biya has vowed to "totally wipe out" the Islamist group which is now posing an increasing threat to the country's security.

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.

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

- **29 October 2014** – According to a spokesman for the UN mission in the CAR, UN peacekeepers have freed 67 hostages who had been seized by militia groups. Speaking at a news conference Wednesday, Myriam Dessables confirmed that all the hostages were released after military operations carried out by the peacekeepers, revealing that four women had been kidnapped in the capital Bangui while the rest of the hostages were seized in the central area of the country. The hostages have indicated that they were detained for days by anti-balaka militias who accused them of being traitors for having sold goods at a market in the mainly Muslim KM-5 neighbourhood.
- **23 October 2014** – UN peacekeepers reported Thursday that new attacks in the CAR have killed at least thirty people and left several dozens wounded. According to officials from the UN MINUSCA force, on Tuesday and Wednesday unidentified gunmen attacked the central village of Yamale, where they pillaged and burned down several homes. The UN has warned that the death toll is likely to rise as reports emerge that the gunmen also targeted neighbouring villages. News of the attacks prompted hundreds of people to flee the area, including many Christians who live in the region, and to seek shelter in refugee camps in the nearby town of Bambari. Despite recent months of relative calm, the CAR has seen a spike of unrest, which has further pitted Christians and Muslim. The recent increase in violence has killed one MINUSCA soldier and several militiamen.

Domestic News

- **22 October 2014** – The CAR's interim president has announced that the country is planning to create a rapid intervention unit that will eventually be tasked with helping rebuild the CAR's army and dealing with persistent inter-religious clashes. Speaking during an address to the country's transitional parliament on Wednesday, President Catherine Samba Panza disclosed that because insecurity remains the CAR's main issue, "I have decided to create a rapid intervention unit as a means of efficiently protecting the population from recurring deadly attacks." According to the interim leader, the new intervention unit will be drawn from members of the country's army, known as the FACA, while the army leadership will be tasked with taking on measures in order to reform and professionalize the security forces to better serve the people. While the creation of a rapid intervention unit is seen as a key step towards stabilizing the CAR, forming the unit and arming it will take time. Prior to the Seleka takeover in 2013, the FACA numbered around 8,000 troops, however currently few FACA soldiers remain on active duty in the CAR. At the time of the coup, some opted to join either the Seleka or later the anti-balaka militias while others opted to stay home after being unpaid for more than a year. While last week, the CAR's deputy army chief of staff called on all FACA members to return to their barracks, officials have not disclosed how many former soldiers have returned. There is also the issue of arming the rapid intervention unit. Last month, President Panza Samba requested that the UN consider modifying an arms embargo,

initially imposed last year on the CAR, so that security forces could be properly equipped to work alongside UN peacekeepers. On Wednesday, she disclosed that a lack of weapons and ammunition continues to be an issue. Despite France deploying troops to its former colony, and UN peacekeepers taking over duties from an African Union (AU) force last month, over the past month, the country has seen a spike in violence, particularly in the capital city Bangui, while anti-balaka leaders had called for the interim president to step down.

International Developments

- **22 October 2014** – Cambodia has deployed its first batch of 216 military personnel who will join the UN peacekeeping operation in the CAR. According to Defence Minister General Tea Banh, the peacekeepers will conduct their one-year mission in the town of Bria, which is located 600 kilometres (370 miles) east of the capital city. They have been tasked with constructing roads, bridges and barracks, digging wells and demining, with the defence minister noting that the overall mission “...is to join the other UN peacekeepers to stabilize the situation in the Central African Republic.” Cambodia first dispatched its troops abroad in April 2006 under the UN peacekeeping umbrella. Since then, the Southeast Asian nation has sent a total number of 2,165 personnel to UN peacekeeping missions around the world.

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.

On the Ground Reporting

- **24 October 2014** – Despite recent kidnappings and on-going clashes, believed to be carried out by Boko Haram militants, officials in Chad disclosed Friday that they believe Nigeria's agreement with Boko Haram to free more than 200 kidnapped Nigerian schoolgirls would go ahead, revealing that the key to the agreement was a prisoner exchange. According to Moussa Mahamat Dago, a Chadian foreign ministry official, it appears that some Boko Haram factions are refusing to abide by the deal, which was brokered by the Chadian foreign minister, along with two representatives of the Islamist group and two Nigerian negotiators, at a meeting in Chad on September 14 and 30. Speaking to reporters in the Chadian capital N'Djamena late Thursday, Mr Dago disclosed "quite possible those who are fighting are dissidents that even they (Boko Haram) aren't able to control. So far, there is no reason for others to doubt this agreement," adding "what I can say is that those that negotiated with the Nigerian government did so in good faith...We are waiting for the next phase which is the release of the girls." Mr Dago also confirmed that the two sides had agreed

verbally to a series of points that were summarized in a document, which included the release of the schoolgirls and of jailed Boko Haram fighters. The specifics on the names and number of Boko Haram fighters still to be released has not been yet agreed. The first stage of the agreement was made with the release of a group of 27 Chinese and Cameroonian hostages, who were released two weeks ago in northern Cameroon. However the ceasefire agreement and accord for the release of the girls seized from Chibok in northeastern Nigeria in April, has been called into question ever since it was announced by the Nigerian military last week. Many Nigerians have questioned the existence of a ceasefire between the Nigerian government and Boko Haram, as fighting over the past week has continued, with a further 25 girls abducted. Boko Haram has not yet commented on the ceasefire, however Mr Dago has disclosed that while Boko Haram negotiators are no longer in Chad, they have agreed to return in October after freeing the girls in order to hold more talks, which will likely focus on drafting a roadmap in order to tackle more fundamental issues. The announcement of the ceasefire and possible release of more than 200 schoolgirls held in captivity for six months, has been maintained by Nigeria officials. An announcement by Boko Haram denying the ceasefire would be a large embarrassment for Chadian President Idriss Deby's government. The release of the girls however would be a boost for Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan, who has yet to confirm his re-election bid in next year's presidential polls which are set to take place in February.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Security Summary ~ There is a confirmed Ebola outbreak in the DRC. The current outbreak is localized near the remote town of Boende, 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

- **2 November 2014** – At least eight people were killed overnight in new violence that erupted in the eastern region of the DRC. The attack, which occurred in the town's eastern Bel-Air district, came just hours after the country's president, Joseph Kabila, visited the town. Witnesses believe that the attackers were from the Ugandan rebel group the Allied Democratic Forces, which is currently being targeted by the Congolese army, with the support of UN peacekeepers. The latest deaths in the town of Beni add to the more than 110 deaths that have occurred in the region in the last month.
- **30 October 2014** – Ugandan rebels have killed at least fourteen people in the Beni region in the DRC's restive eastern area. According to local sources, the incursion by the Uganda ADF rebel group took place overnight in the town of Kampi ya Chui, with at least fourteen people massacred by machetes. The governor of North Kivu province, Julien Paluku, has cautioned that there is a need for confirmation of the deaths as there was "a lot of contradictory information" coming from the attack area. The latest incident comes just two weeks after suspected ADF Ugandan rebels were accused of having massacred at least 80 civilians in the region. According to local officials, despite the presence of Congolese troops and peacekeepers from the UN's MONUSCO mission, the rebels killed women and children, with tensions forcing many to flee the area. Amidst the heightened tensions, the country's President Joseph Kabila travelled to Beni on Thursday, where he met with several different groups. He has called on an urgent solution to the issue and has asked that the military re-launch operations in the area to curb further attacks. Earlier in the year, the army and MONUSCO peacekeepers had been successful in weakening the Ugandan rebel group, however attacks over the past several months have indicated that rebels remain active in the region and are increasingly becoming a serious threat to the area.
- **28 October 2014** – Dozens are feared dead after flooding hit the eastern region of the DRC. According to local officials, more than 700 homes, a school and church were reportedly destroyed around Bushushu village in South Kivu province after heavy rain set off landslides. Some victims have reportedly been swept into Lake Kivu. Reports have indicated that at least 65 people were killed in the landslides, however officials are warning that this number is likely to rise in the coming days as the heavy rain, which has been targeting the area since the weekend, has made it difficult to carry out search and rescue operations. Martin Kobler, the head of the UN's MONUSCO mission in the DRC has disclosed that the UN is currently doing "everything possible to come to the aid of the victims of this disaster." An additional seventy-five Red Cross rescue

workers have been dispatched to the area to help volunteers at the scene, however gaining access to the area has been hampered as the floods have washed away two key bridges.

- On Tuesday, the DRC's Interior Minister revealed that Ugandan rebels, who are suspected of killing at least 80 people in the northeastern DRC earlier this month, have been depleted and are now adopting new guerrilla tactics in a bid to survive. According to Richard Muyej, the DRC government knows that "...they are weakened in numbers....Now they act in small groups using guerrilla tactics and rely on surprise." He further indicated that government is currently "...trying to redeploy our troops to combat their new strategy. Its very early to say that we've succeeded. But we're on the right path." Despite the DRC's last war formally concluding in 2003, violence along the country's eastern borderlands has persisted. Following the defeat of M23 last year, operations carried out by UN peacekeepers and government troops aimed at removing armed groups have made progress. In January, the Congolese army, with the backing of the country's UN mission MONUSCO, launched Operation Sukola against the ADF-NALU, and forced the rebels out of all their known bases. However fighters believed to be part of the ADF-NALU continue to operate in the region and are becoming a major threat to the country's security. Earlier this month, suspected ADF-NALU fighters attacked a village near the town of Beni in a series of overnight raids, killing at least 80 people with hatchets and machetes. Muyej has disclosed that 45 suspects have been arrested in connection to the recent attacks. Tensions in Beni however remain high after residents last week accused UN soldiers of not doing enough to protect them. Crowds, composed of mainly young men, attacked several of the mission's facilities in North Kivu province, throwing stones and forcing the evacuation of staff. President Joseph Kabila is due to visit Beni on Wednesday. Although estimates of their strength vary greatly, MONUSCO has reported that ADF-NALU forces are currently at around 500 fighters.
- **25 October 2014** – The World Health Organization (WHO) announced Saturday that the DRC could be declared Ebola-free in late November if there are no more new cases reported. The Ebola outbreak in the DRC, which is separate to the on-going outbreak in West Africa, began in August. There have been a total of 67 cases and 49 deaths, including 8 fatalities among healthcare workers.
- **22 October 2014** – On Wednesday, Congolese troops and UN peacekeepers fired live rounds in a bid to disperse hundreds of protesters outside a UN base in the eastern town of Beni. According to several eyewitnesses, peacekeepers and Congolese troops fired into the air to disperse the crowds gathered at Beni airport, which is where the force has a base. A number of injuries were reported with a police source disclosing that two people were confirmed dead, however it remained unclear whether they had been shot by UN or Congolese forces. Protesters had gathered at the UN base and called for peacekeepers to leave the town after two people were shot dead Tuesday during protests over the UN missions' failure to stem the violence and ensure the safety of the local population. Tensions have increased in recent weeks as renewed violence has been blamed on Ugandan rebels, who have killed dozens of civilians over the past several weeks. While a spokesman for the UN mission has not commented on Tuesday's shooting, he did disclose that an

enquiry into the incident had been opened. Despite joint UN-Congolese operations, Uganda's ADF-NALU rebel group continues to operate in the eastern region of the country. While earlier this week, Martin Kobler, the head of the UN peacekeeping mission, called for a new military operation against the rebel group, action has yet to be taken.

- **20 October 2014** – The United Nations confirmed Monday that a surveillance drone from the UN peacekeeping mission deployed in the DRC crashed in the eastern region of the country, adding that no injuries were sustained in the accident. According to Charles-Antoine Bambara, a spokesman for the UN mission in the DRC, MONUSCO, the unmanned aircraft went down “shortly after taking off from the airport in Goma,” adding that the drone crashed in an uninhabited area located 3 kilometres (2 miles) north of Goma, with the crash causing no injuries or damage. The cause of the incident is currently being investigated however the UN mission has an additional four operational drones. This is the second such incident to occur this year. In January, a drone also crashed near Goma. The UN drone programme was launched in December 2013 and is aimed at aiding the mission to watch over the mineral-rich North Kivu province as well as to monitor the armed groups that continue to threaten the area. The drones are unarmed and are equipped for reconnaissance flights. Despite this programme, however rival groups, which have terrorized local residents for over two decades, continue to threaten the area's security. Over this past month, Ugandan rebels are believed to have killed more than eight civilians in North Kivu province in two separate attacks. This has sparked renewed calls from local officials for the UN force to do more in order to ensure the safety and security of the local population.

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.

Equatorial Guinea

Security Summary ~ There currently are no travel advisories for Equatorial Guinea. Flights to/from Sao Tome et Principe, Cameroon, the Ivory Coast, Ghana, Republic of Congo, Benin, Togo, Nigeria and Gabon have now been resumed after being cancelled as part of preventive measures against the spread of Ebola to Equatorial Guinea. Vessels travelling to/from west, central or east Africa are not being granted permission to berth or depart from Malabo Port. Equatorial Guinea has also suspended issuing visas for those intending to travel to the country from central and West Africa. Equatorial Guinea currently has no confirmed cases of the deadly virus.

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.



Domestic News

- **23 October 2014** – According to state media reports, Equatorial Guinea’s President has granted an amnesty for political crimes as part of efforts to convince exiled politicians and other opposition figures to join talks, which are set to take place next month. In September, President Thodoro Obiang Nguema, announced the “national dialogue,” which will be the third such meeting in the country’s history, disclosing that the talks should include all parties. While opposition groups initially greeted the announcement of talks with cautious optimism, last week, several parties announced that they would not take part without a general amnesty as well as neutral mediation by international observers and the legalisation of new political movements. Responding to these calls, on Wednesday President Obiang disclosed in his preamble to the declaration of the amnesty that the “...total general amnesty is granted to all citizens convicted by the courts of Equatorial Guinea of political crimes...whether or not their sentences were served,” adding that officials are hoping that this general amnesty will effectively wipe “the slate clean.” The government also indicated that it would transport those politicians currently living in Europe to the national dialogue free of charge on the country’s Ceiba Intercontinental airline. One of those who may benefit from this newly announced amnesty agreement is the country’s main opposition leader, Severo Moto, who has been in exile in Spain for decades. His Progressive Party of Equatorial Guinea remains banned. He was convicted in absentia and sentenced to 62 years in prison for involvement in a failed 2004 coup attempt. Sources close to his party have indicated that Mr Moto could return to Equatorial Guinea ahead of the talks. Other political prisoners include Cipriano Nguema, who was abducted in Nigeria in December 2013 and subsequently tortured by authorities at Equatorial Guinea’s National Security Headquarters in Malabo. On 27 September 2014, five others connected to Mr Nguema – Ticiano Obama Nkogo, Timoteo Asumu, Antonio Nconi Sima, Mercedes Obono Nconi and Emilia Abeme Nzo, were sentenced by a military court to between 15 and 27 years for allegedly threatening state security. **Update (24 October 2014)** – Amnesty International (AI) has called on Equatorial Guinea’s government to reveal the names and the reasons for the arrest of all the prisoners set to benefit from the country’s newly announced amnesty on political crimes. While earlier this week, the country’s President signed a decree, which effectively grants amnesty to all individuals convicted or facing trial for political offences in the country, the amnesty does not clearly define “political crimes,” nor does it clarify how many are set to benefit from it. While the amnesty agreement has been seen as a positive step for human rights in Equatorial Guinea, Stephen Cockburn, Amnesty International’s Deputy Regional Director for West and Central Africa has warned that “...the authorities must be transparent about the details,” adding “the government must ensure that these prisoners are released immediately and that their families and others are kept informed of all developments.” AI has documented on-going human rights violations in Equatorial Guinea, including the use of torture, as well as arbitrary arrest of political opponents and the use of military courts to try civilians, noting that this amnesty “...should be a platform for the government to address wider human rights issues in

Equatorial Guinea, not least by ensuring accountability for violations and ending torture and arbitrary detention.”

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.

